



# Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–19

## FINLAND



Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training  
policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables  
of the Riga conclusions

**Country chapter**

**FINLAND**

Developments in vocational education and training policy  
in 2015-19

Cedefop (2020). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19: Finland*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies.

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/developments-vocational-education-and-training-policy-2015-19-finland>

© European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 2020.  
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

This report was produced by Cedefop and reflects contributions from Cedefop's VET policy and systems team, and Cedefop experts working on common European tools and principles for education and training, and statistics. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources.

# Contents

Contents.....	2
Figures and tables.....	4
Tables .....	4
Figures .....	4
Introduction .....	6
Aspects of VET context in 2015.....	8
CHAPTER 1.        All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships .....	11
1.1.    Baseline 2015.....	11
1.2.    Policy priorities for 2016-20 .....	12
1.3.    Main actions taken in 2015-19.....	12
1.3.1.    Adoption of a new VET Act (2017) .....	12
1.3.2.    The 2018 VET reform .....	13
1.3.3.    New training agreement model.....	13
CHAPTER 2.        Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET .....	14
2.1.    Baseline 2015.....	14
2.2.    Quality assurance mechanisms in line with the EQAVET recommendation in 2015-19.....	15
2.3.    Continuous information and feedback loops in IVET in 2015-19 .....	17
2.4.    Continuous information and feedback loops in CVET in 2015-19 .....	17
CHAPTER 3.        Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non- formal and informal learning.....	18
3.1.    Baseline 2015.....	18
3.2.    The 2015-18 reform of VET qualifications requirements .....	19
3.3.    The 2018 VET reform .....	19
3.4.    Reform of the qualifications structure .....	20
3.5.    Transparency, recognition, validation.....	20
3.5.1.    National qualifications framework ( ).....	20
3.5.2.    ECVET.....	20
3.5.3.    Validation ( ) .....	21
3.6.    Education tracks for the integration of migrants .....	21

CHAPTER 4.	Key competences in both IVET and CVET .....	23
4.1.	Baseline 2015.....	23
4.2.	Key competences addressed in the reporting period .....	25
4.3.	Key competences in IVET and CVET.....	26
CHAPTER 5.	MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers .....	27
5.1.	Baseline 2015.....	27
5.1.1.	Access to teaching vocational studies in VET school: entry requirements and initial training.....	27
5.1.2.	In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training.....	28
5.1.3.	VET school teachers: main lines for CPD.....	28
5.1.4.	In-company trainers: main lines for CPD .....	29
5.2.	Initial training for teaching / training staff in VET schools 2015-19 .....	29
5.3.	Initial training for trainers in enterprises 2015-19 .....	30
5.4.	CPD for teaching / training staff in VET schools 2015-19 ...	31
5.5.	CPD for trainers in enterprises 2015-19 .....	31
	Statistical overview: 2019 update.....	32
	Conclusion .....	35
	Bibliography .....	36

# Figures and tables

## Tables

1.	Framework data: score on VET indicators in Finland and in the EU: 2010-15 .....	9
2.	Key competences addressed in 2015-19 .....	25
3.	Score on VET indicators in Finland and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change .....	32

## Figures

1.	Use of EQAVET indicators .....	16
2.	Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education (GE) and VET in 2016 .....	24
3.	Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science .....	24



# Introduction

In June 2015, the ministers in charge of vocational education and training in the EU Member States, the candidate countries and the European Economic Area countries, convened in Riga, agreed on objectives for vocational education and training (VET) policies for 2015-20 <sup>(1)</sup>.

Cedefop has been entrusted with monitoring the countries' policies implemented towards reaching these objectives.

This country chapter is part of the monitoring process. It was drafted based on input from the national ReferNet team. It presents an overview of the major policy developments that have taken place in the country in 2015-19, in the areas covered by the Riga medium-term deliverables (MTDs).

The country chapter is structured as follows:

- (a) the introductory section Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015 briefly sketches the VET context in the country in 2015, highlighting selected figures and major policy initiatives that were just being adopted or started at that time. This introductory section is targeted at setting a baseline to put in perspective the policy choices and developments that have taken place since the beginning of the Riga cycle;
- (b) five thematic chapters then follow, devoted to the five respective MTDs outlined in the Riga conclusions. Each thematic chapter also begins with a 2015 baseline, more specifically addressing the MTD-related topics. The baseline is followed by the presentation of the major policy developments in the MTD since 2015;
- (c) the country chapter ends with a conclusion summarising the main lines of the 2015-19 policy developments and highlighting possible priorities for the future.

This country chapter is part of the information which the European Commission used to prepare the European Semester exercises <sup>(2)</sup> in 2017-19. It also informs the work of Cedefop and the European Training Foundation (ETF) in preparing a joint monitoring report on the implementation of the Riga conclusions. Both the joint report and the country chapter are aimed at informing the work of EU

---

<sup>(1)</sup> *Riga conclusions 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-2020, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 Bruges communiqué:*

[https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions\\_2015.pdf](https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf)

<sup>(2)</sup> European Semester: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en)

Member States' Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTS) and Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) on taking stock of the outcomes of the Riga conclusions and preparing the next steps for the EU VET policy for the next few years.



## Aspects of VET context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Finland was well above the EU average (70.4 % in 2014 compared to 48 % in the EU – see framework data below; 71 % in 2015 compared to 47 % in the EU) <sup>(3)</sup>. All VET students were following work-based programmes as every VET qualification comprised a minimum of six-month work-based training. The employment rate of recent upper secondary education graduates was above the EU average (71.6 % in 2014) (European Commission, 2016b) compared to 70.8 % in the EU. Adult participation in lifelong learning was high (25.1 % and 25.4 % in 2014 (European Commission, 2015) and 2015 respectively, compared to 10.7 % in the EU in both years (Table 1).

In 2015, Finland was starting a VET reform. The amended VET Act entered into force in August 2015. It was aimed at enhancing the learning outcomes approach, modularisation, flexibility, validation and work-based learning <sup>(4)</sup>.

---

<sup>(3)</sup> Source: Eurostat table educ\_uoe\_enrs04. 2015 data.

<sup>(4)</sup> The reform was taken a step further in June 2017 when the government adopted a new act on VET which came into force in the beginning of 2018. The act reforms the VET system extensively. The key elements of the reform are to enhance the competence-based and customer-oriented approach, to offer individual, flexible and customer-oriented pathways for individuals, to integrate separate funding systems (institution-based, apprenticeship, vocational adult education and partly employment training) into one coherent funding system and to develop and increase apprenticeship training and other forms of work-based learning.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Finland and in the EU: 2010-15

Indicator label	2010		Yr	2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	FI <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>		FI <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	FI	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	70.4 <sup>b</sup>	48.0 <sup>b E1</sup>	'13-'14	0.3	-0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	14.5 <sup>b</sup>	34.0 <sup>b E2</sup>	'13-'14	-0.8	0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	100.0	69.2 <sup>E3</sup>	'13-'14	0.0	-1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	40.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	40.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	12.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	12.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	23.0		'15	25.4	10.7 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	0.2	0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	74.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	74.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	68.0 <sup>b</sup>	42.7 <sup>b E1</sup>	'13-'14	0.4	-1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	32.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	32.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	29.1 <sup>b</sup>	33.0 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	-3.1	-0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	15.3	5.3	'15	17.8	6.9	'10-'15	0.5	0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	9.8		'15	12.8 <sup>c</sup>	4.3 <sup>b C</sup>	'13-'15	0.8	-0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	16.8		'15	19.1	9.5 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	0.3	-0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	10.6 <sup>B</sup>	9.5 <sup>e B</sup>	'11	10.6	9.5 <sup>e</sup>			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	78.7 <sup>B</sup>	80.2 <sup>e B</sup>	'11	78.7	80.2 <sup>e</sup>			
Skill development and labour market relevance								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	1.30 <sup>b</sup>	0.56 <sup>b E4</sup>	'12-'13	0.00	0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)			'13	7.4 <sup>b</sup>	6.4 <sup>b E5</sup>	'12-'13	0.0	0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.8	0.8 <sup>e</sup>	'10	0.8	0.8 <sup>e</sup>			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.9 <sup>b</sup>	1.0 <sup>b E6</sup>	'13-'14	0.0	0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	26.2 <sup>b</sup>	30.0 <sup>b E7</sup>	'13-'14	-1.5	-0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	0.0 <sup>b</sup>	9.3 <sup>E8</sup>			
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	34.7	41.5 <sup>E9</sup>	'12	39.7	41.6 <sup>E9</sup>	'10-'12	2.5	0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)			'15	75.9 <sup>b</sup>	77.2 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	-1.7	0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	0.2 <sup>b</sup>	5.3 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	-2.7	-1.0
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	31.8 <sup>b</sup>	23.7 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	-0.2	-0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	81.7	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	63.4	55.2	'15	69.3	57.3	'10-'15	1.2	0.4

Indicator label	2010		Yr	2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	FI <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>		FI <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	FI	EU
Overall transitions and labour market trends								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	10.3	13.9	'15	9.2 <sup>c</sup>	11.0 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.2	↘ -0.6
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	45.7	33.8	'15	45.5 <sup>c</sup>	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.1	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	12.5	16.6	'15	14.6	15.8	'10-'15	↗ 0.5	↘ -0.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	10.3	13.1	'15	12.1	12.9	'10-'15	↗ 0.4	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	79.7	77.4	'15	75.5 <sup>c</sup>	76.9 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.7	↘ -0.2
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	17.0	27.3	'15	12.3 <sup>c</sup>	23.5 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.9	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	73.0	68.6	'15	72.9	70.0	'10-'15	↘ -0.1	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	53.9	53.4	'15	50.8 <sup>c</sup>	52.6 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.7	↘ -0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	89.5 <sup>d</sup>	82.8 <sup>d</sup>			

(\*) The data in this column are the data available in 2016. Where 2015 data were not available, data from previous years were used.

(A) UOE back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED 2011 not yet available.

(B) AES 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

(C) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

(D) Forecast made in 2016.

(E1) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

(E2) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

(E3) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

(E4) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

(E5) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

(E6) Partial information for NL.

(E7) Based on 25 countries (missing: IT, HR, UK).

(E8) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

(E9) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

(b) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: Definitions in the indicators table differ from those used in national legislation.

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked •. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop (2017). *On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies. Country statistical overviews – 2016 update*, page 129. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5561>

## CHAPTER 1.

# All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

### 1.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the legal basis of the Finnish VET system was laid down in the Vocational Education Act (1998) <sup>(5)</sup>. The Finnish government was responsible for determining the national objectives of VET and its qualification structure. The Ministry of Education and Culture was in charge of steering VET and the Finnish National Board of Education <sup>(6)</sup> drew up the qualification requirements for VET in cooperation with employers' and employees' organisations, the Trade Union of Education and student unions (Cedefop, 2014).

Development of VET was mainly based on tripartite partnerships. Employer and employee representatives took part in the National Education and Training Committee which contributed in setting up qualification requirements and national core curricula and identifying future competence needs (Cedefop and ReferNet, 2014a).

Vocational upper secondary qualifications were offered in VET institutions and in apprenticeships. In VET programmes, the share of work-based learning was at least one sixth of the studies. Work-based learning was construed as guided and goal-oriented training at a workplace, allowing students to learn part of the practical vocational skills included in the targeted qualification. The duration of workplace learning could vary.

Apprenticeship was mainly used in continuing education, further education for adults, and retraining. It was based on a written fixed-term employment contract concluded between an employer and an apprentice. On-the-job training amounted to 70-80% of the apprenticeship programme. It was supervised by a trainer. The theoretical part of the training was delivered in vocational educational institutions and vocational adult education centres (Cedefop and ReferNet, Finland, 2014a). Employers who provided apprenticeship training could claim a compensation to cover the costs arising from work-based learning, which was agreed on a case-by-case basis between the education provider and the employer.

Already before the reporting period, Finland had implemented the Youth Guarantee and most beneficiaries received offers for a job, traineeship,

---

<sup>(5)</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=86177](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=86177)

<sup>(6)</sup> Renamed Finnish National Agency for Education since 2017.

apprenticeship or further education after having registered at the public employment services (European Commission, 2016a). As part of the Youth Guarantee programme, the Ministry of Education had launched a development programme for 2014-16, the main objective of which was to increase the apprenticeship training offer for young people by developing models that combined institution-based and apprenticeship-based education (Cedefop and ReferNet Finland, 2014a).

Mid-2015, the VET Act was amended, aiming – among others – to strengthen the importance of work-based learning and increase participation in apprenticeship programmes.

## 1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For the 2016-20 period, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Government, is to merge initial and continuing VET and parts of the labour market training into one uniform system.

## 1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

### 1.3.1. Adoption of a new VET Act (2017)

A new Act on VET was adopted in June 2017 and entered into force on 1 January 2018. The focus in the implementation of this latest reform is on the following elements:

- (a) a single act on VET, i.e. VET for young people and adults in the same framework;
- (b) a single licence to provide education and award qualifications;
- (c) flexible application and admission systems;
- (d) a clearer range of qualifications that better meets the needs of working life;
- (e) a single competence-based approach to completing qualifications;
- (f) competence-based and individual study paths for all;
- (g) more versatile learning environments and more study at workplaces, based on training agreements and apprenticeship training;
- (h) labour policy education becomes a part of the VET system; it is targeted at unemployed persons or those at risk of unemployment;
- (i) one coherent funding system for vocational upper secondary education and training, vocational further education and training, apprenticeship training and labour policy education leading to qualifications that encourage effectiveness and outcomes.

### **1.3.2. The 2018 VET reform**

An action plan was adopted in 2016 for comprehensive VET reform to be in place as of 2018. The reform aimed – among others – at increasing and diversifying learning in the workplace and apprenticeship training. The plan also provided for reducing the administrative and financial burden incurred by employers while providing practical training. The employer compensation for providing apprenticeships was increased for a limited period, ending in 2017. In addition, if the apprentice is a long-term unemployed jobseeker, lacks professional skills, or is disabled, the employer may also receive a State-funded pay subsidy.

At the beginning of 2018, the unit price of apprenticeship training was increased to the same level as that of institution-based training. This was expected to encourage education providers to increase the offer of apprenticeship training.

### **1.3.3. New training agreement model**

Practical training is included in all VET qualifications. Training at workplaces in connection with the practical work tasks can be apprenticeship training or training based on a training agreement. A new training agreement approach was set up as part of the VET reform. When applying for a training agreement, students are not in an employment relationship (their status is 'student'). Students do not receive a salary and employers do not receive training compensation. The details of the training agreement are planned and implemented through co-operation between the education institutions and employers. Training agreements are designed to support the student's flexible transition between the education institution and the workplace and the student's transition towards an apprenticeship contract. A student may flexibly transfer from a training agreement to apprenticeship training, when the prerequisites for concluding an apprenticeship agreement are met.

## CHAPTER 2.

# Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET

### 2.1. Baseline 2015

A quality assurance national reference point (QANRP) was set up in 2008 in the National Board of Education <sup>(7)</sup>. At the beginning of the reporting period, a quality network for VET was in place. A quality management recommendation had been adopted in 2008, followed by a quality strategy for VET in 2009. A comprehensive national quality assurance approach for all levels of VET and work based learning was also in place.

Quality-related requirements were part of VET legislation, e.g. authorisation/accreditation to provide VET that led to formal qualifications and State funding. Guidelines and national objectives at provider level promoted a culture of continuous improvement. An evaluation carried out in 2015 by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the National Board of Education and the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) revealed that 71 % of the VET providers that participated <sup>(8)</sup> in the evaluation had a quality assurance system in place. Legislation obliged the institutions to self-assess performance and participate in external evaluation. Also, to steer quality, award-winning skills demonstrations were in place. The demonstrations also formed the basis for the national evaluation and monitoring of learning outcomes.

Administrative data from different sources (e.g. population register, social security register, educational achievements, unemployment register, tax register, etc.) were combined to follow up individual learning paths and labour market careers, on the basis of an agreement with education and labour authorities. Individual data on transitions were collected by the national statistical agency. There was a performance-based funding scheme which used transition achievements as one of its criteria. The graduate tracking measures covered all forms of education and training including curriculum-based VET, apprenticeship track and CVET (with exception however of CVET provided by companies to their employees).

---

<sup>(7)</sup> Since January 2017, the Finnish National Agency for Education.

<sup>(8)</sup> More than 90% of the Finish VET providers participated in this evaluation.

In 2015, the Finnish skills anticipation system for initial VET was already quite coherent and its main instruments were interconnected. Finland renewed in 2009 its quantitative anticipation and forecasting mechanism involving four ministries, i.e. a joint consortium called PAKET involving the Ministry of Education and Culture; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Employment and Economy; and the Ministry of Social and Health Affairs. The Government Institute for Economic Research had produced the VATTAGE forecast which helped to reduce uncertainties relating to previous forecasts. Every five years, the labour force forecast was published, looking at a 15-year forecast period. The model was under revision based on feedback from the first round. The Ministry of Education and Culture used the VATTAGE forecast results in its MITENNA system to inform decisions on educational provisions.

In addition to the VATTAGE/MITENNA forecasting, other actors and instruments were also involved in carrying out surveys on working life related skills needs. Actors involved included regional institutions, education providers, trade unions, ministries, Chambers of Commerce and independent researchers. Also, several ESF-funded qualitative forecasting projects were carried out under the responsibility of the National Board of Education. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were being brought closer together in 2015.

## 2.2. Quality assurance mechanisms in line with the EQAVET recommendation in 2015-19

Based on the results of the 2015 evaluation (see Baseline 2015 above), the Ministry of Education and Culture supports the development of the quality assurance system for VET providers. The QANRP used Erasmus+ funding in 2016-17 to update the criteria for self-assessment and related guidelines for VET providers. It is also involved in other ongoing projects and networking with QANRPs from other countries (e.g. Austria) to strengthen the culture of quality assurance in VET and involve teachers and trainers in quality management systems <sup>(9)</sup>. *Erasmus+* funding continued in the period 2017-19 to ensure that the recent VET reform (Section 1.3.2) is in line with the new elements of EQAVET+, focusing on the following topics:

---

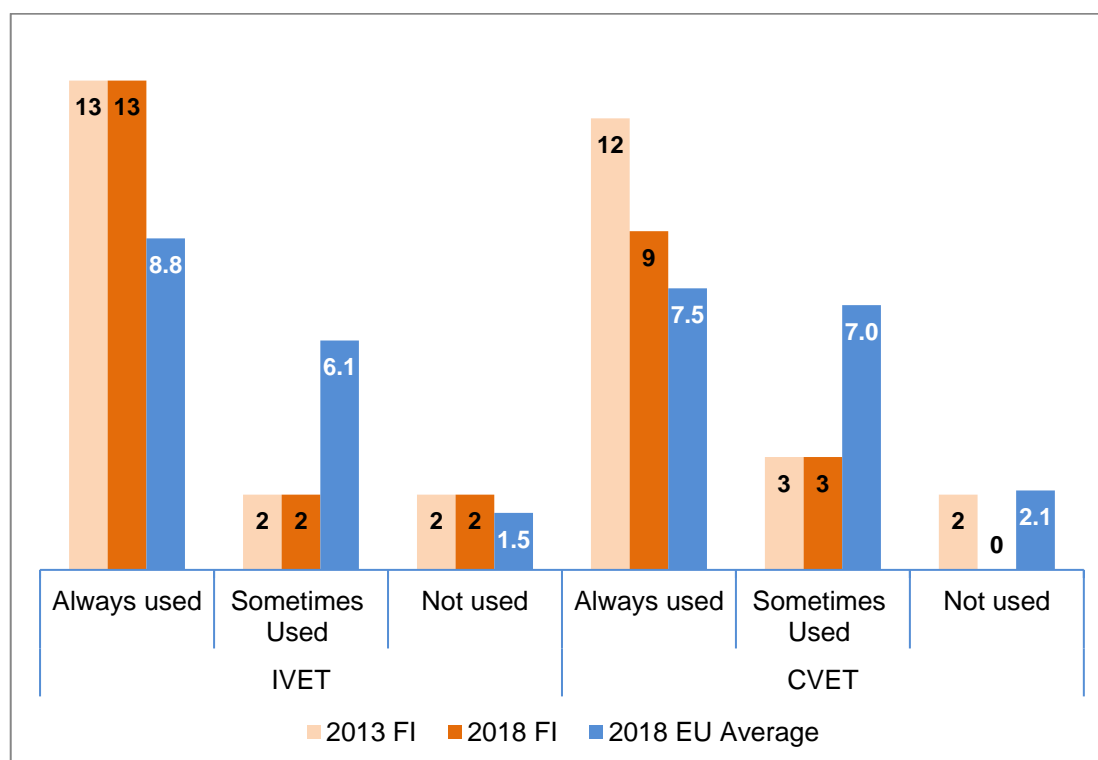
<sup>(9)</sup> 2016 Compendium of EQAVET NRP Erasmus+ funding:  
[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/compendium\\_eqavet\\_2016\\_for\\_website.pdf](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/compendium_eqavet_2016_for_website.pdf)



- (a) the quality assurance of qualification design, assessment and certification in IVET;
- (b) updating criteria for peer reviews in the Finnish VET;
- (c) disseminating outputs of *Erasmus+* to the VET providers;
- (d) organising (transnational) study visits on various topics <sup>(10)</sup>.

Concerning the systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor the VET system ('always used' in Figure 1), the situation has remained unchanged since 2013 in IVET while for CVET Finland did not report on the use of some indicators in 2016. Finland was above the EU average in IVET and CVET in 2018. The two indicators not used for IVET relate to information on the occupation obtained after completion of training and on the satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with acquired skills/competences.

Figure 1. **Use of EQAVET indicators**



Key: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, 13 were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2018 in Finland, compared to 8.8 in the EU on average in 2018.

NB: In 2018, no reply was provided for the use of 5 indicators in CVET.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretarial Surveys for 2013 and 2018 data.

<sup>(10)</sup> 2017 Compendium of EQAVET NRP Erasmus+ funding:  
[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/library/compendium-eqavet-2017\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/library/compendium-eqavet-2017_en)

### 2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in IVET in 2015-19

In 2017, the 30 national education and training committees were replaced by nine anticipating groups representing each different vocational field. These groups comprise representatives of employers, employees and entrepreneurs, as well as VET providers, higher education institutions, teaching staff, researchers and education administrators. The anticipating groups are appointed until 2020. Their tasks include:

- (a) analysing changing and new competence and working life related skills needs, and their implications for different levels of education;
- (b) strengthening cooperation between upper secondary VET and higher education;
- (c) providing public authorities with recommendations on new development needs and cooperation between the world of work and education.

### 2.4. Continuous information and feedback loops in CVET in 2015-19

A three-year project on a national anticipation model for adult education <sup>(11)</sup> was launched by the Finnish National Agency for Education on 1 August 2015. The aim of the project was to develop and pilot a tool for anticipating the training and skills needs of the adult population. An expert group was set up, which identified drivers of change, scenarios, and resulting skills needs. Regional pilots were started. Social partners and stakeholders from the traffic and logistics sectors were involved (companies, employer and employee organisations, providers of further training, relevant ministries and regional administration, research and adult students). The project was expected to improve the relevance of CVET to the needs of individuals and the world of work. The learning outcomes approach was also supported. The project came to an end in January 2019.

---

<sup>(11)</sup> *Valtakunnallinen aikuiskoulutuksen ennakointi* (in Finnish only), on the Finnish National Agency for Education webpage.

## CHAPTER 3.

# Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

### 3.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, equal access for all to education and training was already a basic principle in Finland. The education system was reported to be highly permeable and free from dead ends that prevent progression to higher levels of education (Cedefop and ReferNet Finland, 2014b, p. 14).

High permeability and competence-based qualifications had been introduced through the 1990s reform. Flexibility had been further increased in the late 2000s with the introduction of learning individualisation and modularisation in VET. In particular, flexibility and individualisation were seen as ways for tackling early school leaving through allowing module-level certification and re-entry to education (Cedefop and ReferNet Finland, 2014b, p. 18). Horizontal co-operation between institutions as well as vertical cooperation between different levels of education were being promoted. Legislation obligated providers of general and upper secondary VET to cooperate regionally. The benefits of cooperation included better individualisation opportunities for students. Students could complete several qualifications in parallel (Cedefop and ReferNet Finland, 2014b, p. 18).

Guidance was offered both at school and outside school. Career management skills development was part of education curricula from the youngest age. Pupils at grades 7 to 9 (lower secondary education) were offered guidance classes and in-depth counselling prior to making their first career choice. In upper secondary VET, a module on guidance was integrated into different vocational subjects. Outside of schools, a decision was made in 2014 to start expanding the One-Stop Guidance Centres activities to different parts of Finland as part of the Youth Guarantee. The target group was persons under 30 years of age. The Centres provided information, advice and guidance in matters related to work, education

and everyday life <sup>(12)</sup>. Targeted guidance services were also offered to migrant communities and other at-risk groups.

The country had been systematically working on promoting VET and increasing its attractiveness. An advisory committee had been set by the Ministry of Education to develop and steer communication activities to improve the attractiveness of VET. Every third year, the Ministry would carry out a survey on VET attractiveness among students in basic and general upper secondary education, VET, and also in the industry.

Access to adult learning and CVET was legally guaranteed. Education and training providers were legally obliged to take into account the individual life situation of adult learners and provide these with tailored and flexible training accordingly. More permeability had been introduced through the 2010 amendment of the Act on Universities, which granted to holders of further and specialist VET qualifications the access to university education.

Recognition of prior learning was also in place. An adult could access formal qualifications by demonstrating that s/he possessed the required skills, acquired whether non-formally or informally (Cedefop and ReferNet Finland, 2014b, p. 18).

### 3.2. The 2015-18 reform of VET qualifications requirements

The main lines of the reform were to strengthen the learning-outcome approach of vocational qualification requirements, the modular structure of qualifications, flexibility and individualisation in learning paths, and validation of prior learning. The scope of vocational upper secondary qualifications was set to 180 ECVET credits.

### 3.3. The 2018 VET reform

The main goals of the reform are to update the funding system, remove overlaps and barriers from education, ensure a regionally comprehensive education network, and strengthen links between education and the labour market. Key aspects of the reform are a competence-based approach, customer-oriented VET, and labour market relevance. Reinforcing workplace learning, apprenticeship, and

---

<sup>(12)</sup> At the beginning of 2017, the number of centres across Finland totalled about 40. About 450 professionals from different sectors work at least one day a week in the centres. The services are free of charge for the people who use them. They are funded by the central government and the ESF.

alleviating the administrative and financial burden of employers (Section 1.3.2.) are also part of the reform.

### 3.4. Reform of the qualifications structure

As part of the 2018 VET reform (Section 3.3), the Ministry of Education confirmed, in February 2017, the restructuring of vocational qualifications as of January 2019. The number of vocational qualifications has decreased from 351 to 164 (43 vocational qualifications, 65 further vocational qualifications and 56 specialist vocational qualifications). The new qualification structure, which is composed of broader qualifications, is expected to allow individual learners to organise their competence development in a more flexible way and in line with the changing demands of working life.

### 3.5. Transparency, recognition, validation

#### 3.5.1. National qualifications framework <sup>(13)</sup>

The Act on the Finnish national framework for qualifications and other competences <sup>(14)</sup> and the related government decree <sup>(15)</sup> entered into force on 1 March 2017. The framework covers the entire education/qualifications system. In this framework, the qualifications, syllabi and other extensive competence modules of the Finnish national education system are classified into eight levels on the basis of the learning outcomes. The referencing to the EQF was completed in December 2017.

#### 3.5.2. ECVET

The implementation of ECVET took place in 2015 as part of the reform of the qualification system and revision of the national qualification requirements. The credit points for IVET were replaced by 'competence points', which show the relative importance of the unit of learning outcomes to the overall qualification (e.g. based on relevance for the labour market and social integration as well as the complexity, scope and volume of the unit of learning outcomes). A community of

---

<sup>(13)</sup> Source: Cedefop (2017).

<sup>(14)</sup> Act 93/2017.

<sup>(15)</sup> Decree 120/2017.

practice is in place. The Finnish National Agency for Education is in charge of information and cooperation in relation to ECVET <sup>(16)</sup>.

### **3.5.3. Validation <sup>(17)</sup>**

Finland is among the first European countries to have adopted standards and legislation in IVET and CVET for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (a competence-based qualification system which is mainly used by adults). Validation of prior learning is part of the legislation at all levels of education. Learners have the right to have their prior learning assessed/validated as part of their studies in VET and HE; this is mostly used in VET and adult learning.

The competence-based qualifications (CBQs) in Finland embed validation of non-formal and informal learning as an integral part of the entire CVET qualifications system. The system has been in place since 1994 and was further strengthened in 2007 and in 2015 by the Decree on Individualisation. The Decree defines the principles of validation more precisely than before. The CBQ system is very popular among the adult population in Finland, involving 100 000 learners annually. In IVET, validation is integrated in the teaching and learning process as a first step in determining the individual learning path.

On 1 August 2015, the existing legislation on vocational education and training was amended to steer the IVET system to implement validation more effectively. The most drastic change was the shift from time-bound credit points to competence points. The curricula were redesigned to serve the competence-based approach.

The 2017 Act on vocational education states that each student must have an individual competence development plan. The plan includes information on, for example, identification and recognition of prior learning, acquisition of missing skills, competence and skills tests, and the necessary guidance and support.

## **3.6. Education tracks for the integration of migrants**

In May 2016, the Finnish Government launched an action plan to improve the integration of immigrants in all fields and levels of education, including vocational training. This plan anticipates increasing the preparatory training for initial vocational qualifications (IVET) and competence-based qualifications (CVET) targeted at immigrants. The general language proficiency requirement will no longer be an admission criterion to VET but the education provider must still ensure the student has sufficient language skills to acquire the competences during their

---

<sup>(16)</sup> Source: the ECVET users' group members.

<sup>(17)</sup> Source: Cedefop (2017) and Karttunen (2016).

studies. Different fields of study may have different requirements. Language studies and support for language learning integrated in vocational studies will be increased. Learners can either enter the labour market straight after the successful completion of their vocational training or complete the other parts of the qualification as competence-based qualifications. Competences and qualifications which they might have acquired earlier will be identified and recognised whenever possible. Immigrants will be directed towards sectors in high labour demand. This action plan was prepared jointly by the Ministries of Economic Affairs and Employment, Education and Culture, Environment, Social Affairs and Health and Finance. A budget of EUR 20 million was allocated by the Ministry of Education in January 2017. The major part of the funds (EUR 18.8 million) was given to VET providers and EUR 1.2 million was used for apprenticeship training.

In order to provide more training to migrants struggling to find employment, the Liberal Adult Education Act was amended at the beginning of 2018 to give institutions a greater role in providing literacy training and studies for the integration of migrants.

## CHAPTER 4.

# Key competences in both IVET and CVET

### 4.1. Baseline 2015

In 2015, a key objective of upper secondary VET was to support study completion among young people and provide them with tools for citizenship and lifelong learning.

The 2014 decree on upper secondary VET qualifications <sup>(18)</sup> stipulated that every qualification should include:

- (a) vocational units (135 competence points);
- (b) common units (35 competence points);
- (c) free-choice units (10 competence points).

While vocational units were based on labour market needs, common units included key competences, e.g. communication, interaction, maths, social and cultural competences. The aim of common units was to ensure that all upper secondary VET graduates would possess skills for citizenship and lifelong learning <sup>(19)</sup>.

A recent survey <sup>(20)</sup> showed that, compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes felt they had stronger (ranged by priority):

- (a) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- (b) ability to work with others;
- (c) ability to be creative;

and weaker:

- (a) cultural awareness;
- (a) foreign language speaking;
- (b) science and technology skills (Figure 2).

---

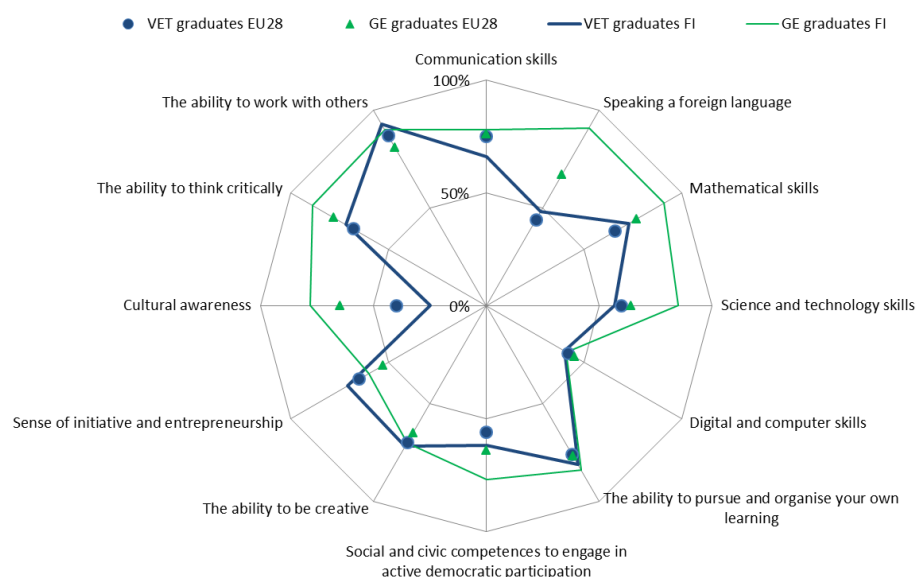
<sup>(18)</sup> Decree 801/2014.

<sup>(19)</sup> For more information on key competences in VET see Finnish National Board of Education (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Finland*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

<sup>(20)</sup> Cedefop (2017). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/264585>



**Figure 2. Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education (GE) and VET in 2016**



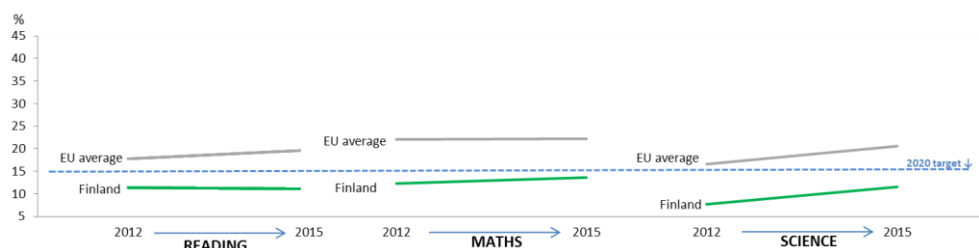
NB: Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop (2017). Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/264585>

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in maths and science and a (slightly) decreasing share of the same young low achievers in reading compared with 2012 (Figure 3). However, the share of low achievers in Finland was much lower than in the EU on average, thus making the country one of the best performers in the EU.

**Figure 3. Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing Level 2 on the PISA scale.

Source: OECD (PISA 2012 and 2015)

As VET enrolled 71 % of all upper secondary learners in the country <sup>(21)</sup>, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes. This was happening against a background where the 2015 upper secondary VET qualifications' reform was strengthening the competence-based approach (replacing time-based approach with competence-based one), freedom of choice and flexibility in providing education <sup>(22)</sup>. The reform had also increased the share of the so-called common units in VET programmes, namely communication and interactive ability, mathematics and science, skills needed in society and the world of work, and social and cultural competences, thus promoting key competences for lifelong learning.

#### 4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2 outlines the key competences in initial and continuing VET that were addressed in the reporting period. A description of policies is provided in the following sections.

Table 2. Key competences addressed in 2015-19

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy		
Foreign languages		
Digital competence		
Maths		
Science		
Technology		
Social and civic competences		
Learning to learn		
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence		
Cultural awareness and expression		
Key competences as a package	YES	

<sup>(21)</sup> Calculated from Eurostat table educ\_uoe\_enrs04; 2015 data.

<sup>(22)</sup> For more information on key competences in VET see Finnish National Board of Education (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Finland*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.  
[http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet\\_FI\\_KC.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_FI_KC.pdf)

NB: The list derives from the 2006 EU key competences framework for lifelong learning; it has been restructured and expanded with additional competences that can be considered key.

Source: Cedefop based on ReferNet input.

### 4.3. Key competences in IVET and CVET

The 2015 amendment to the VET Act drew on the 2006 EU key competences framework. The VET Act stipulated that key competences are included in the objectives of core subjects, the requirements of vocational qualification modules and their assessment criteria.

The national qualification requirements governing different upper secondary vocational qualifications determine the key competences of lifelong learning. These are included in the vocational skills requirements set for vocational units and core subjects.

Since 2018, following the 2017 VET reform, key competences are no longer addressed as a separate part of vocational competence. They have been modified so that key competences are integrated into all vocational skills requirements and assessment criteria. The key competences for lifelong learning are:

- (a) digital and technological competence;
- (b) mathematics and science competence;
- (c) communication and interaction competence;
- (d) competence for sustainable development;
- (e) cultural competence;
- (f) social and citizenship competence;
- (g) entrepreneurial competence;
- (h) the competence to use and develop one's skills and knowledge independently.

## CHAPTER 5.

# MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers

### 5.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, education in Finland was decentralised. Therefore, the rules on the training of workplace instructors and the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers were mainly in the hands of VET institutions. The challenge that VET teaching was facing was the need for upgrading teachers' guidance skills.

Three main groups of teachers and trainers <sup>(23)</sup> were at play in VET programmes:

- (a) VET teachers;
- (b) general subject teachers;
- (c) in-company trainers (nationally referred to as workplace instructors, responsible for supervising learners during their on-the-job learning periods or apprenticeship training in enterprises).

The total number of VET teachers in 2013 was 13 166. Approximately 80 % of them were formally qualified for their positions <sup>(24)</sup>. More than 50 % of them were above 50 years of age.

Teacher education was increasingly incorporating subjects like multicultural education, cultural diversity and social participation into initial training and CPD. In 2015, the Government announced the objective of introducing new pedagogical approaches to strengthen initial teacher training and CPD (European Commission, 2016b).

#### **5.1.1. Access to teaching vocational studies in VET school: entry requirements and initial training**

Vocational teacher education colleges operated in conjunction with universities of applied sciences. Two vocational teacher training institutions also provided education for special needs VET teachers, in addition to providing education for teachers of vocational studies.

---

<sup>(23)</sup> Special needs teachers and guidance counsellors were also in place.

<sup>(24)</sup> 92% in 2016.

To be a qualified teacher of vocational studies, one had to have:

- (a) an appropriate HE degree (or a specialist vocational qualification if an appropriate HE degree did not exist in that field); or
- (b) an appropriate degree from a university of applied sciences; or
- (c) the highest possible qualification in their own occupational field and at least three years of work experience in the field.

Apart from that, VET teachers were required to have completed pedagogical studies (at least 60 ECTS credits).

Special needs VET teachers had to meet the same requirements as VET teachers. In addition they had to complete studies in special needs education with a scope of 60 ECTS and have teaching experience at a vocational institution for at least one year.

General subject teachers had the same training as teachers in general education. They had to have <sup>(25)</sup>:

- (a) a master's degree with a scope of 300 ECTS credits, including a minimum of 120 credits in one teaching subject and 60 credits in other subjects taught, as well as teacher's pedagogical studies of 60 ECTS credits;
- (b) a master of science in engineering in an appropriate study programme, plus completed pedagogical studies with a scope of at least 60 ECTS.

#### **5.1.2. In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training**

Workplace instructors were usually experienced foremen and skilled workers. Most of them had a vocational or professional qualification but did not hold pedagogical qualifications. All qualifications acquired in initial VET included an optional module 'Workplace instructor training'. Similar modules were also included in some further and specialised vocational qualifications. Enterprises used to appoint workplace instructors in charge of interacting with the student and the school.

#### **5.1.3. VET school teachers: main lines for CPD**

Teacher CPD could be based on: (a) collective agreements; (b) in-service training funded by central or regional governments; and (c) self-motivated continuing education. Topics could include: the acquisition of a higher degree; pedagogical studies; special needs teacher training; guidance counsellor training; student affairs administration; social welfare and health care management; and continuing education organised by trade unions. In 2015, the focus of State-funded CPD was

---

<sup>(25)</sup> Government Decree on teaching qualifications (Finnish Government, 1998).

on: capacity building in working with different kinds of learners; preventing exclusion; multiculturalism; and the use of ICT in versatile learning environments.

Teachers' employers (usually municipalities) were responsible for providing teacher CPD. This could be organised by employers as in-service personnel training. The minimum duration of this free-of-charge in-service training was three working days per school year. Employers would decide on the method of implementation and the content of the training.

Self-motivated CPD could be acquired at general upper secondary schools for adults, open universities, continuing education centres at universities, open polytechnics and polytechnics. Adult education centres as well as summer universities and different folk high schools also provided continuing education for teachers.

Teacher placements in enterprises and other workplaces were part of VET teacher CPD. A 25 ECTS credits programme for teachers' continuing education had been set up to allow for placements. The programme target was that every VET teacher should participate in this programme at least every five years. Figures from 2011-12 show that 80% of the teaching personnel used to participate in CPD, among which less than 5% were in enterprise placement.

#### **5.1.4. In-company trainers: main lines for CPD**

According to VET regulations, workplaces involved in training had to have a sufficient number of employees with vocational qualifications and relevant work experience to be appointed as workplace instructors. Education providers were responsible for training workplace instructors. However, according to 2012 figures, only one half of workplace instructors had received official workplace instructor training in compliance with national guidelines. Three training modules (three-week study) had been recommended by the Finnish National Board of Education, oriented towards planning workplace training, supporting vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests, and instructing and assessing students. Workplace instructor training was funded by companies, the national education administration, and VET providers. Providers of such training were responsible for tailoring it to the needs of each participant.

## **5.2. Initial training for teaching / training staff in VET schools 2015-19**

Higher education institutions cooperate in the process of admission to teacher education. Students with the best capacity for teaching are selected for teacher training.

In 2016, a teacher education development programme (*Opettajankoulutuksen kehittämisohjelma*) was launched by the Ministry of Education. The programme recommends that training should emphasise capabilities for:

- (a) working as a teacher in different operating environments;
- (b) promoting learner-centredness;
- (c) creativity.

The aim is to embolden teachers to experiment and to mainstream working methods that stem from learners' needs. Mentoring and induction will become a more systematic part of training at the start of a teaching career. The training of peer group mentors will be further expanded.

The programme will affect all levels of teacher education from core studies and initial training to competence development during a teacher's career. A EUR 60 million budget has been allocated over three years.

### 5.3. Initial training for trainers in enterprises 2015-19

There are no regulations for the qualifications of workplace instructors. Education providers are responsible for the quality of workplace instructors. They decide whether workplace instructors have relevant qualifications and experience.

To become workplace instructors, learners in all IVET qualifications may follow the relevant optional module. Reformed regulations for the 52 vocational qualifications came into force in summer 2015. They also include amendments to the skills required for workplace instructor training, inter alia: identify tasks suitable for on-the-job learning and prepare plans for it; provide induction training on duties, practices and rules in the workplace; work with different learners and colleagues; receive and give feedback etc. The three modules recommended by the Finnish National Agency for Education now cover:

- (a) planning workplace training, vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests (one credit);
- (b) supporting and assessing learning (one credit);
- (c) assessing the learner's/candidate's competences (1 credit).

The agency recommends that the training for workplace instructors be implemented flexibly by VET providers, taking into account the current situation and competence needs of employees acting as workplace instructors, as well as their prior learning/knowledge and skills. These are to be assessed and recognised (supporting material is provided by the agency). Achieving the training objectives takes an average of three weeks. The three modules may be completed individually and in the order which suits participants.

State subsidies, which are allocated annually by the Finnish National Agency for Education, can be used for the training of workplace instructors. Some EU structural funds (*Rakennerahasto*) can also be allocated to train workplace instructors.

#### 5.4. CPD for teaching / training staff in VET schools 2015-19

According to 2016 data, about 17% of VET teachers take part in professional development periods in the workplace, which is below the target of every teacher undertaking a professional development placement at five-year intervals.

The *Parasta osaamista* project has set up a network for improving VET teacher CPD. It started in 2016 and is coordinated by Jyväskylä University. The aim of the project was to support education staff during the implementation of the 2017-18 VET reform. Emphasis is put on developing coherent practices, unifying quality criteria, promoting competence-based and customer-oriented VET in cooperation with the world of work, mapping the competence needs of VET staff, developing tools and operational models for workplace learning and improving the induction of workplace instructors.

The 2016 teacher education development programme (*Opettajankoulutuksen kehittämisohjelma*, see Section 5.2) also aims at adopting a systematic and coherent structure for teachers' competence development during their careers. It is recommended that education institutions prepare competence development plans, which will be underpinned by strategic plans and evaluations of competence by education providers. Particular attention is being paid to building up the vocational skills of young teachers and the possibilities for providing them with support. CPD is being organised to promote the integration of Finnish language learning into the vocational studies, language awareness focused teaching and collaborative instruction.

#### 5.5. CPD for trainers in enterprises 2015-19

VET schools offer short courses/events to upskill workplace instructors in relation to various themes, such as how to guide special needs learners at the workplace.

The *Parasta osaamista* project also offers support for workplace instructors (Section 5.4).



# Statistical overview: 2019 update

Table 3 updates the figures that were provided in Table 1. Although Table 1 may contain data for 2015, these are not systematically repeated here. In some cases, not repeating is due to breaks in time series, which prevent comparability. In other cases, values differ due to methodological changes.

**Table 3. Score on VET indicators in Finland and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	FI	f	EU	f	Yr	FI	f	EU	f	Range	FI	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	71.3		47.3	ce	'17	71.6		47.8	ce	'15-'17	0.4	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	13.6		28.3	ce	'17	13.1		27.9	ce	'15-'17	-0.4	-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	100		68.1	ce	'17	100		68.6	ce	'15-'17		0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	43.8		40.8		'15	43.8		40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	55		34		'15	55		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	25.4		10.7		'18	28.5		11.1		'15-'18	3.1	0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	83.1		72.6		'15	83.1		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	68.8		42	ce	'17	69.1		42.7	ce	'15-'17	0.3	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	37.6		30		'15	37.6		30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)	29.1		33		'18	37.5		33		'15-'18	8.4	0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	17.8		6.9		'18	21.2		7.3		'15-'18	3.3	0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	12.8		4.3		'18	15.6		4.3		'15-'18	2.8	0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	19.1		9.5		'18	24.7		10.7		'15-'18	5.6	1.2
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)					'16	12.4		11.4				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)					'16	79.9		79.4				

Indicator label	2015					Last available year				Recent change		
	FI	f	EU	f	Yr	FI	f	EU	f	Range	FI	EU
Skill development and labour market relevance												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	1.1		0.5	ce	'16	1.1		0.5	ce	'15-'16	-0.1	0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)	7		7.1	ce	'16	6.5		7.4	ce	'15-'16	-0.5	0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.5		0.9		'15	0.5		0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	1.9		1	ce	'17	2		1	ce	'15-'17	0.1	0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	22		29.2	ce	'17	20.9		29.1	ce	'15-'17	-1.1	0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates		z			'17		z	14.3	b ce	'15-'17		
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16	40		37.7				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)	75.9		77.2		'18	79.8		80.5		'15-'18	3.9	3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)	0.2		5.4		'18	5.5		6.6		'15-'18	5.3	1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)	31.8		23.7		'18	30.5		23.3		'15-'18	-1.3	-0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	81.7		83.7		'15	81.7		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	68.7		57		'15	68.7		57				
Overall transitions and labour market trends												
Early leavers from education and training (%)	9.2		11		'18	8.3		10.6		'15-'18	-0.9	-0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	45.5		38.7		'18	44.2		40.7		'15-'18	-1.3	2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	14.6		15.8		'18	11.6		13.7		'15-'18	-3	-2.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	12.1		12.9		'18	9.3		9.4		'15-'18	-2.8	-3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	75.5		75.9		'18	81.7		80.6		'15-'18	6.2	4.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	12.3		23.5		'18	10.8		21.9		'15-'18	-1.5	-1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	72.9		70		'18	76.3		73.1		'15-'18	3.4	3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	50.8		52.6		'18	52.9		56.1		'15-'18	2.1	3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	91.4	D	85.8	D			

EU refers to EU- 28, unless otherwise specified.

(D) Forecast made in 2018.

(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data.

(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

Source: Cedefop, 2020.

In 2017, 71.6% of all upper secondary students in Finland were enrolled in IVET. This percentage is 23.8 points above the EU average. It appears, however, that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is slightly higher, by 0.4 point, compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2017, 13.1% of all upper secondary IVET students were enrolled in a work-based learning setting, which is slightly lower, by 0.4 points, than in 2015. In contrast, the EU average is 27.9%.

In 2018, 28.5% of adults participated in lifelong learning activities, which is higher, by 3.1 points, than in 2015. The EU average is 11.1%.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 79.8%. It appears that the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is higher by 3.9 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015. The EU average is 80.5%.

## Conclusion

Since 2015, Finland has been engaged in comprehensive VET reform which was planned to continue until 2019. Actions are being undertaken to enhance work-based learning and apprenticeships, strengthen the quality assurance system, and restructure the information system, which guides the development of initial VET. The reform of upper secondary VET and vocational qualifications is being prepared, while at the same time important milestones have been achieved by adopting a first version of the national qualifications framework and by implementing ECVET. On the equal opportunity side, active efforts were developed to support the integration of newly arrived asylum seekers and other immigrants. Finally, an ambitious and innovative development programme has been adopted to support the initial training and continuous professional development of VET teachers and trainers.

Compared to 2015-16, the main changes in 2017 have taken place in MTDs 1, 3 and 4. In MTD 1, the VET reform that had been started in 2015 with the amendment of the VET Act, was taken a step further in June 2017 with the adoption of a new act on VET, which came into force at the beginning of 2018 <sup>(26)</sup>. As regards MTD 3, the Act on the Finnish national framework for qualifications entered into force on 1 March 2017. The Framework was referenced to the EQF in December 2017 <sup>(27)</sup>. In MTD 4, the design of key competences was updated <sup>(28)</sup>.

No new policy initiative was reported for 2018-19.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions are being addressed.

---

<sup>(26)</sup> Section 1.1.

<sup>(27)</sup> Section 3.5.1.

<sup>(28)</sup> Chapter 4.

# Bibliography

[URLs accessed 18.11.2019]

- Cedefop (2014). *Spotlight on VET in Finland 2012/13*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/8055>
- Cedefop (2015). *Stronger VET for better lives: Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies 2010-14*. Cedefop Reference series 98. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/el/publications-and-resources/publications/3067>
- Cedefop (2017). *European inventory of national qualifications frameworks 2016: Estonia*. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/estonia-european-inventory-nqf-2016>
- Cedefop (2020). *On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies. Indicator overviews: 2019 update*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 76. [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5576\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5576_en.pdf)
- Cedefop ReferNet Finland (2014a). *Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes: Finland*. [https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2015/ReferNet\\_FI\\_2014\\_WBL.pdf](https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2015/ReferNet_FI_2014_WBL.pdf)
- Cedefop ReferNet Finland (2014b). *VET in Europe – Country report 2014*. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/finland-vet-europe-country-report-2014>
- EEPO (2015). *Country fiches on skills governance in the Member States – Finland*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
- EQAVET Secretariat (2014). *Supporting the implementation of the European quality assurance reference framework: results of EQAVET Secretariat survey 2013-14*. [http://www.eqavet.eu/Eqavet2017/media/Documents/Results-EQAVET-Secretariat-Survey-2013-2014-\(1\).pdf](http://www.eqavet.eu/Eqavet2017/media/Documents/Results-EQAVET-Secretariat-Survey-2013-2014-(1).pdf)
- EQAVET Secretariat (2019). *Supporting the implementation of the European quality assurance reference framework: draft results of EQAVET Secretariat survey 2018*. <https://www.eqavet.eu/getattachment/What-We-Do/Statistics/Progress-report-Results-EQAVET-Secretariat-Survey-2018.pdf.aspx?lang=en-IE>
- European Commission (2015). *Education and Training Monitor 2015: country analysis*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/87b59c67-c3f8-11e5-8d08-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>

European Commission (2016a). Country report Finland 2016: including an in-depth review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances. Commission staff working document. SWD(2016) 94 final.

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/cr\\_finland\\_2016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/cr_finland_2016_en.pdf)

European Commission (2016b). *Education and Training Monitor 2016: country analysis*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e9916271-ad65-11e6-aab7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>

- European Commission (2017). *Erasmus+ KA3 — Support to the activities of the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) National Reference Points (NRP): Compendium 2016*.  
[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/compendium\\_eqavet\\_2016\\_for\\_website.pdf](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/compendium_eqavet_2016_for_website.pdf)
- European Commission (2018). *Erasmus+ KA3 — Support to the activities of the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) National Reference Points (NRP): Compendium 2017*.  
[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/compendium\\_eqavet\\_2017.pdf](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/compendium_eqavet_2017.pdf)
- Karttunen, A. (2016). Country report – Finland: 2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning. In: Cedefop; European Commission; ICF (2017). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning – 2016 update: synthesis report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.  
[https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2016\\_validate\\_fi.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2016_validate_fi.pdf)