

PANORAMA

Vocational education and training in Finland

Short description

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Matti Kyrö

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Europe 123
GR-57001 Thessaloniki (Pylea)

Postal Address:
PO Box 22427
GR-55102 Thessaloniki

Tel. (30) 23 10 49 01 11
Fax (30) 23 10 49 00 20
E-mail: info@cedefop.europa.eu
Homepage: www.cedefop.europa.eu
Interactive website: www.trainingvillage.gr

Matti Kyrö
Finnish National Board of Education

Edited by:
Cedefop
Sylvie Bousquet, Project manager

Published under the responsibility of:
Aviana Bulgarelli, Director
Christian Lettmayr, Deputy Director

‘The ageing labour force and population development, plus the concomitant goal of raising the level of employment, demand that the education system be open to change.

We cannot afford to lose young people from education.

We cannot afford to lose the potential and resources of even a single student.’

Antti Kalliomäki, Minister for Education
European forum for freedom in education (EFFE) colloquium
8 June 2006

Introduction

This overview of vocational education and training (VET) in Finland was compiled to mark the Finnish presidency of the European Union Council. It is one of a series of short descriptions forming part of the continuing work of Cedefop on VET systems.

Cedefop's eKnowVET database contains information on VET. It provides country-specific or general data which are regularly updated by ReferNet⁽¹⁾. The description of the national systems can also be found on the pages of Cedefop's European Training Village website⁽²⁾.

The present publication has been compiled by Matti Kyrö from the Finnish National Board of Education, the agency responsible for developing education in Finland, in close collaboration with Sylvie Bousquet of Cedefop. It is based on the contribution of the Finnish ReferNet member to the eKnowVET database. We wish to express our thanks to all colleagues who have contributed to this publication, including the Finnish members on Cedefop's Governing Board – Petri Lempinen, Tarja Riihimäki and Tarja Tuominen.

Human resources are the most important resource for Finland. For decades education has aimed to ensure that the whole population has equal opportunities for education and training and attains a high education level. The responsibility for all education and training lies very much with public authorities and education and training is free of charge for students.

Since the early 1990s, decentralisation of decision-making has been a characteristic feature of Finnish society in general and specifically in educational policy. The national core curricula give the framework within which local providers have the freedom to focus education and training according to local and regional needs. National evaluations have replaced the inspection system. Local responsibility and the trust in competent teachers is a fundamental aspect of Finnish decentralisation.

The main challenges for Finnish VET are the quality of training and the attractiveness of VET. The development of Finnish VET is based on the basic philosophy of qualitatively equal education and training throughout the country. Improving guidance and counselling is an important part of the strategy to make VET more attractive.

This publication provides an overview of VET in Finland, describing the main aspects of the system. Further information is available on the websites of Cedefop and Eurydice⁽³⁾.

Christian Lettmayr
Deputy Director
Cedefop

Pentti Yrjölä
Director, Quality management and monitoring
Finnish National Board of Education

May 2006

⁽¹⁾ Cedefop's European network of reference and expertise.

⁽²⁾ http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/.

⁽³⁾ <http://www.eurydice.org>.

Table of contents

Introduction	1
1. General policy context: framework for the knowledge society	7
1.1. Political and administrative structure	7
1.2. Population and demographics	7
1.3. The economy and the labour market	8
1.4. Educational attainment	10
2. Education policy: objectives and priorities	11
3. Education system institutional framework	13
3.1. Administrative framework	13
3.1.1. National level	13
3.1.2. Regional level	14
3.1.3. Local level	15
3.1.4. Administration and management of vocational institutions	15
3.2. Legislative framework	15
3.3. Role of social partners	16
4. Initial vocational education and training	18
4.1. Overview	18
4.2. Lower and upper secondary general education	23
4.3. Upper secondary vocational education and training	23
4.3.1. School-based education and training	23
4.3.2. Apprenticeship training	26
4.4. Other youth programmes and alternative pathways	28
4.5. Vocational education and training at post-secondary level	29
4.6. Vocational education and training at tertiary level	29
4.6.1. Polytechnics	29
4.6.2. Universities	30
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults	31
5.1. Overview	31
5.1.1. Organisation of adult training	31
5.1.2. Recent policy developments	31
5.1.3. The Noste programme	32

5.2.	Continuing vocational education and training.....	32
5.2.1.	Upper secondary and post-secondary vocational education and training	32
5.2.2.	Higher education	33
5.2.3.	Participants.....	34
5.3.	Labour market training.....	35
5.4.	Continuing vocational education and training at the initiative of enterprises or social partners	36
5.5.	Quality assurance and evaluation	37
6.	Training of VET teachers and trainers.....	38
6.1.	Types of VET teachers and trainers	38
6.2.	Preservice training for IVET teachers	40
6.2.1.	Core subject teachers.....	40
6.2.2.	Vocational subject teachers.....	40
6.2.3.	Special needs teacher education for vocational institutions.....	41
6.2.4.	Guidance counsellor education for vocational institutions	41
6.2.5.	Principals.....	41
6.2.6.	Trainers or workplace instructors.....	42
6.2.7.	Assessment and quality monitoring	42
6.3.	In-service, continuing training and development for IVET teachers.....	42
6.4.	Teachers and trainers in continuing vocational education and training	43
7.	Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy.....	44
7.1.	Mechanisms for anticipating skill needs	44
7.2.	Bridging pathways and new educational partnerships.....	44
7.3.	Renewal of curricula.....	45
7.3.1.	National core curriculum.....	45
7.3.2.	Education and training providers' curricula.....	45
7.3.3.	Individual study plans	46
7.3.4.	Modular qualifications	46
8.	Accumulating, transferring and validating learning	47
8.1.	Validation of formal learning: general concepts and schemes.....	47
8.2.	Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning	48
8.2.1.	Competence-based qualifications.....	48
8.2.2.	The National Certificate of Language Proficiency.....	49
8.2.3.	Computer Driving Licence®.....	49

9.	Guidance and counselling	50
9.1.	Strategy and provision	50
9.1.1.	Use of Internet resources in guidance services.....	51
9.1.2.	Guidance available in the public employment service	52
9.2.	Guidance and counselling personnel	52
10.	Financing: investment in human resources	53
10.1.	Background information.....	53
10.2.	Funding for initial vocational education and training	54
10.3.	Funding for continuing vocational education and training.....	55
10.4.	Funding for training the unemployed and other vulnerable groups	56
11.	European and international dimension	58
11.1.	National strategies related to EU policies, programmes and initiatives	58
11.2.	Impact of internationalisation.....	59
Annex 1	Acronyms and abbreviations	61
Annex 2	Glossary	62
Annex 3	Legislative and bibliographical references	66
Annex 4	Internet sources for further information	70
Annex 5	Important organisations	72

List of tables and figures

Tables

Table 1:	Real GDP growth rate in Finland, EU-15 and EU-25 for 1996, 2000, 2005 and 2006 (percentage change on previous year)	8
Table 2:	Number of persons employed by sector of the economy with breakdown by gender (in %).....	9
Table 3:	Total unemployment rate and unemployment rate by gender and for population under 25 in Finland, EU-15 and EU-25 in 1995, 2000 and 2005 (in %)	9
Table 4:	Employment rates (15 to 64 years) in Finland, EU-15 and EU-25 by gender in 1995, 2000 and 2005 (in %).....	10
Table 5:	Educational attainment of the population aged 25 to 64 by ISCED level in Finland and selected EU Member States in 2004 (in %).....	10
Table 6:	Number of participants in certificate-oriented education and training in educational institutions in 2000, 2002 and 2004	34
Table 7:	Participation in non-certificate-oriented education and training in educational institutions in 2004	35
Table 8:	Number of persons attending labour market training from 2001 to 2005 (reference date: end of January).....	36
Table 9:	Roles and tasks of VET teachers and trainers (in addition to instructing students).....	39
Table 10:	Indicators of performance-based funding for upper secondary vocational education and training in 2006	54

Figures

Figure 1:	Population by age group in 2001, 2005 and forecasts for 2010, 2015 and 2030 (in %).....	8
Figure 2:	The administration of education and training in Finland.....	13
Figure 3:	The Finnish education system (in English, Finnish and Swedish)	19
Figure 4:	Students in vocational upper secondary education and training in 2004 (September).....	26
Figure 5:	Students in the apprenticeship training in vocational upper secondary education and training in 2004.....	28
Figure 6:	Simplified chart of flows of funding of IVET in Finland (training provided by federations of municipalities)	53

MAP OF FINLAND



1. General policy context: framework for the knowledge society

1.1. Political and administrative structure

Finland is a republic which became independent 1917. Finland's republican constitution dates from 1919. It was renewed 1999.

Finland is a parliamentary democracy with a multi-party system. Legislative power rests in the unicameral parliament (*eduskunta, riksdag*) of 200 members elected for a four-year term. The government is appointed by the president, who is elected by direct, popular vote for a term of six years. In 2006 Ms Tarja Halonen was re-elected as president of the country.

Finland is one of the biggest countries in Europe (338 000 km²). The country is divided into six provinces (*lääni, län*), 15 regions and 432 municipalities. One of the provinces, the Åland islands, consists of more than 6 500 islands and skerries, and has an autonomous status. The islands have their own parliament (*maakuntapäivät, lagting*) and government (*maakuntahallitus, landskapsregering*). The population of the Åland islands is approximately 26 000 inhabitants.

Finland has been a member of the European Union since 1995 and was among the 12 countries to form the European Monetary Union in 1999.

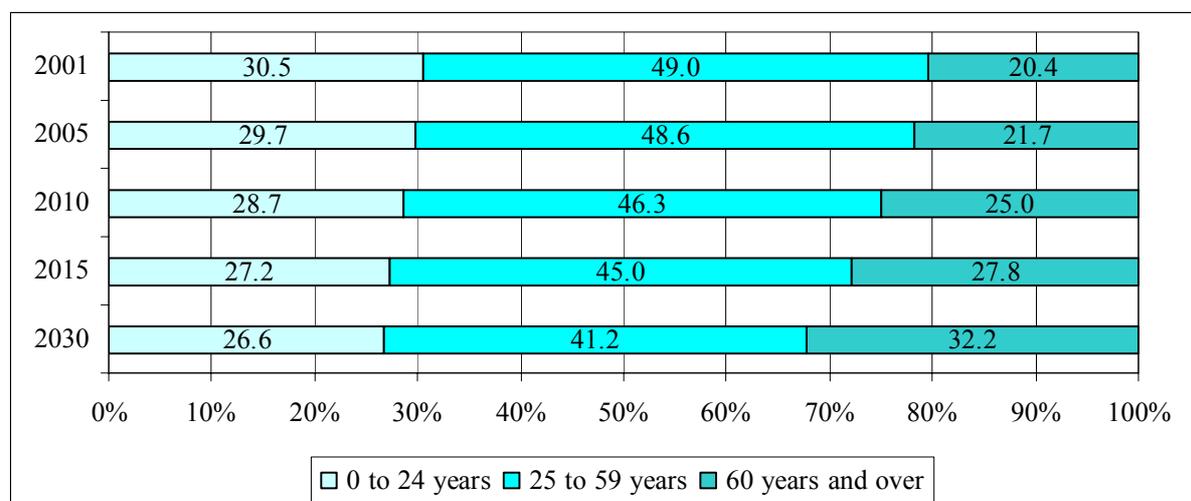
1.2. Population and demographics

Finland's population of 5.2 million is divided into three language groups. Around 92 % speak Finnish; the Swedish-speaking minority comprises about 6 % of the total; and the Sámi-speaking minority 0.03 %. There are two official languages in the country, Finnish and Swedish, except for the Åland islands where the official language is Swedish. All public services, including education, are available to Finnish citizens in their mother tongue (Finnish or Swedish).

Statistics Finland (*Tilastokeskus, Statistikcentralen*), the national agency for statistics, has forecast that the population will remain above five million at least until 2030. The proportion of the working-age population will continue to increase for some years but before year 2010 it will begin to decrease rapidly. In 2020 almost one fourth of the population will be over 65 (see Figure 1).

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

Figure 1: Population by age group in 2001, 2005 and forecasts for 2010, 2015 and 2030 (in %)



Source: Statistics Finland, 2006.

1.3. The economy and the labour market

The economy and welfare have grown steadily in Finland since independence until the 1990s, except during the depression in the 1930s and the Second World War. In the 1950s, trade with the Soviet Union had a significant impact on the development of export industries. First the war indemnities to Soviet Union and then the bilateral trade relations with it meant a rapid increase in industrial activity in Finland. In the 1980s growth was stable but, at the beginning of the 1990s, the Finnish national economy was hit by the worst depression since the war. The growth of GDP in recent years has been faster than in the EU in general (see Table 1).

Table 1: Real GDP growth rate in Finland, EU-15 and EU-25 for 1996, 2000, 2005 and 2006 (percentage change on previous year)

	Finland	EU-15	EU-25
1996	3.7	1.6	1.7
2000	5.0	3.9	3.9
2005	1.5	1.5	1.6
2006 (*)	3.5	2.0	2.1

GDP: Gross domestic product.

(*) Forecast.

Source: Eurostat. European system of accounts (ESA 1995), 2005.

Finland has the industrial structure of a modern knowledge-based society. The proportion of agriculture and manufacturing has declined and, in the last two decades, electronics has become the success story of Finnish exports. Its growth in the 1990s is mainly based on mobile phones and other telecommunication equipment. Three major export sectors today are

electronics, metal and engineering, and wood and paper. The last is the traditional basic industry in Finland (see Table 2).

Globalisation has meant a big challenge for Finnish industry, with a tendency to move production to countries where labour expenses are lower. This tendency exists both in electronics and in the paper industry.

Table 2: *Number of persons employed by sector of the economy with breakdown by gender (in %)*

		Agriculture	Industry	Services
1991	Men	11.0	40.7	48.4
	Women	6.6	16.0	77.4
	Total	8.9	28.7	62.4
1996	Men	9.5	39.4	51.0
	Women	5.3	13.9	80.9
	Total	7.5	27.3	65.2
2001	Men	7.5	39.4	53.1
	Women	3.7	13.8	82.5
	Total	5.7	27.2	67.1
2003	Men	6.7	38.1	55.2
	Women	3.0	12.4	84.6
	Total	4.9	25.7	69.4

Source: Statistics Finland, 2006.

In early 1990, Finland went into deep depression and unemployment rose rapidly to almost 20 %. Since mid-1990, unemployment decreased. In 2005, the unemployment rate (8.4 %) was little below EU-25 average (8.7 %). However, youth unemployment is still relatively high (20.1 %). Employment has increased as unemployment has declined (see Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3: *Total unemployment rate and unemployment rate by gender and for population under 25 in Finland, EU-15 and EU-25 in 1995, 2000 and 2005 (in %)*

	Finland				EU-15				EU-25			
	Female	Male	Total	15-24	Female	Male	Total	15-24	Female	Male	Total	15-24
1995	15.1	15.7	15.4	29.7	12.0	8.7	10.1	21.1	:	:	:	:
2000	10.6	9.1	9.8	21.4	9.3	6.4	7.7	15.3	10.2	7.4	8.6	17.4
2005	8.6	8.2	8.4	20.1	8.9	7.0	7.9	16.7	9.8	7.9	8.7	18.5

(:) Not available.

NB: Unemployment rates represent unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force.

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

Table 4: Employment rates (15 to 64 years) in Finland, EU-15 and EU-25 by gender in 1995, 2000 and 2005 (in %)

	Finland			EU-15			EU-25		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
1995	59.0	64.2	61.6	49.7	70.5	60.1	:	:	:
2000	64.2	70.1	67.2	54.1	72.8	63.4	53.6	71.2	62.4
2005	66.5	70.3	68.4	57.4	72.9	65.1	56.3	71.3	63.8

(:) Not available.

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

1.4. Educational attainment

One of the main policy aims over the decades has been to give everyone the opportunity to study to achieve the best use of human resources for the nation. In international comparisons, the level of education of the Finns is relatively high. In 2003, among the countries participating in PISA, Finland had the lowest ratio of low-achievers in reading literacy aged 15 (5.7 %; EU-average: 19.8 %) ⁽⁴⁾. Almost 90 % of the group aged 25-34 had attained at least upper secondary education. The so-called big age cohorts, born after the Second World War, had fewer opportunities to continue after compulsory education, with 55 % of the group aged 55-64 failing to progress beyond basic education (see Table 5).

Table 5: Educational attainment of the population aged 25 to 64 by ISCED level in Finland and selected EU Member States in 2005 (in %)

Country	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
Denmark	17	49	34
Finland	21	44	34
Estonia	11	56	33
Sweden	16	54	29
Spain	51	21	29
Germany	17	58	25
Italy	49	39	13

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education. ISCED 0-2: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education; ISCED 3-4: upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education; ISCED 5-6: tertiary education.

The countries are listed by the percentage of their population educated to level 5 or 6.

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

⁽⁴⁾ <http://www.pisa.oecd.org>.

2. Education policy: objectives and priorities

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

Every fourth year the government decides on future guidelines for education and training. This five-year plan forms the political basis for the development and reform of education in the coming years. The development plan Education and research 2003-08 (*Koulutus ja tutkimus 2003-08, Utbildning och forskning 2003-08*, see Annex 3) identifies the following priorities:

Improving the education system

- expand opportunities to study general and vocational subjects simultaneously in post-compulsory schooling;
- increase cooperation between polytechnics and universities and clarify their separate roles;
- develop adult education and training into a coherent system which can respond to the educational needs of adults and to labour market requirements;
- devise ways to recognise prior learning for all levels of education.

Content of education and training and methods of learning

- make educational content more relevant to the modern world taking into account the growing role of international cooperation and multiculturalism;
- enhance remedial teaching, special needs teaching and student welfare services to improve early intervention;
- promote entrepreneurship by improving links between education and working life, enriching teachers' and guidance counsellors' entrepreneurial knowledge, and ensuring better educational content and methods;
- improve the quality of work practice and work-based learning;
- provide more flexible options to maintain and improve the vocational skills of the working population;
- improve the teaching for guidance counsellors as well as for pupils with special educational needs and immigrants, and improve the use of information and communication technology in teaching.

Quantitative aims

- ensure that by 2015 the proportion of those aged 25-29 with at least secondary qualifications will rise from 85 % to at least 90 %; and that the share of those aged 30-34 with higher education will rise from 40 % to at least 50 %;
- provide opportunities for those completing secondary education to gain qualifications or degrees in initial vocational training;

- ensure that by 2008, 25 % of new polytechnic students and 2-3 % of new university students graduate through the basic education/initial vocational qualification track (see Chapter 4);
- ensure a better gender balance in vocational and general upper secondary education;
- provide post-compulsory education or training for all, so that by 2008 at least 96 % of comprehensive school-leavers begin in a general upper secondary school, in vocational education and training or in voluntary basic further education.

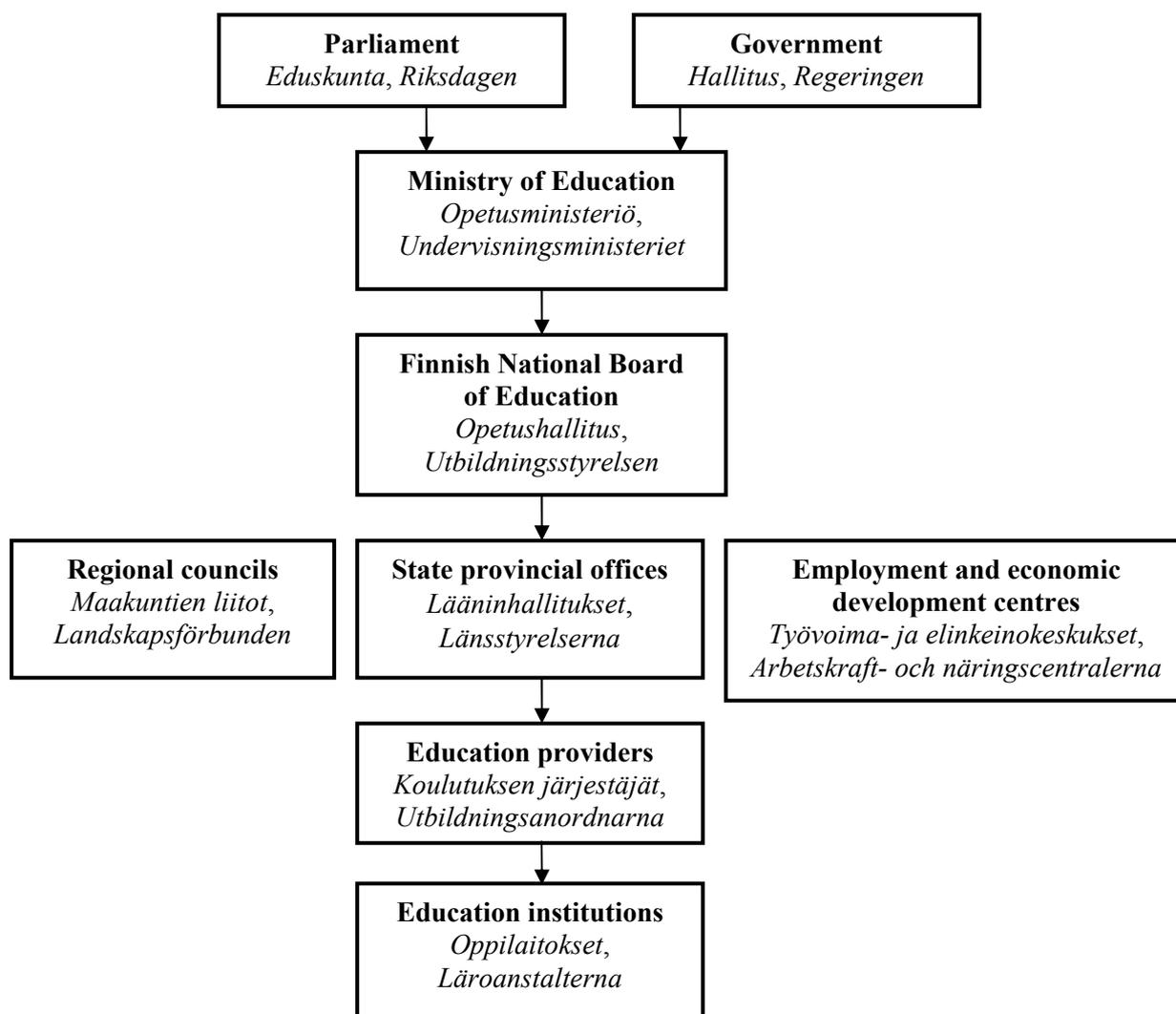
From August 2006, skills demonstrations (see 4.3.1.) will be incorporated into all qualifications completed in upper secondary VET as a way both to improve and assure the quality of training. Students will show how well they have achieved the objectives of their vocational studies and acquired the vocational skills required by the labour market. Skills demonstrations will run throughout the entire period of education and training and will be organised in cooperation with workplaces. The objective is to organise them in realistic work-like situations.

Another recent development is performance-based funding for education providers. After an experimental four-year period this has been integrated in 2006 into the normal unit funding system in accordance with the government bill (see 10.2.).

3. Education system institutional framework

3.1. Administrative framework

Figure 2: The administration of education and training in Finland



Source: Finnish National Board of Education.

3.1.1. National level

Education policy is defined by government and parliament. In addition to legislation, policy is specified in various documents and in the state budget. The latest development plan Education and research (see Annex 3) was adopted at the end of 2003. The plan includes measures for each field and level of education, as well as the main targets for education and research policy and the framework of the allocation of resources. The implementation of the development

plan rests with the Government, the Ministry of Education and the Finnish National Board of Education.

The Ministry of Education is the highest authority and has overall responsibility on all publicly funded education. It is responsible for preparing education legislation and all necessary regulations and orders. There are several expert bodies supporting the work of the ministry, usually with social partner representation. Higher education institutions are directly steered by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Labour (*työministeriö, arbetsministeriet*) is responsible for provision and financing of the employment training (see 5.3.). The Labour Market Policy Implementation Department is the unit responsible, together with the regional employment and economic development centres.

The Finnish National Board of Education is a national agency under the Ministry of Education. It is an expert body responsible for development, monitoring, supporting and evaluation of primary and secondary education as well as adult education and training. The Finnish National Board of Education has legal responsibility for national core curricula for vocational education and training providers as well as for the basic education and upper secondary general education (see 4.2.). It provides the framework for initial vocational qualifications and competence-based qualifications (see Glossary). It has also some service tasks concerning the higher education institutions.

3.1.2. Regional level

In each of the six state provincial offices, affairs falling under the Ministry of Education are conducted by the Education and Culture Department led by the Provincial Counsellor of Educational and Cultural Affairs. These departments are responsible, at least partly, for issues concerning legal protection, national selection systems, coordination of adult further education, financing and monitoring of European Social Fund projects and anticipation, evaluation and follow-up of VET in the province.

The 15 regional councils are not part of state administration. They are formed by the municipalities of the region and have regional responsibilities which can be compared with those of provincial offices. They draw up regional development plans in cooperation with local authorities as well as with business representatives and non-governmental organisations. Regional development work also involves the 15 employment and economic development centres. These centres improve the operating conditions for businesses, support the rural economy, and promote employment and the functioning of the labour market as well as labour market training under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour (see Figure 2).

3.1.3. Local level

Municipal authorities are responsible for organising basic education and are partly responsible for financing it. The Ministry of Education gives the framework for VET organisation and the authorisation to provide education. There is no statutory obligation for municipalities to organise VET, but they are obliged to contribute to its financing. Of vocational institutions, 80 % are maintained by municipalities and joint municipal boards, i.e. federations of municipalities, and the rest (20 %) by state or private organisations (see 10.2.).

3.1.4. Administration and management of vocational institutions

The responsibility for organising, developing and administrating education rests with an institutional board. Each vocational institution must have a rector responsible for its operation. All matters for organisation, administration, authority, staff, duties of bodies such as institutional bodies and student bodies, etc., are determined in the institutional regulations. Vocational institutions must always have a student body.

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

There are also vocational adult education centres which have a board accountable to their owner and a rector responsible for day-to-day operations. The majority of them are owned by local authorities or joint municipal boards. Continuing education centres of universities are subordinate to the universities (see 5.2.2.).

3.2. Legislative framework

Finnish educational legislation has traditionally been detailed and targeted to the different types of educational providers. In the late 1990s, the reform of education legislation aimed to consolidate legislation into a general framework act with the focus on regulation of education instead of institutions (Act 630/1998 and Decree 811/1998 on Vocational Education). The legislation governing primary and secondary level education, and part of the legislation governing adult education, were reformed on 1 January 1999 to more uniform legislation (Act 631/1998 and Decree 812/1998 on Adult Vocational Education) concerning the objectives, contents and levels of education as well as students' rights and responsibilities (for legislative references, see Annex 3).

The legislation has substantially increased the autonomous decision-making powers of local authorities, other education providers and schools: for example, the working hour regulations

in schools or the possibility for providers of general upper secondary education and VET to purchase certain services from other sources.

The Act on Vocational Education and Training regulates the right to provide education and training. The education provider needs an authorisation to organise education and training. The authorisation regulates the maximum number of students and the fields of training, which the provider concerned is allowed to offer to the students. The act regulates generally the content of studies, the rights of students and the evaluation of education and training, leaving much decision-making power for the provider of education. The provider can make decisions, for instance on local curriculum, possible extra funding, focusing of the training courses, cooperation with the enterprises.

3.3. Role of social partners

The Act on Vocational Education regulates the organisation of VET in cooperation with representatives of working life. The most important channels through which the social partners can participate in planning VET aims and emphases are the training committees, the Advisory Board for Educational Cooperation and the Adult Education Council set up by the Ministry of Education. There are also governing bodies and consultative committees of educational institutions. The government appointed a tripartite Council for Labour and Training Affairs (*työ- ja koulutusasiainneuvosto, rådet för arbets- och utbildningsärenden*) in 2004 to consider labour and education policies and their major challenges and strategies. Central labour market organisations have high-level representatives in the council.

The task of vocational training committees and the Advisory Board for Educational Cooperation is to plan and develop vocational education and training and to promote interaction between education and working life in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Finnish National Board of Education.

For vocational adult education and training there are qualification committees, which are appointed by the Finnish National Board of Education and organised on a tripartite basis. Their tasks include supervising and steering the organisation of competence tests, confirming approved qualifications and signing qualification certificates. The politically representative Adult Education Council prepares reports on adult education and training and takes positions on issues concerning focuses and future policies.

The governing bodies and consultative committees in the educational institutions are responsible for local VET cooperation and development. There are no official bodies for the regional level except those in federations of municipalities which cover whole regions. Informal cooperation at local level has expanded recently because of an increase in practical training in IVET and competence-based examinations in adult training.

The Confederation of Finnish Industries, EK (*Elinkeinoelämän Keskusliitto, Finlands Näringsliv*), is the employers' organisation actively involved in VET policy designing. For the employees there are three central organisations: SAK, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (*Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö, Finlands Fackförbunds Centralorganisation*); STTK, the Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees (*Toimihenkilökeskusjärjestö, Tjänstemannacentralorganisationen*); and AKAVA, the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals (*Korkeasti koulutettujen työmarkkinakeskusjärjestö, Centralorganisation för högutbildade*). Most VET teachers are members of AKAVA.

4. Initial vocational education and training

4.1. Overview

(See Figure 3: the Finnish education system in Finland – in English, Finnish and Swedish.)

Vocational education and training has been developed in the education system to lead to both employment and further studies. Finnish educational policy seeks educational pathways that are open from basic education to higher education with no dead-ends at any level or in any part of the formal system.

Vocational education and training aims to fulfil the need for skills in working life, hence its development of VET on a tripartite basis. Employer and employee representatives express their opinions on future trained workforce needs, while the education administration actively supports work on anticipating skill needs.

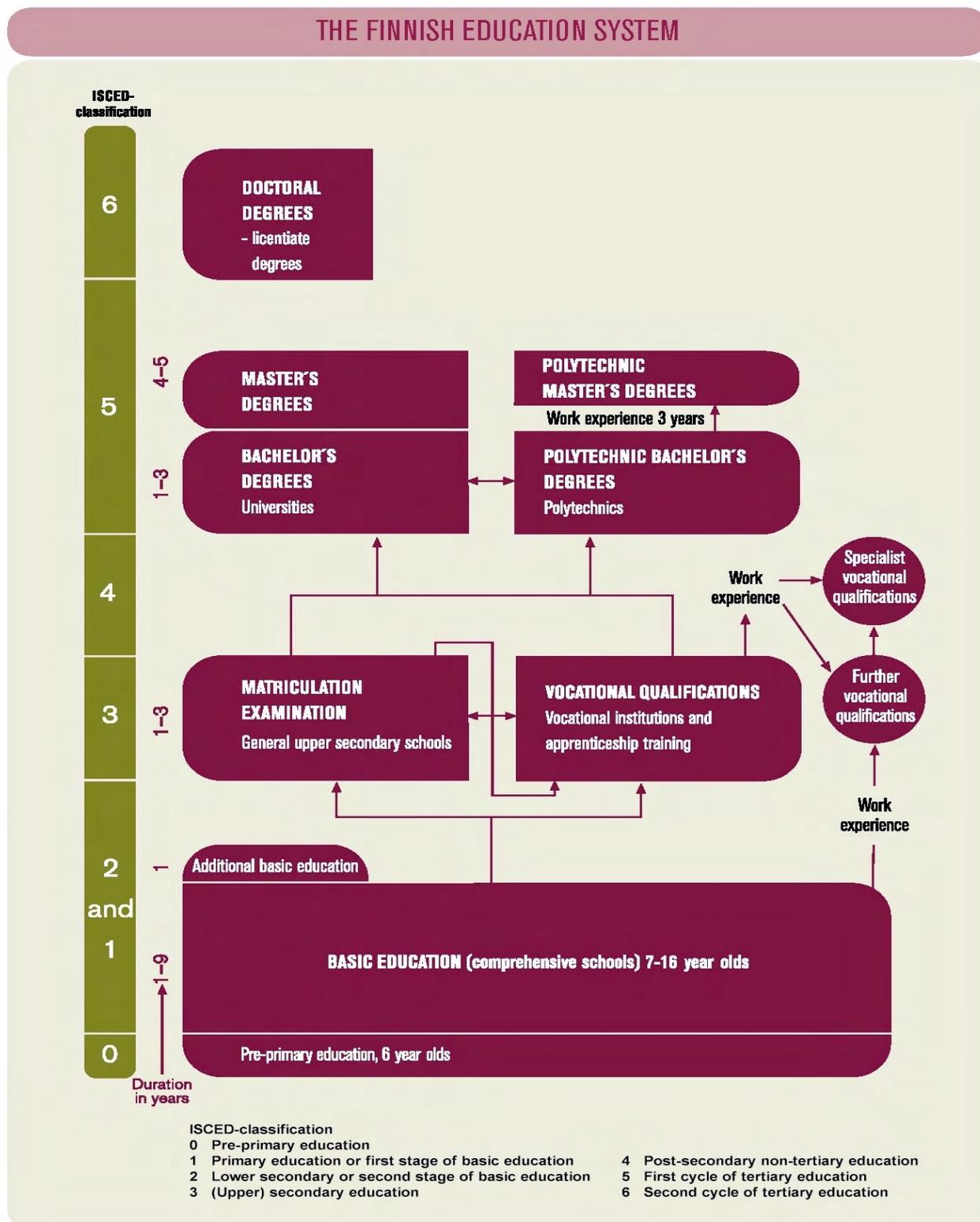
Globalisation offers the major challenge of improving capacity to compete in the world market. Finland has very few natural resources so its best capital is a highly skilled labour force and good quality products. The aim of Finnish education policy is to provide as high skills as possible for the whole population.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Finnish education policy has focused on upgrading the skills of the adult labour force. The distinction between adults and young people is not clear. Sometimes the age 25 is used to define an adult student but the distinction can also be made on the basis of training. Curriculum-based training is for young people and competence-based qualifications are for adults.

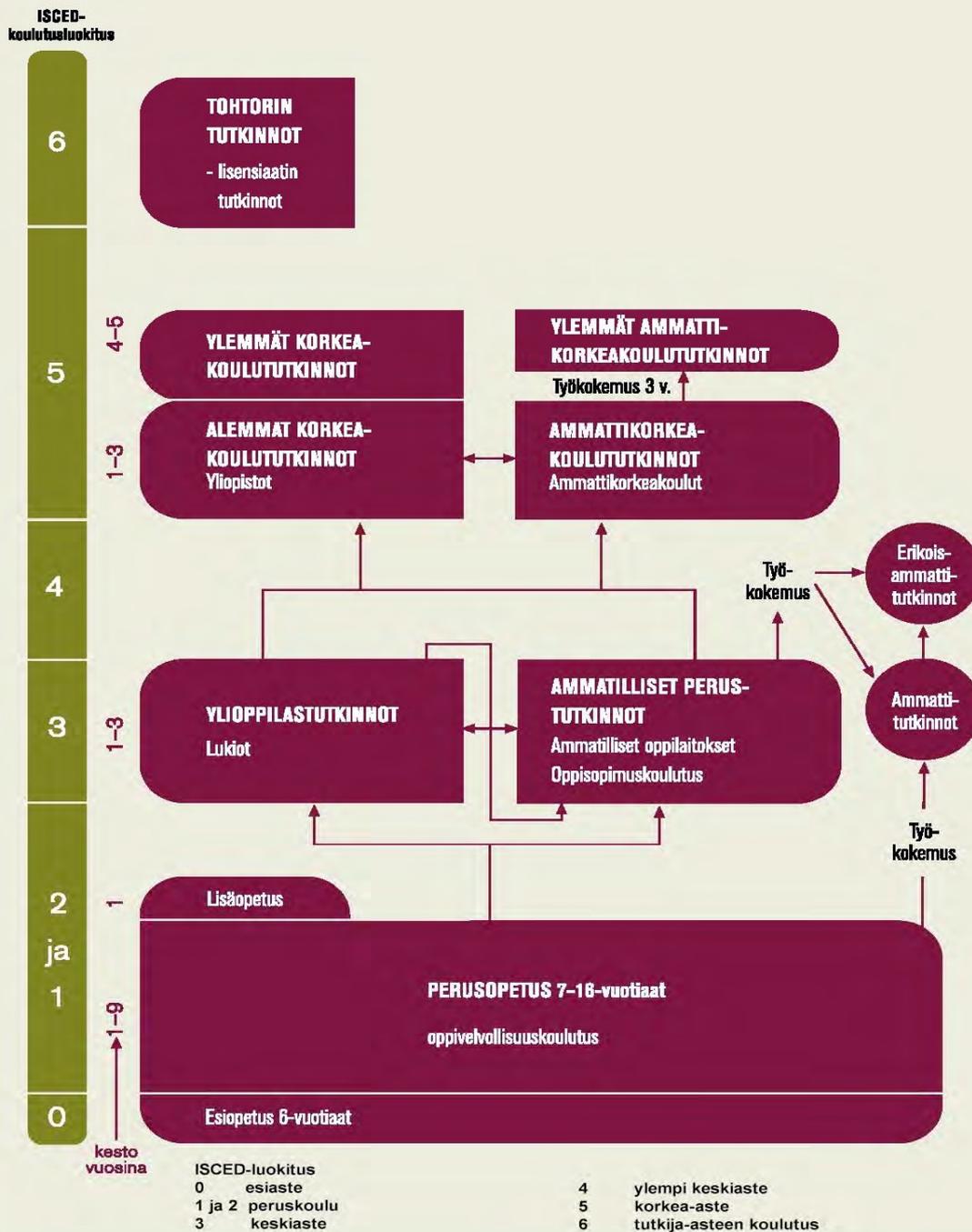
Legislation requires all municipalities to provide pre-primary school teaching (*esiopetus, förskoleundervisning*) free of charge to all children from age six, but participation in such teaching is voluntary. Almost 100 % of children aged six now go to pre-primary school.

Compulsory education (*peruskoulu, grundskolan*) starts in the year when a child becomes seven years of age and ends when the syllabus of basic education has been completed or 10 years after the beginning of compulsory education. Initial vocational education and training does not exist at lower secondary level.

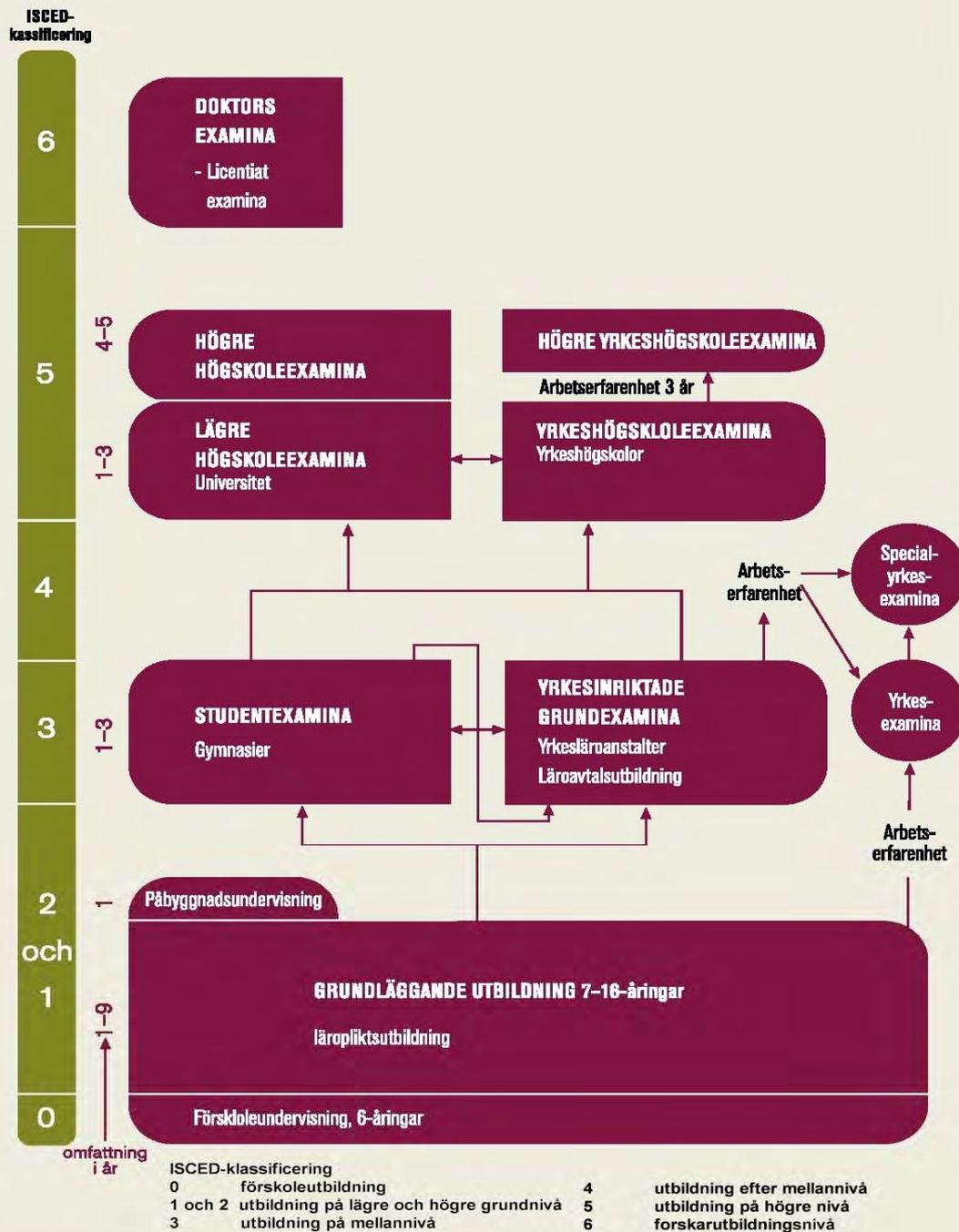
Figure 3: The Finnish education system (in English, Finnish and Swedish)



SUOMEN KOULUTUSJÄRJESTELMÄ



UTBILDNINGSSYSTEMET I FINLAND



Source: Ministry of Education (www.minedu.fi).

About 95 % of those leaving compulsory education continue their studies. In 2005, 54 % of basic education graduates continued general upper secondary education (*lukio, gymnasium*), about 38 % upper secondary vocational education and training (*ammattillinen koulutus, yrkesutbildning*) and about 3 % in the voluntary 10th grade (*lisäopetus, tilläggsutbildning*) (see 4.2.). The remaining school leavers do not continue their studies immediately after compulsory education. Finland has rates of early school leaving well below the European Lisbon objective (concrete target for 2010: no more than 10 %) ⁽⁵⁾.

In 2004 there were 110 000 students in general upper secondary schools and 143 000 students in upper secondary vocational education and training.

Higher education is provided either at universities (*yliopistot, universiteten*) or at polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulut, yrkeshögskolorna*). The starting age in higher education varies because students do not all start their higher education studies immediately after upper secondary education. Only about half of the new university students have accomplished general upper secondary education the same year. Polytechnic degrees take three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half years to complete. University master's degrees take at least five years.

Joint application systems

Students apply for upper secondary education through the national joint application system. There is a similar system after upper secondary graduation for polytechnics. The upper secondary joint application system following basic education is common for both general and vocational education: applicants can choose alternatives from both. Selection criteria for vocational education and training usually include the general study record, grades emphasised in the field of study, work experience and various entrance tests. Priority is given to young people without prior vocational education.

Those with the matriculation examination, following general upper secondary education, and VET graduates can apply for polytechnic studies through the polytechnics joint application system. Students applying for higher education studies can be selected for two or more study lines at universities or polytechnics, but they have to choose one of them and they can only begin one per year.

The idea of the joint application system is to make it easier for students to apply for further studies. The national system helps local education providers to get their students without students needing to send their applications to several institutions. This system is meant to make the application procedure more effective than one in which the institutions themselves directly choose their students.

⁽⁵⁾ Eurostat. EU Labour Force Survey, Eurostat database, 2006. The rate of early school leaving is defined as the proportion of the population aged 18-24 with only lower-secondary education and not in education or training.

The right to only one study place per year in higher education makes the use of university and polytechnic study places much more effective. The students cannot be awarded several places but several students have an opportunity to get a place.

4.2. Lower and upper secondary general education

Lower secondary education in Finland is a part of basic education, corresponding to grades seven to nine. There is also an opportunity to continue basic education in the 10th grade. That is a voluntary year for those who like to improve their marks or use a study year for better preparation for studies at upper secondary level. After the 10th grade the pupil is in the same position to apply for studies at upper secondary level as those who leave basic education after nine years.

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

The general upper secondary school network covers the entire country and is mostly owned by the municipalities. Upper secondary schools offer a three-year general education curriculum, at the end of which the pupil takes the national matriculation examination, which is the general eligibility criterion for higher education. The schools follow a national core curriculum. General upper secondary school has traditionally constituted the main channel to university education, with students achieving both the fulfilled learning certificate and the matriculation certificate.

Upper secondary students have a right to combine studies from general and vocational institutions in a flexible way. In 2002 about 2 050 students studied with the intention of taking both the matriculation examination and a vocational examination at the same time.

4.3. Upper secondary vocational education and training

4.3.1. School-based education and training

Since 1 August 2001, all programmes leading to upper secondary vocational qualifications take three years to complete and comprise 120 credits. One year of study consists of 40 credits, with one credit equivalent to 40 hours of a student's average workload. Vocational qualifications provide general eligibility for both polytechnics and universities. All upper secondary qualifications build on the basic education syllabus.

Qualifications can be completed in the form of school-based education and training at vocational institutions (*ammattilliset oppilaitokset, yrkesläroanstalterna*), apprenticeship training (*oppisopimuskoulutus, läroavtalsutbildning*) (see 4.3.2.) or competence-based qualifications (*ammattitutkinnot, yrkesexamina*). Initial training is organised mainly as school-based training and most students are young people with no prior vocational training. All initial vocational qualifications available at educational institutions may be obtained through apprenticeship training.

In the 1990s a system of competence-based qualifications was launched (see 8.2.1.). The idea was to allow those with work experience to demonstrate their vocational skills regardless of how and where they have acquired the skills. The thinking was based on the fact that around half the workforce aged 45-64 had no formal qualifications but had most of the skills and knowledge needed for a qualified worker's competence because of long work experience.

The national core curriculum of vocational education and training in each branch is the basis for the local curriculum of each education provider. There is also an obligation to build up individual study plans for each student. The Finnish National Board of Education approves qualification-specific core curricula and the requirements of each competence-based qualification. These both are drawn up in cooperation with employers and employees in different fields, other representatives and experts of economic life, and teachers and students.

The curriculum includes:

- vocational studies and on-the-job learning which vary according to the qualification (90 credits);
- core subjects, common to all qualifications (20 credits, out of which 16 are compulsory and 4 are optional);
- free-choice studies, which vary (10 credits); these include at least 1.5 credits of student counselling and a final project with a minimum 2 credits.

The compulsory core subjects (16 credits) are:

- language: Finnish, Swedish (4 credits),
- other national language: Finnish, Swedish (1 credit),
- foreign language (2 credits),
- mathematics (3 credits),
- physics and chemistry (2 credits),
- social, business and labour-market subjects (1 credit),
- health education (1 credit),
- physical education (1 credit),
- arts and culture (1 credit).

Students may choose from a range of free-choice studies available either at their own or another institution. Free-choice studies can be vocationally complementary courses in their own or another field, supplementary core subjects, or general studies which enable students to complete general upper secondary school and/or the matriculation examination at the same

time as the vocational qualification. They may even select courses based on their own interests.

All qualifications include a six-month period of on-the-job learning (at least 20 credits). On-the-job learning is a 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 will be introduced in August 2006. In these, students demonstrate how well they have achieved vocational studies objectives and the vocational skills and knowledge required by working life. Demonstrations take place in genuine work situations throughout the studies. They play a central and determining role in assessing vocational study modules in the school-based system and grading is decided by the representative of a workplace and a teacher together. Vocational skills demonstrations form part of the assessment of vocational studies, with other assessment methods also being used. VET providers nominate local boards (representatives of employers, employees, VET providers, teachers and students of the field concerned) to ensure the quality of vocational skills demonstrations. The board decides on the arrangement and assessment of skills demonstrations and awards appropriate certificates.

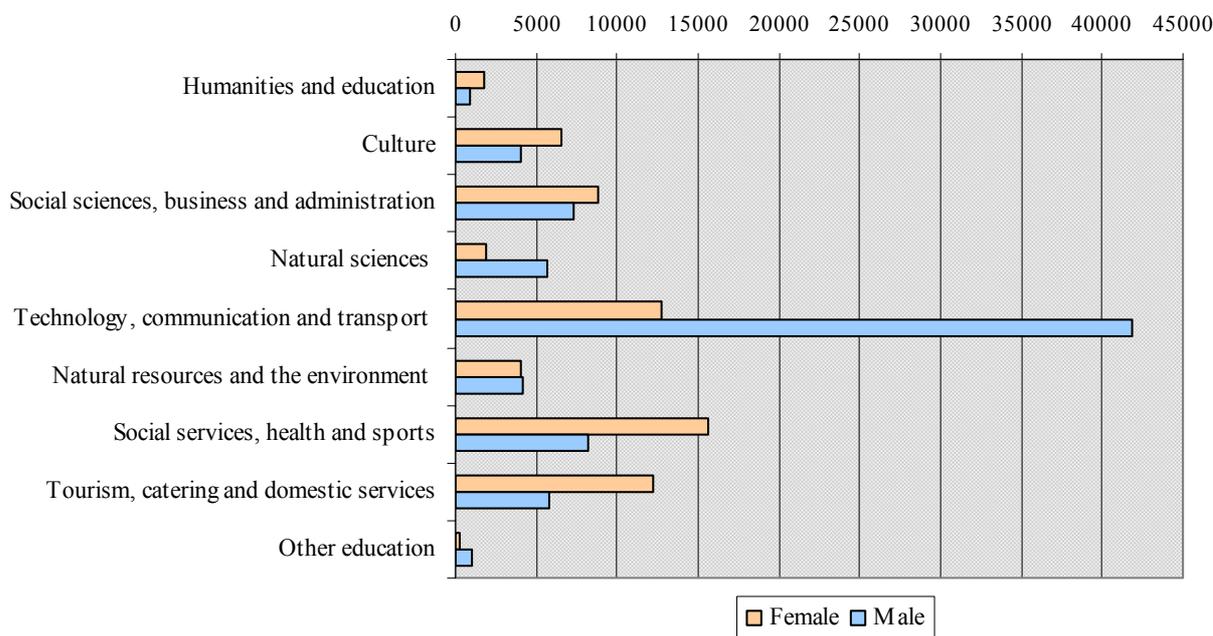
Those who complete the qualification must have both extensive basic vocational skills for various assignments in their field and more specialised competence and vocational skills required by working life in one sector of the qualification in question. Specialisation within a qualification will be determined by study programmes and qualification titles. For instance, in natural resources and the environment, study programmes include agriculture, horticulture, fishery, forestry.

The following fields of study are available (see Figure 4):

- 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.

Almost 80 % of VET institutions are owned by municipalities or federations of municipalities. Private organisations and foundations own 18.5 % of vocational institutions. The State owns six institutions; 2.5 % of the total. Five of these six institutions provide special education. VET and general upper secondary institutions are usually distinct places but some education providers have built centres where several different institutions work near to each other. The Ministry of Education has encouraged vocational education and training providers to increase their cooperation, aiming to collect the provision of VET into bigger and more effective units.

Figure 4: Students in vocational upper secondary education and training in 2004 (September)



NB: Total number of students in upper secondary VET in 2004: 143 000.

Source: Statistics Finland, Finnish National Board of Education, 2006.

Vocational special institutions provide facilities and services for students with severe disabilities or chronic illnesses. Students apply to the institutions directly and the institutions accept applications throughout the year. The main principle for students with special needs is the inclusion into the common groups. Some disabilities make it difficult to work in all vocations, therefore there are still special education institutions which focus their activities on certain disability groups and their special needs.

4.3.2. Apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship training is based on the national core curriculum or the guidelines for the relevant competence-based qualification. Both can form the basis of a student's individual learning programme which is drawn up to reflect 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 instructor's responsibilities, and other issues relevant to the qualification arrangement. The student's previous education and work experience has to be taken into account and accredited in the learning programme. The programme is drawn up by the student, the employer and the local administrative authorities in cooperation and is appended to the apprenticeship contract. The apprenticeship training programmes lead to the same qualifications as school-based training and qualifications titles are the same.

The practical part of apprenticeship training takes place at the workplace. It is complemented by theoretical studies, which may be arranged at vocational institutions, vocational adult education centres or other educational institutions. Training is according to a written employment contract of fixed duration between the apprentice and the employer. These contracts are based on agreements between employers and education providers.

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

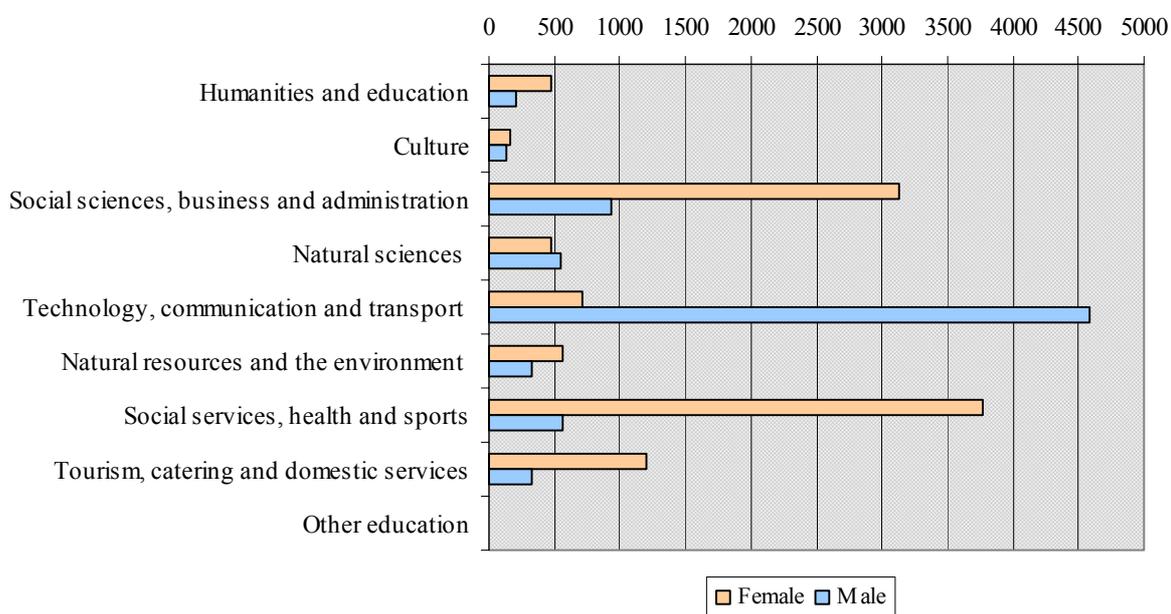
To be able to participate in apprenticeship training, enterprises must be engaged in production and service activities of sufficient size. The necessary work equipment for apprentices must be available as must be the necessary personnel to be assigned as responsible apprentice instructors.

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). Their wages are paid by the employer according to the collective labour agreement. 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 (see 10.2.).

There are two kinds of apprenticeship training programme: one leads to qualifications, the second is non-qualification oriented and is meant to complete one's competences and qualifications. In 2004, participants in apprenticeship training totalled 18 000 in upper secondary vocational training and 29 500 in further training (non-qualification oriented). Most of the apprenticeship trainees are adults. Young people more often choose school-based training than apprenticeship training (see Figure 5).

The assessment of training is done by the employer and the theoretical education provider. The assessments of workplace training and theoretical education are put together and attached to the certificate. The largest part of qualifications is taken in the form of a competence-based test, where students can demonstrate through a practical test that they command the skills and knowledge needed for a given occupation, regardless of how they acquired that knowledge. Students may take part in competence-based tests without preparatory teaching, straight out of working life.

Figure 5: Students in the apprenticeship training in vocational upper secondary education and training in 2004



NB: Total number of apprenticeship trainees in upper secondary vocational training: 18 000.

Source: Statistics Finland, Finnish National Board of Education, 2005.

4.4. Other youth programmes and alternative pathways

Other types of IVET programme are available for both young people and adults in the form of workshop training (*työpajakoulutus, workshoputbildning*). 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 unemployed people. Workshop activities try to address problems faced by those at risk of social exclusion who are already excluded from the labour market.

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, individual counselling, preventive work among substance abusers and apprenticeship training. The courses can vary in length. Most workshops are owned by municipalities and they are primarily funded by municipalities and the labour administration.

4.5. Vocational education and training at post-secondary level

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET in Finland leads to specialist vocational qualifications, which are considered competence-based qualifications. Specialist vocational qualifications are primarily intended for adults with work experience (see 5.2.1.) and are classified at ISCED level 4.

The system allows people to demonstrate their vocational skills in competence tests irrespective of whether they have acquired the skills at work, through study or as a result of their leisure interests. The studies preparing for competence tests are based on individual learning programmes which are drawn up separately for each student.

4.6. Vocational education and training at tertiary level

Institutions of higher education include universities and polytechnics. General access requirement to higher education is an upper secondary qualification. The path from upper secondary VET to higher education is less used; 24 % of new polytechnic students in the academic year 2004/05 had a VET background and less than 5 % of the new university students.

4.6.1. Polytechnics

Studies leading to a polytechnic degree provide 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 three to four years to complete. Polytechnics also organise adult education (see 5.2.2.).

There are 29 accredited polytechnics in Finland. Of these, 18 are owned by local authorities and joint municipal boards; 11 are 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 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 (see 4.1.). 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 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 (ISCED 5A) consist of basic and professional studies, optional studies, practical training and a diploma project. The Ministry of Education normally expects the programmes to be equivalent to 140 or 160 credits (three-and-a-half to four years of full-time study). One credit is equivalent to about 40 hours of student work; one academic year comprises approximately 40 credits. Full-time students must complete their studies within no more than one year over and above the standard duration of the studies, unless the institution makes a specific exception. Polytechnic post-graduate degrees (Polytechnic master's degrees), which were introduced as official degrees in 2005, are worth 40-60 credits (see 5.2.2.).

Each polytechnic gives orders and instructions on student assessment in its degree regulations. The polytechnics grant students a degree certificate when they complete all the studies.

4.6.2. 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. All universities are state-owned and receive funding direct from the state budget. Holders of matriculation examination certificates, those with a polytechnic degree, post-secondary vocational qualification or at least a three-year vocational qualification are all eligible.

University education is divided into 20 fields of study, regulated by appropriate 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, and fine arts.

The structure of university degrees has been reformed in almost all fields of study. The new system introduced the bachelor's degree in 2005, with a minimum of 120 credits and three years of full-time study. The master's degree is worth 160 credits and requires at least five years of full-time study, two more years after completing the bachelor's degree. Postgraduate programmes, i.e. those leading to licentiate and doctorate degrees, are available for students with a higher academic degree or a corresponding foreign degree.

5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults

5.1. Overview

5.1.1. Organisation of adult training

The Finnish education system is built on the principle of lifelong learning, to provide opportunities for further study for people of all ages and with any level of education. Both certificate-oriented and non-certificate-oriented forms of education and training are available for adults. Some of these include education and training specifically for adults leading to initial qualifications, whereas others cover further education and training.

The adult education sector is commonly divided into three parts:

- self-motivated learning, to provide adults education and training appropriate to each student's own objectives, circumstances and level of education. It is completely or partially funded by the educational administration;
- labour market training for unemployed people, procured by the Ministry of Labour;
- in-service training, training financed by individual employers and usually undertaken during working hours. This trains employees in accordance with employer needs with a view to increasing productivity and profitability and motivating personnel. In-service training takes place either in workplace or in training organisations, usually the same ones for self-motivated and labour market training.

5.1.2. Recent policy developments

Current adult education policy is based on the *Report of the parliamentary adult education and training committee* (see Annex 3) which completed its work in February 2002. The committee set four general objectives on which proposals for action were to be based:

- self-development will become the approach of an increasing number of Finns and workplaces 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 to provide adults with high-quality opportunities for self-development;
- adult education and training will be used to uphold and reinforce participatory democracy, prevent social exclusion and support active citizenship.

These general objectives were developed to:

- provide all citizens with an opportunity for training for one to two weeks each year and for more thorough upgrading of their competence every 10 to 15 years;
- 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;
- promote equality in adult learning, in particular, through the action programme for adults with a low level of initial education;
- reinforce teaching methods and counselling and develop new learning environments and virtual education, develop recognition of learning and investment in the competences of teachers and trainers;
- develop social benefits for adult students and retention of fees charged for adult education and training at a reasonable level.

5.1.3. The Noste programme

The Noste programme is a five-year (2003-07) action programme for education and training targeted at adults aged 30-59 who have only completed basic level education. The programme provides an opportunity to complete initial vocational qualifications and further or specialist vocational qualifications or specific modules of these free of charge. Funds may also be used for instruction in information society skills required in working life, such as training for computer driving licences, and for completion of basic education of those aged 25-54.

The general objectives of the Noste programme are to improve career development for people who have not completed any education and/or training beyond a basic level, to mitigate labour shortages caused by early retirement and to increase employment. The name *Noste (Lyftet)* in Finnish refers to upgrading adult skills.

5.2. Continuing vocational education and training

Publicly provided adult education and training is available for anyone and is mostly funded by the Ministry of Education. Different options are available; the main types are listed below. Training is provided by vocational adult education centres, vocational institutions and folk high schools. Non-vocational education is provided by folk high schools and adult education centres.

5.2.1. Upper secondary and post-secondary vocational education and training

Initial vocational education and training

Initial VET is primarily targeted at young people at upper secondary level but there is a specific form designed for adults which leads to the same set of vocational qualifications.

Qualifications are competence-based qualifications, irrespective of the method of acquiring the skills, and the completion period is usually shorter than the standard period set for young people. The qualifications can also be completed following apprenticeship training. Providers are funded in the same way for adult participants as for young people.

Vocational further education and training

Vocational further education and training caters specifically for adults. It is designed ‘to maintain and enhance the vocational competence of the adult population, to provide students with opportunities for independent self-employment, to develop working life and promote employment and to support lifelong learning’. It provides an opportunity to complete further or specialist vocational qualifications or individual modules of these qualifications. It can be undertaken at school or as apprenticeship.

All qualifications are competence-based (see 8.2.1.). The purpose of further and specialist vocational qualifications is to provide a study track for adults already in command of their occupation and wanting to obtain formal recognition. Adults may complete further and specialist vocational qualifications either by demonstrating their vocational skills through competence tests without any preparatory training or at the end of their training. However, most candidates have taken part in some preparatory training. Vocational further education and training does not necessarily lead to a formal qualification. Students can demonstrate their skills also in parts of the qualification tests without achieving the full formal qualification.

The State funds 90 % of the costs of certificate-oriented vocational further education and training. Where training is organised as in-service training, the State covers 50 % of the costs. The State funds 100 % of the theoretical part of apprenticeship training. Employers pay salaries which correspond to the collective agreement but get a subsidy for workplace training (see Chapter 10).

About 40 vocational adult education centres provide vocational further education and training.

5.2.2. Higher education

Polytechnics

Adult education is one of the basic tasks of polytechnics and adults can complete exactly the same bachelor’s degrees as young people. The only differences are pedagogical approach, which is more tailored to adults, and course organisation, to reflect that adults cannot always study full-time.

In 2002, Finland launched a trial project for postgraduate polytechnic degrees (polytechnic master’s degrees) based on requirements set by polytechnic degrees and development of working life. These aim to provide basic knowledge and skills and the abilities to function in working-life development and other assignments requiring special expertise, as in the statute. 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 three years of post-degree work experience in the relevant field. In 2005 the degrees became an official part of the degree system (see 4.6.1.).

Polytechnics also provide adult education that does not lead to degrees. The Open Polytechnic provides individual courses which are part of polytechnic degrees. Polytechnics also provide professional specialisation studies (*erikoistumisopinnot, specialiserade studier*) mainly for those who have already completed a polytechnic degree. The scope of the studies is 20-60 credits and they last for one to two years.

Universities

Education leading to bachelor's and master's academic degrees is not provided separately for young people and adults; 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 a new degree to be taken in less time than normal.

Universities also provide specialisation studies to promote professional development. Universities offer other forms of continuing education, which are usually implemented by continuing education centres (*täydennyskoulutuskeskukset, fortbildningscentralen*) operating in conjunction with them. Every university has its own continuing education centre.

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.

5.2.3. Participants

The tables below show participation in adult education and training. It should be noted that data include all types of adult education whether formal or non-formal, vocational or non-vocational. The figures include both the employed and unemployed. The age structure of participants varies according to the type of education.

Table 6: *Number of participants in certificate-oriented education and training in educational institutions in 2000, 2002 and 2004*

	2000	2002	2004
General upper secondary education	15 455	13 951	12 068
Competence-based qualifications	35 190	44 307	60 152
Polytechnics	20 527	20 922	22 083

Source: Statistics Finland, Educational institutions, 2005.

Table 7: *Participation in non-certificate-oriented education and training in educational institutions in 2004*

	Number of participants (*)	Females (%)
Vocational further education and training, not apprenticeship training	79 935	55
Vocational further education and training, apprenticeship training	2 961	73
Labour market training	51 955	52
Courses ordered by employers	298 839	43
Courses organised as liberal education	1 649 692	72
Open polytechnics education	13 560	66
Open university education	57 986	80
Other education	91 568	55
Total	2 246 496	66

(*) The number of participants is counted as participants in individual courses, which means that a person taking several courses can be counted into the number of participants several times.

Source: Statistics Finland, Educational institutions, 2005.

In 2005, Finland was among the four best performing countries for participation by adults in lifelong learning (with Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom). The participation rate was high (15 % or more) in all the regions ⁽⁶⁾.

5.3. Labour market training

Administrative and funding responsibility for training unemployed people (and those at risk of unemployment) rests with the Ministry of Labour. Participation by unemployed people 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 two main parts: vocational training, and career guidance and preparatory training. The former develops the vocational skills of participants, with about half acquiring 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. The objective of career guidance and preparatory training is to find appropriate employment and educational options for each individual (see 9.1.).

Labour market training may be purchased from a licensed organisation such as a university, a polytechnic or another appropriate education provider. In other words, training is mostly

⁽⁶⁾ Eurostat. EU Labour Force Survey, Eurostat database, 2006. Lifelong learning participation is considered as the percentage of those aged 25-64 participating in education and training during the four weeks preceding the survey.

purchased from the education providers receiving state subsidies granted by the educational administration. This includes publicly supervised private institutions, since private institutions providing certificate-oriented training get the same state subsidies as public institutions. Training is funded through procurement, where a representative of the labour administration, most typically a regional Employment and Economic Development Centre (see 3.1.2.) purchases training from a provider of educational services.

Labour market training is governed by Act 1295/2002 on the public employment service (see Annex 3) which states that each registered job-seeker is to have an individual job-seeking plan within five months, which outlines the person’s competences and possible vocational further education and training needs. The plans provide as individually tailored a service 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. In 2005, vocational initial and continuing training and retraining were provided for more than 200 occupations. 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, to assure quality and improve development conditions for training.

Table 8: Number of persons attending labour market training from 2001 to 2005 (reference date: end of January)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
On labour market training	29 300	25 800	33 300	33 500	33 000

Source: Ministry of Labour, 2005.

5.4. Continuing vocational education and training at the initiative of enterprises or social partners

In principle there is no government regulation on in-service-training; this is viewed as an enterprise responsibility. Enterprises tend to purchase certificated and non-certificated training from formal education institutions.

In-service training is promoted both in legislation and through general incomes policy agreements. The law encourages the use of in-service training in situations where an enterprise’s production structure changes so that staff competences no longer match the enterprise’s operational models. Act 725/1978 on Cooperation within Undertakings (see Annex 3) requires enterprises with at least 30 employees to draw up annual training plans and to update them where the number of employees is reduced.

The Employment Contracts Act 55/2001 (see Annex 3) imposes an obligation on employers to provide training in situations where termination of employment can be prevented by means of vocational further education and training. In-service training is required to be considered as feasible and reasonable from the point of view of both contracting parties.

Adult education and training also play a role in collective agreements: the most recent national collective agreement between the central organisations of the social partners for 2005-07 (see Annex 3, Incomes policy settlement for 2005-07) contains a proposal for government to increase allowances targeted at higher vocational adult training and adult education.

5.5. Quality assurance and evaluation

In certificate-oriented vocational further education and training (and in initial training preparing for competence-based qualifications), the key quality assurance mechanism comprises the respective qualification requirements themselves and whether they are met. Responsibility for organising and supervising competence tests rests with qualification committees which include social partner representatives to ensure that qualifications are designed in accordance with working life needs. Their primary task is to steer the organisation of competence-based tests and award examination certificates.

Act 630/1998 on Vocational Education and Act 631/1998 on Adult Vocational Education (see Annex 3) require 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 national Evaluation Council for Education and Training.

The Polytechnics Act 351/2003 (see Annex 3) also includes provisions on evaluation: the polytechnic shall be responsible for the standard of quality and continuous development of its educational provision and other operations and shall participate in external quality assessment on a regular basis. Polytechnics are also required to publish the results of evaluations.

The Universities Act 645/1997 (see Annex 3) determines an equivalent obligation for universities. They are required to evaluate their education, research and artistic activities and the effectiveness of these operations and to participate in external evaluations. Similarly, universities are also required to publish evaluation results.

Two independent expert bodies are responsible for evaluating education and training: the Evaluation Council for Education and Training and the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council. The role of the former is to support education providers in evaluation matters, organise external evaluations relating to education policy, make proposals to develop evaluation and promote research into evaluation. The role of the latter is to assist higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education with their evaluations. Both councils are appointed by the Ministry of Education and they also have duties concerning adult education and training.

6. Training of VET teachers and trainers

6.1. Types of VET teachers and trainers

The qualification requirements for VET teaching personnel, i.e. in vocational institutions (see 4.3.1.), vocational adult education centres (see Glossary) and polytechnics (see 4.6.1.), are mostly defined by law (see Annex 3, Decree 986/1998 on Teaching Qualifications and Polytechnics Act 351/2003).

Teaching staff whose qualification requirements are regulated include:

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

Qualifications and training of both trainers in apprenticeship training and workplace instructors (see 6.2.) are not regulated.

Teacher qualifications for general and vocational institutions were harmonised at the beginning of 1999 (see Annex 3, Decree on Teaching Qualifications). Teachers within all types of formal educational institution (basic education; general upper secondary schools; vocational institutions; and liberal adult education institutions)⁽⁷⁾, must have pedagogical studies worth a minimum of 60 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits. The principle is that student teachers are to achieve a core knowledge of teaching and learning that can be generalised to all forms of education and training.

The education of core subject teachers, e.g. mathematics and language teachers, is the same for basic as for general upper secondary education, and pedagogical studies are usually taken alongside subject-specific ones (see Annex 3, Decree 576/1995 on the Degrees in Education and Teacher Training). Vocational teacher education is always consecutive. It builds on two basic requirements: the degree and work experience. When student teachers apply to study, they are already professionals with experience (of a career) in a certain field. Special needs teachers and guidance counsellors can either have the same training as core subject teachers or as vocational subject teachers before their specialisation.

⁽⁷⁾ Folk high schools, adult education centres, etc.

The quality of teacher education is monitored through the self-evaluation of each university or polytechnic and external evaluations conducted by The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (see 5.5.).

There are no formal qualification requirements for trainers/workplace instructors. These posts tend not to exist in school-based VET as schools and adult education centres have teachers who are responsible for all training, including student supervision during periods of on-the-job learning in enterprises. In apprenticeship training, apprentices work in enterprises under the guidance of a trainer (an older, experienced worker or foreman). As on-the-job learning periods and skills demonstrations are included in upper secondary qualifications, the workplace instructor's role has become more important.

VET teachers have opportunities to influence their work through their involvement in curricula and requirements for competence-based qualifications as well as in training committees (see Table 9). They also have influence at institutional level where they can take their own decisions regarding pedagogy, learning materials and student assessment. Finnish teachers can also participate in making decisions on the school budget and, in particular, on the allocation of resources within the school.

Table 9: Roles and tasks of VET teachers and trainers (in addition to instructing 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 school and enterprise	x	x

Source: Finnish National Board of Education, 2006.

VET providers are responsible for recruiting and employing their teaching staff and determine the types and number of posts needed. As a general rule, posts should be filled permanently wherever possible.

Universities and polytechnics enjoy a degree of autonomy which allows each university pedagogical faculty and vocational teacher education college (see Glossary) to draw up their own education programmes within the limits of legislation and agreements made with the Ministry of Education.

6.2. Preservice training for IVET teachers

6.2.1. Core subject teachers

Teachers of core subjects at vocational institutions and polytechnics have the same education as subject teachers working in general education. They have a master's degree with a scope of 300 ECTS credits. Subject teacher education includes 60 pedagogical studies ECTS credits.

They apply to the respective university faculties and departments of their main subject, following the usual procedure. Those admitted to a degree programme and aiming to be subject teachers will then apply separately for subject teacher education. Admission to subject teacher education is based either on aptitude tests alone, or on aptitude tests and the applicant's study record. Several universities have programmes where students apply directly for subject teacher education. The education of subject teachers is the same regardless of the subject taught.

Polytechnic lecturers are required to have a master's degree and senior lecturers a postgraduate licentiate or doctorate. Part-time and temporary teachers are officially required to hold a full teaching qualification but many lack pedagogical studies as part-time or temporary posts are not attractive to fully qualified teachers.

6.2.2. Vocational subject teachers

Teachers of vocational subjects are required to have an appropriate master's degree or a polytechnic degree or, if such do not exist, the highest possible qualification in their own occupational field. In addition, they must complete pedagogical studies amounting to 60 ECTS credits and have at least three years of work experience in the field. Polytechnic lecturers are required to have a master's degree and three years' relevant work experience and senior lecturers a licentiate or doctorate and the same work experience.

Students applying for teacher education at vocational teacher education colleges must have the required degrees and work experience. The colleges are autonomous and can thus decide on further selection criteria. Very commonly the following criteria are taken into account when selecting the students:

- degrees,
- basic studies in education,
- work experience (non-teaching),
- teaching experience,
- special activities.

In vocational teacher education colleges (*ammattilliset opettajakorkeakoulut, yrkespedagogiska lärarhögskolorna*) education is similar for all students regardless of their field or subject specialisation. The studies include basic studies in education, vocational

subject pedagogic studies, teaching practice and other studies. Students may complete the education in one academic year by studying full-time or flexibly as multiform education in one to three years and link their studies to the development of their own teaching methods and the working environment of the institution.

Vocational teacher education is provided at five teacher education colleges, which are affiliated to five polytechnics. Teacher education for Swedish-speaking teachers is provided by the faculty of pedagogy of the Swedish-language university, *Åbo Akademi*.

6.2.3. Special needs teacher education for vocational institutions

Teachers with subject or vocational subject teacher qualifications can specialise in special needs education. Vocational teacher education colleges offer 60 ECTS credits, qualifying for work as special needs teachers at vocational institutions. 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. These institutions are responsible for providing education and training for students with the most severe disabilities, as special needs instruction should primarily be provided in connection with regular instruction or in separate groups or both.

6.2.4. Guidance counsellor education for vocational institutions

Guidance counsellors at vocational institutions have the same basic qualification requirements as subject or vocational subject teachers. In addition they are required to undertake 60 ECTS credits organised by vocational teacher education colleges.

The students familiarise themselves with the underlying social factors involved in student counselling as well as with various areas and methods of counselling, both within their own institutions and in cooperation with other organisations.

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

6.2.5. Principals

Principals at upper secondary vocational institutions should have a master's or bachelor's degree and the pedagogical qualifications required of teachers. Furthermore, they should have sufficient teaching experience. They are also required to have a certificate of educational administration accredited by the Finnish National Board of Education, or studies in educational administration at a university, or they must have acquired comparable

administrative experience. The administrative studies required of the principal can be taken freely without any entry requirements.

Principals at vocational adult education centres should hold a master's degree and have sufficient work experience in the field. They are also required to have the same administrative studies as principals at vocational upper secondary institutions.

Principals of polytechnics should have a licentiate or doctorate, sufficient knowledge of the educational field and administrative experience.

6.2.6. Trainers or workplace instructors

Trainers or workplace instructors do not have formal qualification requirements: Finnish education has not officially recognised the trainer function. In apprenticeship training (see 4.3.2.), the apprentices work in enterprises under the guidance of an older, experienced worker or foreman but their theory instruction takes place in vocational institutions and is provided by qualified teachers. The same applies to the so-called workplace instructors, the workers in enterprises who are responsible for the students in vocational upper secondary education and training doing their compulsory six-month on-the-job learning period.

6.2.7. Assessment and quality monitoring

Student teachers are assessed at the end of their studies by means of assignments carried out during the studies, a final project (often an independent development project, a kind of thesis), and assessment of teaching practice. Teaching practice is a part of student teachers' pedagogical studies.

There is no formal procedure for assessing teachers; it is the responsibility of the principals. Where performance is substandard, the principal can only try to solve it through discussions. Dismissal is very rare although teachers may be dismissed if they are unable to carry out their duties adequately or if they continuously neglect them.

6.3. In-service, continuing training and development for IVET teachers

Teaching staff are obliged to participate in in-service training. For teachers in vocational institutions this is based on collective agreements for civil servants. The number of days required for in-service training varies from one to five, 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.

The Finnish National Board of Education has drawn up two continuing training programmes for vocational teachers, the specialist in competence-based qualifications (*näyttötutkintomestarikoulutus, examensmästare för fristående examina*) and studies for teachers to increase their competence in the world of work (*opettajan työelämäosaamisen opinnot, studier i arbetslivskunskaper för lärare*). Both are worth 23 ECTS credits (see Glossary).

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

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.

6.4. Teachers and trainers in continuing vocational education and training

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

Types of teachers and trainers in CVET, including liberal adult education institutions, are identical to those in IVET. The qualification requirements are mostly defined by law.

7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy

7.1. Mechanisms for anticipating skill needs

The Development Plan Education and Research 2003-08 (see Annex 3) includes development measures for each sector and level of education, as well as the main targets for education and research policy and the framework for allocating resources (see Chapter 2).

Quantitative skills anticipation information is mainly provided by the Finnish National Board of Education. It uses a calculation model developed in 1996-99 in MITENNA, the project to anticipate the quantitative educational needs in vocational education and training (*Määrällisten koulutustarpeiden ennakointi, Prognostiseringen av kvantitativa utbildningsbehov*). The objective of MITENNA was to collect the statistical and other information necessary for anticipating skill needs and to create a calculation model that could be applied. A national forecast of educational needs was produced using the results.

The calculation model has been used to forecast vocational training needs for 2001-10 derived from the forecasts of changes and natural wastage in the total labour force. These forecasts were then presented for different fields of study and levels of education in certificate-oriented education.

Quantitative skills anticipation information is also provided by the Labour Force 2020 Project (see Annex 3) coordinated by the Ministry of Labour. The main aim is to anticipate economic development and the labour force needed between the years 2003 and 2020.

Important governmental bodies in skills anticipation are training committees and the Advisory Board for Educational Cooperation (see 3.3.). Their task is, among others, to monitor, evaluate and anticipate the development of vocational education and training and competence required in working life in their own field. The normal procedure is that they are asked to react to and comment on official proposals, anticipation reports and plans.

7.2. Bridging pathways and new educational partnerships

One basic philosophy of the Finnish education system is that pathways through the formal school system are open to all. Basic education is comprehensive and gives eligibility to continue to upper secondary level; here, examinations qualify students for higher education.

General upper secondary education has traditionally had special status among upper secondary education forms. Bridging general and vocational education, allowing students to study the

two at the same time, has been one central aim in developing the education system over the past decade.

There is special focus on upgrading, renewal and initial training of the adult labour force in Finland, tackling the many with no formal qualifications or with out-of-date skills. Initiatives such as the Noste project aim to give such people opportunities for employment and remaining in the labour force (see 5.1.3.). Competence-based qualifications (see Glossary) were launched in the mid-1990s, representing acknowledgement of learning in work (see 4.3.1.).

7.3. Renewal of curricula

Each VET curriculum is based on the national core curriculum and consists of the institution's individual curriculum and the individual study plan.

7.3.1. National core curriculum

The national core curricula and the framework for competence-based qualifications constitute a legal norm for educational institutions and apply to all upper secondary vocational education providers. The Finnish National Board of Education approves qualification-specific core curricula and the requirements of each competence-based qualification. They are drawn up in cooperation with social partners from various different fields plus representatives and experts from business as well as teachers and students.

In addition to vocational and general subjects, core curricula and the competence-based qualification requirements include the following topics: internationality, promoting sustainable development, using 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.

7.3.2. Education and training providers' curricula

The core curricula provide the framework for more detailed curricula which are defined in each institution's individual curriculum. Providers (municipalities) can delegate decision-making to the institutions to organise their instruction as they see fit, and may take local and changing needs into account.

With the Finnish decentralised approach, teachers have considerable freedom on issues concerning their own teaching, such as choosing methods to achieve the objectives defined in the curriculum. They often adopt a wide range of working methods and teaching not tied to

year classes, integration of theory and practice and cooperation and interaction between institutions in planning and implementing instruction.

7.3.3. Individual study plans

Because the students have the right to choose optional courses, and even studies in other institutions, an individual study plan is needed to steer matters (see 4.1.). Students are provided with individual study plans which outline what, when, how they study and the assessment of studies. The individual study plan is made on the basis of the curriculum and student choice; it is then supported with continued study counselling. Individual choices and marks achieved are recorded on their certificate at the end of the studies.

7.3.4. Modular qualifications

The modular qualification structure increases flexibility and options and makes it easier for students to gain credit for previous studies. Qualifications are in large modules, which students may choose themselves and complete in the manner best suited to them.

8. Accumulating, transferring and validating learning

Finland's vocational qualifications structure aims at ensuring that people entering the labour market have the necessary skills. The structure is not based purely on formal education; there are also systems for recognising non-formal and informal learning which are governed by legislation. The ability to recognise previously acquired competences enables individuals to access the most appropriate type of education and training for completing a formal qualification.

Generally speaking, the methods of recognising non-formal and informal learning have been developed for adult education and training. However, recognising work-based learning and previous studies has also become established within upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) intended for both young people and adults. Higher education, in turn, has placed more emphasis on accreditation of previous studies. While the methods exist, they are not employed to a large extent.

8.1. Validation of formal learning: general concepts and schemes

In the mid-1990s, education providers were given greater autonomy. The Finnish National Board of Education (see 3.1.1.) formulated core curricula on the basis of which comprehensive schools, general upper secondary schools and upper secondary vocational institutions drew up their own curricula. Individual education and training providers, qualification committees (see 3.3. and 5.5.) or educational institutions award qualifications (there is no national body). There is some diversity in the content of certificates awarded but, when the minimum requirements of the core curriculum are met, the qualifications and titles are the same.

In terms of validation/accreditation of formal, non-formal and informal learning, this decentralisation means that education providers have a great deal of freedom in applying the legislative framework. There are also separate regulations on validation/accreditation of formal, non-formal and informal learning in vocational education and training and at universities and polytechnics (see Glossary). Accreditation was added to the Act on Vocational Education in 2005.

Accreditation procedures are based on Act 630/1998 on vocational education (see Annex 3) which allows for studies to be arranged differently if the student is already considered to possess some of the necessary knowledge and skills indicated in the curriculum. Students can be credited for work experience acquired previously or studies completed elsewhere, provided that the objectives and main content of these studies conform with the curriculum.

Accreditation is increasingly used in VET to shorten study times and avoid an overlap of studies.

Where students transfer from one qualification to another or from general upper secondary school to vocational upper secondary education and training, they can be credited for completed core subjects and free-choice studies as a minimum. Summer jobs and previous work experience can also be accredited, provided that the competence acquired through these conforms to curriculum objectives. Where necessary, the competence can be verified by skills demonstrations.

Where a student has completed a whole study module, the grade acquired can be transferred. If the grading scale is different, there is a conversion formula. Where no grade has been awarded a separate assessment shall be arranged.

Accreditation is also needed for qualifications acquired in other countries; this is undertaken by the Finnish National Board of Education. Academic recognition of qualifications involves either having foreign studies recognised as part of Finnish qualifications or gaining eligibility for further studies. All decisions on academic recognition are made at higher education institutions.

8.2. Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning

‘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’ (development plan Education and research 2003-08, see Annex 3).

There are a few mechanisms designed to assist people to formalise their non-formal and informal skills and competences gained outside formal education and training.

8.2.1. Competence-based qualifications

Provisions on competence tests are included in the Act and Decree on Vocational Adult Education (see Annex 3). Adult students may demonstrate their vocational skills (see Glossary) in competence tests regardless of how and where they have acquired the skills. The qualification guidelines determine the vocational skills to be demonstrated to acquire the certificate. They also define the methods of demonstrating the vocational skills.

There are three levels of competence-based qualifications: initial, further (ISCED 3) and specialist (ISCED 4). They are completed in the same way as for young people coming through the formal system. While not requiring formal preparation, many participants acquire preparatory training to take the exams offered by VET providers. Preparatory training is

regulated by the Requirements of competence-based qualifications (*näyttötutkinnon perusteet, grunderna för yrkesexamen*): students are provided with an individual study plan (see Glossary) based on their previous studies and experience. Preparatory training for the tests can be arranged during the day, in the evenings or as multiform teaching. The duration of study varies with the individual. The qualification examination is still independent of the preparatory training. The students show their skills in the practical tests, which also include testing of, for instance, language, social and computer skills.

8.2.2. The National Certificate of Language Proficiency

The National Certificate of Language Proficiency is a test system for adults introduced in 1994 (see Annex 3, Act and Decree on National Certificates of Language Proficiency). The tests can be taken by anyone, regardless of how and where they have acquired their language proficiency. They measure language skills in practical situations and can be taken at home or abroad. Proficiency is divided into six skill levels, from elementary to fluent. The test can be taken in English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Russian, Sami, Spanish and Swedish.

8.2.3. Computer Driving Licence®

Candidates who pass a Computer Driving Licence® test receive a certificate of IT proficiency. There are currently three levels of testing, which measure the candidate's skills, ranging from beginner to advanced user: general user (@) certificate; A certificate; and AB certificate. The Computer Driving Licence is not a formal part of Finnish education.

9. Guidance and counselling

9.1. Strategy and provision

The objectives and contents of student counselling are determined in the national core curricula approved by the Finnish National Board of Education (see 3.1.1.). Each education provider decides on the practical implementation of student counselling and on the resources available for personal counselling. Careers counselling within the labour administration is governed by the Act 1295/2002 on the public employment service (see Annex 3).

Cooperation between education and labour administrations takes place at national level and is also carried out at regional and local levels. The forms of cooperation are agreed between educational institutions and local employment offices. Sometimes third parties join this cooperation, for example units of the relevant State Provincial Office (see 3.1.2.) responsible for the joint application procedure (see 4.1.).

In addition to the education and labour administrations, there are also private operators in educational guidance in Finland, including labour market organisations, associations of student counsellors and student unions (see Annex 4 and 5). The Economic Information Office (*Taloudellinen tiedotustoimisto*, '*Ekonomisk informationbyrå*'), maintained by employers' organisations, produces plenty of guidance materials presenting working life and occupations and provides training for student counsellors.

Educational guidance aims to support, help and guide pupils so that each one performs as well as possible in his/her studies and is able to make correct and appropriate decisions concerning their education and career choices. In VET institutions, educational guidance provides students with support in drawing up their individual study plans. Students should be provided with information on the qualifications to be completed, the composition and contents of the studies involved, and studies they may choose from other educational institutions. Students are provided with an individual study plan in accordance with their choices. All staff participate in student guidance, but the main responsibility rests with student counsellors.

Students also 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 and promote and follow job placement. Students can also receive special support when they apply for education.

According to core curricula, student counselling should ensure that students:

- receive enough information before and during their education and training;
- 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.

9.1.1. Use of Internet resources in guidance services

Considerable computer-based information on educational and career opportunities is available.

The labour administration maintains occupational and educational databases and local labour offices (*työvoimatoimistot, arbetskraftsbyråerna*) have information service units that are also used by young people.

The Finnish National Board of Education runs the Education Web⁽⁸⁾ (*Koulutusnetti, Studieinfo*) Internet database of information on education and training opportunities at different levels and in different fields of study. It also runs the Internet service EDU.fi⁽⁹⁾ for all teachers and trainers and publishes annual educational guidebooks for choices at upper secondary and higher education levels. EDU.fi is an educational portal for education and training on education levels other than higher education. The portal gathers together services categorised according to the different levels, fields and themes of the education and training system. The categories are, for example, virtual school, pre-primary education, basic education, upper secondary vocational education, internationalisation, special education and education for immigrants.

Opintoluotsi⁽¹⁰⁾ (study pilot) is a web service of the Ministry of Education which gathers Internet information on education and training opportunities. It helps people to find information on education and training and its availability in Finland. *Opintoluotsi* helps people to discover and use education and training opportunities in a way that suits their individual needs.

The website of the Ministry of Labour⁽¹¹⁾ is one starting point for searching for information on jobs in Finland and abroad, training opportunities, career guidance.

⁽⁸⁾ www.koulutusnetti.fi; www.studieinfo.fi.

⁽⁹⁾ www.edu.fi.

⁽¹⁰⁾ www.opintoluotsi.fi.

⁽¹¹⁾ www.mol.fi.

9.1.2. Guidance available in the public employment service

The labour administration provides guidance and counselling services for employed, unemployed and disadvantaged people as well as young people and adults.

The labour administration has a wide training and vocational information service to support appropriate educational choices and job placements and promote vocational development by disseminating information on educational opportunities, the content of work assignments and occupations. Employment offices organise career counselling primarily for adults and those who have already entered working life through them. They also organise what is known as career guidance training (see 5.3.), which is primarily intended for the unemployed and which aims at guiding individuals into suitable training or to working life according to their own needs and abilities.

9.2. Guidance and counselling personnel

All formal education and training providers have to employ student counsellors who must have all the usual VET teacher qualifications plus at least one year of teaching experience.

Vocational teacher education colleges (see Glossary) organise student counsellor education worth 35 credits, which qualifies teachers to work as student counsellors. Students familiarise themselves with the underlying social factors involved in student counselling as well as with methods of counselling.

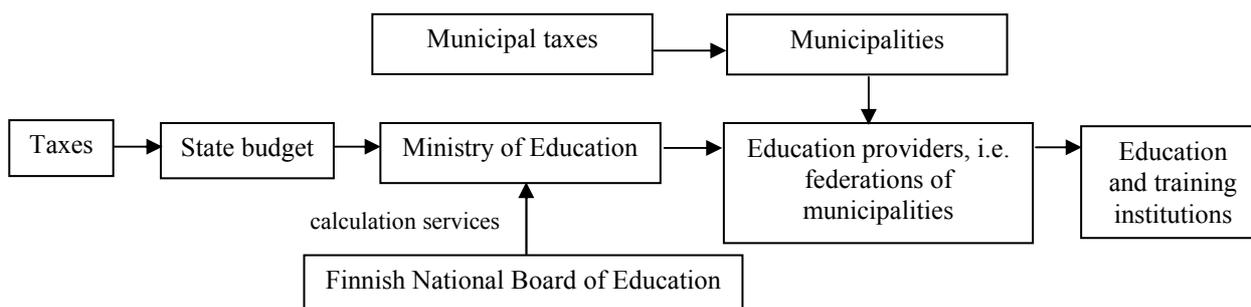
In-service training for student counsellors is offered mostly by universities, polytechnics, State Provincial Offices, the Finnish National Board of Education and the National Centre for Professional Development in Education (*Opetusalan koulutuskeskus, Utbildningscentret för undervisningssektorn*).

Career psychologists are also important contributors, mainly working at employment offices. They are required to have a master's degree in psychology.

10. Financing: investment in human resources

10.1. Background information

Figure 6: Simplified chart of flows of funding of IVET in Finland (training provided by federations of municipalities)



Source: Finnish National Board of Education, 2006.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for funding education and training (see Annex 3, Act 635/1998 on the Financing of Educational and Cultural Provision) except for labour market training which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour. Responsibility for educational funding and capital expenditure is divided between the State and local authorities. The funding criteria are the same irrespective of ownership. Labour market training is mainly purchased by the labour authorities from the different training providers (see Glossary) but there can also be joint labour and education authority measures for training the employed.

Vocational education and training are primarily financed through public funds. This will continue to be the case, although there are continuing discussions about increasing the share of financial contributions from employers and individuals.

Decentralisation of educational administration has been a key aspect of education policy since the 1990s. Decision-making has been increasingly handed over by central government to education providers. This also applies to funding: education providers have relatively extensive powers to decide on the use of their funds. In recent years, attention has also focused on the effectiveness and quality of vocational education and training.

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

10.2. Funding for initial vocational education and training

State subsidies for operating costs (including teachers' wages) are granted according to annual calculations per pupil, lesson or other unit. Unit prices are scaled to allow for cost differences between various fields of education. Other factors included in the calculation are special educational needs. Funding criteria are uniform irrespective of ownership.

The subsidy is calculated to cover 45.3 % of operating costs. The most significant factor influencing the amount of state subsidy is the number of students. The municipality must fund its students even where they choose to study at a provider elsewhere. The state subsidy is payable to the education provider; it is not earmarked for a particular purpose. In addition, some vocational institutions (see Glossary) are awarded performance-based funding. Training providers can also sell services to raise income.

Performance-based funding was introduced in 2002 when education providers were granted separate state subsidies based on their performance. The system became a part of the unit price determination in 2006. Performance-based funding is approximately 2 %, roughly EUR 20 million 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 (job placement and further studies);
- processes (dropping out, % ratio of qualification certification holders to entrants);
- staff (formal teaching qualifications and staff development).

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

Table 10: *Indicators of performance-based funding for upper secondary vocational education and training in 2006*

Indicators	Weight of indicator in 2006
(%)	
Effectiveness	
Employment	40
Further studies (in higher education)	15
Processes	
Dropping out	15
% ratio of qualification certificate holders to entrants	13
Staff	
Formal teaching qualifications	11
Staff development	6

Source: Finnish National Board of Education, 2006 ⁽¹²⁾.

⁽¹²⁾ www.oph.fi/info/rahoitus/tulosr06/turase2006.pdf.

In 2004, total operating costs of vocational institutions amounted to EUR 1 107 million: the average unit cost per student was EUR 8 467.

Instruction is usually free of charge at all education levels. Basic education is completely free of charge for pupils but for higher levels students may have to pay for study materials, meals and transport. Students receive financial aid for full-time post-basic studies lasting at least two months. It is payable for studies at upper secondary schools, folk high schools, vocational institutions, polytechnics or universities through to doctorate level. Financial aid is also available for study abroad. Financial aid comprises a study grant, a housing supplement and a government-guaranteed student loan. There is an adult study grant for mature students, which is determined according to different criteria.

The State covers most of the funding of apprenticeship training, accounts for 77 % of the unit price confirmed by the Ministry of Education, which is confirmed separately for upper secondary and vocational further education and training. The unit price is a calculated amount which does not exactly correspond with the real costs. The employer pays apprentice wages as per the collective labour agreement (see 4.3.2.).

In 2004, total expenditure on apprenticeship training amounted to about EUR 129 million. The funding of the school-based element stood at approximately EUR 61 million, accounting for almost 50 % of total expenditure.

The public costs per student for apprenticeship training leading to qualifications were approximately EUR 4 873 in 2004. The costs of further training per student, where there is no resulting formal qualification, was approximately EUR 3 057.

10.3. Funding for continuing vocational education and training

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 indicators for each type of institution and the education provider is then granted state funding for adult education operating costs.

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

A system for funding vocational further education and training has been applied since the beginning of 2001. Examples are training for vocational and specialist vocational qualifications and language proficiency tests. The education provider receives funding from

the State as state subsidies and institutions offering liberal adult education, polytechnics and universities receive subsidies from the State Provincial Offices (see 3.1.2.).

State Provincial Offices, which represent the intermediate level of administration, decide on the allocation of appropriations for the Noste programme (see 5.1.3.). The prime aim of the programme, which has been granted EUR 30 million in 2006, is to raise the educational level of adults with low educational attainment over the years 2003 to 2007.

It is also possible for the institutions providing adult education to receive a discretionary state subsidy for investment, depending on the decision of the Ministry of Education and within the limits of the state budget. Such investment can be directed, for example, to the development of further education and training.

All 40 vocational adult education centres (see Glossary) and eight national specialised vocational institutions receive operating subventions for education provided as chargeable services; these account for 10 % of average operating costs in the three previous years.

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

Some sectors of trade and industry maintain their own institutions, known as institutions for specialised training (*Ammatilliset erikoisoppilaitokset, Specialyrkesläroanstalterna*). These 42 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.

10.4. Funding for training the unemployed and other vulnerable groups

The targets of labour market training are to balance the supply and demand of the labour force, to meet the demands of the labour force, and to prevent unemployment. Within the framework of the state budget allocation, the labour administration acquires employment training mainly for the unemployed and for those under threat of unemployment. Training for these groups is provided by vocational adult education centres, vocational institutions (see Glossary) and universities.

The training of the unemployed is mainly provided by institutions supervised by the Ministry of Education but funded by the Ministry of Labour. The regional and local labour administrations, under the Ministry of Labour, are responsible for purchasing training courses for the unemployed from a variety of training providers. The Ministry of Labour allocates the

budget to the employment and economic development centres (see 3.1.2.). These district organisations fund employment training directly, they also allocate money to the local employment offices to acquire training locally.

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

The benefits received while attending employment training follow the pattern of normal unemployment benefits. They include a grant plus maintenance and accommodation reimbursement. In 2004 the majority of labour market training was maintained by local authorities; 54 200 people completed a labour market training.

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

The total budget of the programme for the period 2000-06 amounts to EUR 1 510 million, of which the EU share accounts for EUR 410 million. National funding comes from the national budget (EUR 540 million) and from the municipal sector (EUR 85 million). In addition, private funding totals an estimated EUR 460 million. The objective of the programme is to provide work and training for about 250 000 people ⁽¹³⁾.

⁽¹³⁾ Available from Internet: http://www.mol.fi/esr/en/ESF_in_Finland/index.jsp;
http://www.mol.fi/esr/fi/__yleiset/YleisGBscreen.pdf [cited 10.7.2006].

11. European and international dimension

11.1. National strategies related to EU policies, programmes and initiatives

The concept of lifelong learning is one of the main principles underlying the development of Finnish education. Its specific aims are geared to improving the following in terms of lifelong learning: the basic educational level of young people in the transition from school to working life; the basic educational level of the middle-aged; learning ability at all ages; learning opportunities available to senior citizens; formal recognition of skills and knowledge obtained outside education institutions; developing the cooperation between education and training and world of work; educational information and counselling; the criteria for funding education institutions; preventing exclusion; recognising learning difficulties and enhancing teaching skills.

The process of European integration will bring Finland ever closer into the international economic and political community. Globalisation has a significant impact on education and research. This means growing challenges for people's general education, cooperative and interaction skills, language proficiency and cultural knowledge. These challenges have been emphasised in the main educational policy paper, the *development plan Education and research 2003-08 (Koulutus ja tutkimus 2003-08, Utbildning och forskning 2003-08*, see Chapter 2).

Finnish educational institutions and organisations have actively participated in the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Coordination of networks (such as Cedefop's ReferNet, TTnet and the study visits programme) and Eurydice, the Eurostat working group on education and training statistics and the National Reference Points for Vocational Qualifications (NRP) come under the Finnish National Board of Education.

Finland is involved in educational cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries and also Russia. In addition, Finland has concluded bilateral cultural exchange agreements with several European countries. These agreements include exchange of people from different cultural sectors and cultural events. Finland participates actively in OECD projects such as the indicator project INES, PISA, Schooling for tomorrow, etc. ⁽¹⁴⁾.

The Finnish National Board of Education is responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications and developing transparency of qualifications at national level. The NRP, the ENIC (European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition) and NARIC (Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres) are international

⁽¹⁴⁾ www.oecd.org.

information networks promoting the recognition of foreign qualifications, coming under the Finnish National Board of Education. The Finnish National Board of Education has produced Certificate Supplements and model certificates for vocational qualifications (see Glossary) and is the Finnish liaison office for the development of Europass.

The Centre of International Mobility (CIMO, *kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus, centret för internationellt personutbyte*) is responsible for European Union mobility programmes. The Finnish Leonardo is within CIMO (see Annex 4 and 5).

11.2. Impact of internationalisation

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

Growth into internationality is one of the seven common emphasised objectives mentioned in the national core curricula (see Glossary) for upper secondary vocational education and training. The objective of the growth into internationality is for students to manage in a multicultural environment and to be tolerant and capable in languages, in order to participate in student exchanges and to find placements in the increasingly international labour market.

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

It is also stated in the core curriculum that the student can complete part of his/her on-the-job learning abroad. This opportunity is provided under the 1999 school legislation (see Annex 3, Act 630/1998 on vocational education). Students also have the right to be accredited for their previous studies at other institutions when the objectives and key contents of the studies are in line with the curriculum. In practice, this means that studies taken abroad can be included in overall studies (see 8.1.).

Annex 1 Acronyms and abbreviations

AKAVA	Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals <i>Korkeasti koulutettujen työmarkkinakeskusjärjestö, Centralorganisation för högutbildade)</i>
EK	Confederation of Finnish Industries <i>Elinkeinoelämän Keskusliitto, Finlands Näringsliv</i>
FNBE, OPH, UBS	Finnish National Board of Education <i>Opetushallitus, Utbildningsstyrelsen</i>
HOPS	Personal study plan <i>Henkilökohtainen opetussuunnitelma, Individuell studieplan</i>
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
OAJ	Trade Union of Education in Finland <i>Opetusalan ammattijärjestö, Undervisningssektorns Fackorganisation</i>
OPM	Ministry of Education (<i>Opetusministeriö, Undervisningsministerium</i>)
SAK	Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions <i>Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö, Finlands Fackförbunds Centralorganisation</i>
STTK	Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees <i>Toimihenkilökeskusjärjestö, Tjänstemannacentralorganisationen</i>
VET	Vocational education and training

Annex 2 Glossary

Adult education centres (*kansalaisopistot, medborgarinstituten*). There are 250 adult education centres, which are mainly municipal institutions of adult education that have been established to meet local educational and cultural needs. The centres mainly provide courses in art, foreign languages and practical skills, which do not lead to qualifications. In addition, they also organise social studies and other general subject studies, some additional vocational training courses and basic education. They also organise open university instruction in cooperation with universities.

Apprenticeship training (*oppisopimuskoulutus, läroavtalsutbildning*). All upper secondary vocational qualifications available at VET institutions may be obtained through apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training is based on the national core curriculum or the guidelines for the relevant competence-based qualification; either can form the basis of a student's individual learning programme. The practical part of apprenticeship training takes place at the workplace. It is complemented by theoretical studies, which may be arranged at VET institutions, vocational adult education centres or other educational institutions. Approximately 70-80 % of the time is spent in the training workplace with an on-the-job instructor. In addition to initial vocational education and training, apprenticeship training can be applied as (non-qualification oriented) vocational further training for adults.

Bachelor's (*kandidaatti, kandidat*). The first level academic degree which can be obtained either at the universities or at the polytechnics.

Certificate of apprenticeship training (*todistus oppisopimuskoulutuksesta, betyg över läroavtalsutbildning*). Certificate awarded after completion of apprenticeship training. The certificate is based on assessments of the trainee's performance by the employer and by the teacher for the theoretical subjects. It indicates the basic curriculum followed and, where relevant, the specialisation, the duration of the training and the average of the marks obtained.

Competence-based qualifications (*näyttötutkinnot, fristående yrkesinriktade examina*). The system of competence-based qualifications offers the adult population in particular a flexible way to renew and maintain their vocational skills. In competence-based qualifications, vocational skills are demonstrated through competence tests, regardless of whether the skills have been acquired through work experience, studies or other activities. There are three competence-based qualifications: initial vocational qualifications (*ammattilliset perustutkinnot, yrkesinriktade grundexamina*) (ISCED 3), further vocational qualifications (*ammattitutkinnot, yrkesexamina*) (ISCED 3) and specialist vocational qualifications (*erikoisammattitutkinnot, specialyrkesexamina*) (ISCED 4). Further and specialist vocational qualifications can only be taken in competence-based examinations, and they are intended for adults, generally for the gainfully employed population. General subjects (maths, languages, etc.) as such are not tested in competence tests. However, the general subjects which are related to practical skills can be tested.

Education and training providers (*koulutuksen järjestäjät, utbildningsanordnare*). These are usually local educational authorities who maintain the educational institutions.

European credit transfer system - ECTS (*eurooppalainen opintosuoritusten ja arvosanojen siirto- ja kertymisjärjestelmä, europeiska meritöverföringssystemet*). The European credit transfer and accumulation system is a student-centred system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme; such objectives are preferably specified in terms of the learning outcomes and competences to be acquired. The aim of ECTS is to facilitate the transfer and accumulation of the learning outcomes and competences according to the Bologna process. In ECTS, 60 credits correspond to one year's studies.

Folk high school (*kansanopisto, folkhögskola*). Institution of adult education operating mainly as a boarding school. Each school promotes self-motivated education of people in such a way as to emphasise its own set of values, ideology and educational objectives. People's high schools offer general programmes, basic and general upper secondary education, initial vocational education leading to qualifications in culture, social care and leisure time, and vocational further training on a full- or part-time basis.

Individual study plan (*henkilökohtainen opintosuunnitelma, individuell studieplan*). This is prepared for every student and includes study goals, motivations, a course list for each term, career planning, connection of studies and working life, building up of expertise, and international studies or practice.

Initial vocational qualification (*ammattillinen perustutkinto, grundexamen*). A school-based qualification which takes three years including at least six months of practical training at the workplace. It gives the student eligibility for studies in higher education. It can also be taken through apprenticeship and by demonstrating the skills in competence-based qualification tests.

Joint application system (*yhteisvalintajärjestelmä, systemet för gemensam elevansökan*). Nationally organised system for applying students to upper secondary education or polytechnics (two different systems). The applicants can choose five priority study lines and, according to their marks, are ranked for different institutions and their study lines.

Licentiate (*liseniaatti, licentiate*). Postgraduate programme at the universities. The degrees are mostly lower (total of 180 ECTS credits, approximately three years) or higher (in all 3+2 years, 180 + 90/120 ECTS credits) academic degrees, i.e. bachelor's and master's degrees (both are undergraduate degrees in Finland) or postgraduate degrees, i.e. licentiate (2 years) and doctorate (4 years) degrees.

Master's (*maisteri, magister*). The second level academic degree which can be obtained either at universities or at polytechnics.

National core curricula (*opetussuunnitelmien perusteet, läroplansgrunderna*). The national core curricula define the framework of objectives for learning in the schools of the formal education system. They include the objectives for the subjects and their contents. The

education provider, usually local educational authorities, and the schools draw up their own curricula within the framework of the national core curriculum. The core curriculum is a mandatory regulation on the basis of which each education provider decides on its own curriculum.

Polytechnic master's degree, postgraduate polytechnic degree (*ammattikorkeakoulun jatkotutkinto, påbyggnadsexamen vid yrkeshögskola*). New further degree introduced in 2002 on an experimental basis in 20 polytechnic institutions, following authorisation from the Ministry of Education, for a trial period up to 2005. There is no clearly specified duration of studies because the degree is meant to be taken while working, but it corresponds to 40-60 Finnish credits (see 4.3.1.) depending on the field concerned. It is intended for those who have already obtained the polytechnic bachelor's degree or another appropriate degree, and at least three years of subsequent work experience in a related field. The type of education to which the degree will give access has not yet been decided. The decision will be taken based on experience acquired during the experiment.

Polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulu, yrkeshögskola*). Non-university level institution offering multidisciplinary courses for students, usually from the age of 19, who have taken the matriculation examination (*ylioppilastutkinto*), or completed the general or vocational upper secondary education, or hold a corresponding international or foreign qualification. Upper secondary VET provides eligibility for higher education. This route is sometimes used in transition from VET to polytechnics. Around one fifth of the polytechnics students have a VET background but only 2-3 % of the university students have this. The majority of the students in higher education have a general upper secondary education.

Vocational adult education centres (*aikuiskoulutuskeskukset, yrkesutbildningscentralerna för vuxna*). There are 40 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 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. Theoretical studies in apprenticeship training may also be organised at vocational adult education centres.

Vocational further education and training (*amatillinen lisäkoulutus, yrkesinriktad tilläggsutbildning*). Additional vocational training is self-motivated training which aims at improving vocational skills. It is training after the initial vocational training meant for adults. Training can be organised in longer periods, short courses and apprenticeship training.

Vocational institution (*amatillinen oppilaitos, yrkesläroanstalt*). Institution offering three years of initial vocational education in almost all fields for students aged 16 to 19. Instruction is given in multifield or specialised vocational institutions.

Vocational skills demonstration (*ammattiosaamisen näytöt, yrkesprov*). Its official basis is laid down by the Vocational Education and Training Act and Decree and by the national core curricula decided by the Finnish National Board of Education. In vocational skills demonstrations, students show how well they have achieved vocational studies objectives and

the vocational skills and knowledge required by working life. There are usually three to four demonstrations per year, implemented in genuine working situations but the number of demonstrations varies according to the study field. Other assessment methods are also used.

Vocational teacher education college (*ammattillinen opettajakorkeakoulu, yrkeslärarhögskola*). The vocational teacher education colleges at polytechnics provide initial teacher training for teachers working at polytechnics, vocational schools and vocational adult education centres.

Annex 3 Legislative and bibliographical references

A. Legislation and other official documents

Legislation

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Act on Vocational Education (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta, Lag om yrkesutbildning*), 630/1998.

Act on Adult Vocational Education (*Laki ammatillisesta aikuiskoulutuksesta, Lag om yrkesinriktad vuxenutbildning*), 631/1998.

Act on the Financing of Educational and Cultural Provision (*Laki opetus- ja kulttuuritoimen rahoituksesta, Lag om finansiering av undervisnings- och kulturverksamhet*), 635/1998.

Employment Contracts Act (*Työsopimuslaki, Arbetsavtalslag*), 55/2001.

Act on the Public Employment Service (*Laki julkisesta työvoimapalvelusta, Lag om offentlig arbetskraftsservice*), 1295/2002.

Polytechnics Act (*Ammattikorkeakoululaki, Yrkeshögskolelag*), 351/2003.

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Decree on the Degrees in Education and Teacher Training (*Asetus kasvatustieteellisen alan tutkinnoista ja opettajankoulutuksesta, Förordning om examina och lärarutbildning på det pedagogiska området*), 576/1995.

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Annex 4 Internet sources for further information

European and international institutions

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

Cedefop European Training Village:

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/

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

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

Eurostat:

http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=1090,1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

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

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

Ministries and national agencies

Finnish Government: www.vn.fi

Ministry of Education: www.minedu.fi

Ministry of Finance: www.vm.fi

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

Ministry of Labour: www.mol.fi

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: www.stm.fi

Finnish National Board of Education: www.oph.fi

Centre for International Mobility CIMO: www.cimo.fi

Statistics Finland: http://www.stat.fi/index_en.html

Central labour market organisations

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

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

The Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees (STTK): www.sttk.fi

Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ): www.oaj.fi

Research institutions

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

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

University of Turku, Research Unit for the Sociology of Education (RUSE): www.soc.utu.fi/RUSE/

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Research funding / Academy of Finland:

<http://www.aka.fi/index.asp?id=8128312199B840FE9D7A39D4749475DD>

Recognition of foreign qualifications

Degree programmes/ Finnish National Board of Education:

<http://www.oph.fi/koulutusoppaat/amkopas/fi/030505162.html>

English translations of the titles of Finnish vocational qualifications:

<http://www.oph.fi/SubPage.asp?path=1%3B438%3B5098>

How to apply to education: <http://www.oph.fi/english/SubPage.asp?path=447;490;9131>

The Finnish matriculation examination: <http://www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/english.html>

The National Certificate of Language Proficiency:

<http://www.oph.fi/english/page.asp?path=447;490;5373>

Vocational education - occupations: http://www.ammattilinenkoulutus.com/main.php?sivu_id=58

Student organisations

Suomen Ammattiin Opiskelevien Liitto – SAKKI ry (The National Union of Finnish upper secondary vocational students): <http://www.sakkinet.fi/>

The National Union of Finnish Polytechnic Students SAMOK: <http://www.samok.fi/english/>

Suomen Lukiolaisten Liitto (The National Union of Finnish general upper secondary students):

<http://www.lukio.fi/>

The National Union of Students in Finland SYL: <http://www.syl.helsinki.fi/english/>

Information on Finland

Virtual Finland – your window on Finland: <http://virtual.finland.fi/>

Enchanting Finland – Information for tourists on Finns, origins, forest, water and activities:

<http://www.finlandforyou.com/>

Info Bank – A web service for immigrants: <http://www.infopankki.fi/en-gb/home/>

Finnguide: <http://www.finnguide.fi/>

Suomi.fi – Public Services in Finland (Ministry of Finance): <http://www.suomi.fi/english/>

Finnish language

A chance to speak Finnish: <http://virtual.finland.fi/speak/speak.html>

Finnish and Swedish courses (Educational institutions by province which offer Finnish and Swedish courses): <http://www.oph.fi/page.asp?path=1;438;6144;881;3358>

Finnish grammar – An introduction to Finnish grammar: <http://www.uta.fi/%7Ekm56049/finnish/>

Language courses in Finnish / Summer universities in Finland: <http://www.kesayliopistot.fi/>

Skyreg – programmes and courses in folk high schools: <http://haku.kansanopistot.fi/sky/main.htm>

Studying Finnish: http://finland.cimo.fi/studying_finnish.html

Tavataan taas! Finnish for foreigners (An introduction to Finnish language and Finland):

<http://donnerwetter.kielikeskus.helsinki.fi/FinnishForForeigners/>

Annex 5 Important organisations

Ministries and national agencies

Ministry of Education
PO Box 29
FIN-00023 Government Helsinki
Tel. (358-9) 160 04 or (358-9) 578 14
Fax (358-9) 135 93 35
E-mail: opmkirjaamo@minedu.fi
www.minedu.fi

Ministry of Labour
PO Box 34
FIN-00023 Government Helsinki
Tel. (358-10) 60 40 01
Fax (358-10) 604 89 90
E-mail: kirjaamo.tyoministerio@mol.fi
www.mol.fi

Finnish National Board of Education
PO Box 380
FIN-00531 Helsinki
(street address: Hakaniemenkatu 2)
Tel. (358-9) 77 47 75
Fax (358-9) 77 47 78 69
E-mail: firstname.surname@oph.fi
www.oph.fi

Centre for International Mobility (CIMO)
CIMO, Finnish Leonardo Centre
www.leonardodavinci.fi/index-eng.html
PO Box 343
FIN-00531 Helsinki
(street address: Hakaniemenkatu 2)
Tel. (358-9) 77 47 70 33 (switchboard)
Fax (358-9) 77 47 70 64
www.cimo.fi

Social partners

Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK)
PO Box 157
FIN-00531 Helsinki
(street address: Hakaniemenranta 1, 3rd floor)
Tel. (358-9) 772 11
Fax (358-9) 772 14 47
sak@sak.fi
www.sak.fi/

The Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK)
PO Box 30
FIN-00131 Helsinki
(street address: Eteläranta 10)
Tel. (358-9) 420 20
Fax (358-9) 42 02 22 99
E-mail: netti@ek.fi
www.ek.fi

The Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees (STTK):
PO Box 248
FIN-00171 Helsinki
(street address: Pohjoisranta 4 A 21 3rd floor)
Tel. (358-9) 13 15 21
Fax (358-9) 65 23 67
E-mail: firstname.lastname@sttk.fi
www.sttk.fi

Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ)
PO Box 20
FIN-00521 Helsinki
(street address: Rautatieläisenkatu 6)
Tel. (358-20) 748 96 00
Fax (358-9) 14 58 21
E-mail: oaj@oaj.fi
www.oaj.fi

Research institutions

University of Jyväskylä,
Institute for Educational Research
PO Box 35
FIN-40014 University of Jyväskylä
(street address: Keskussairaalantie 2)
Tel. (358-14) 260 3200
Fax (358-14) 260 3201
E-mail: firstname.surname@jyu.ktl.fi
<http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/english>

Jyväskylä University Library
PO Box 35 (B)
FIN-40014 University of Jyväskylä
(street address: Seminaarinkatu 15)
Tel. (358-14) 260 12 11
Fax (358-14) 26 01 02
E-mail: jyk@library.jyu.fi
[http://kirjasto.jyu.fi/showtext.php?
keyword=etusivu&lang=eng](http://kirjasto.jyu.fi/showtext.php?keyword=etusivu&lang=eng)

Research Unit for the Sociology of Education
(RUSE), University of Turku
Hämeenkatu 1
FIN-20014 University of Turku
Tel. (358-2) 333 65 33
Fax (358-2) 333 65 24
E-mail: ruse@utu.fi
www.soc.utu.fi/RUSE/

Work Research Centre, University of Tampere
FIN-33014 University of Tampere
(street address: Pinni B, 3rd floor,
Kanslerinrinne 1)
Tel. (358-3) 35 51 70 21
Fax (358-3) 35 51 72 65
E-mail: wrc@uta.fi
www.uta.fi/laitokset/tyoelama/WRC.html

Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)

Vocational education and training in Finland. Short description

Matti Kyrö

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

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The main aim of Finnish education policy is to give equal opportunities to everyone regardless of their social background, domicile, gender or ethnic background. Arrangements for vocational education and training are flexible and take into account individual needs.

VET provision is based on decentralised decision-making. Local and regional education and training providers have the freedom to focus training provision according to local needs within the national framework.

There are no dead-ends in the formal education system in Finland; initial vocational education and training also provides eligibility for higher education studies. All vocational upper secondary programmes take three years, including a practical training period of at least six months. Qualifications can be completed in the form of school-based education and training or apprenticeship training. Since the early 1990s, vocational training for adults has been moving towards a competence-based qualification system. Lifelong learning in Finland is understood as a wide supply of training for basic vocational skills and open opportunities for further studies.

Vocational education and training in Finland

Short description

PANORAMA



European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training

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

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