

Case study Finland

The future of vocational education and training in Europe Volume 3

Facilitating vocational learning: the influence of
assessments

By Maarit Virolainen, June 2022

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CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

Study context and methodology

This case study on Finnish vocational education and training has been conducted in January - February 2022 for the Cedefop project 'The Future of vocational education and training (VET)'. The project covers the 27 EU Member States as well as Iceland, Norway and the UK. The overall Cedefop project 'The Future of vocational education and training (VET)' is composed of five Work Assignments:

- (a) Changing content and profile of VET: epistemological challenges and opportunities
- (b) Delivering IVET – Institutional diversification and/or expansion
- (c) Facilitating vocational learning – The influence of assessments
- (d) Delivering lifelong learning – The changing relationship between IVET and CVET
- (e) Synthesis and trends.

This case study on assessment in VET in Finland focuses on the work assignment 3. The main objective of Work Assignment (WA) 3 is to map and analyse the evolution of assessment in initial vocational education and training (IVET) over the last 25 years, and the focus of the Finnish case study is on the developments that have been taking place in the Finnish IVET since 1995. In particular, the goal of this work assignment is to explore the way ***how the objectives set by curricula in terms of content and profile are supported by the assessment.*** The overall aim is to get a *deeper understanding about the relationship between the content and profile of VET qualifications and how they influence assessment and the content-related priorities of learners and teachers and vice-versa.*

The research questions set for this work assignment are presented in the box below.

Box 1. Research questions

1. Which are the dominant assessment forms applied in IVET and how have these evolved over time?
2. To what extent are assessment specifications and standards used to support summative assessments?
3. To what extent are assessment specifications aligned with qualifications and programme standards?
4. To what extent could a broadening of the skills and competence base of IVET influence assessments
 - In view of a strengthened emphasis on general subjects?
 - In view of a strengthened focus on transversal skills and competences?

Source: ToR.

The case study is based on literature review of previous, existing studies as well as other available information and documents considering the development of assessment in Finnish IVET during last 25 years. In addition, interviews were conducted with experts in Finnish IVET to get further information about topics that are not very well covered by the available documents, and previous studies.

This case study focuses on IVET qualifications or programmes preparing for the two following occupations to illustrate changes that have taken place in the vocational sectors to enable cross-country comparisons:

- (a) Health workers (e.g. care assistants, auxiliary nurses, etc., typically found in ISCO 532 – Personal Care Workers in Health Services). In Finnish the occupation title in question is: 'lähihoitaja' and the related qualification is: The Vocational Qualification in Social and Health Care, i.e. in Finnish 'Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden perustutkinto' (OPH-2629-2017). The latest curricula observed for this case study has been in effect during 1.8.2018-31.7.2022. (The transition period to the new curriculum will end 31.7.2026. Studies started which were started when this curriculum was in effect can be finished until 31.7.2026).
- (b) Electrical and electronics workers (e.g. including electricians, mechanics and fitters typically found in ISCO 741 - Electrical Equipment Installers and Repairers). In Finnish the occupation in question at present is: 'Elektroniikka-asentaja' and the related qualification is: Vocational qualification in Information and Communications Technology, i.e. in Finnish 'Tieto- ja viestintäteknikan perustutkinto (OPH-2596-2019)'. The latest curricula observed for this case study has been in effect during 1.8.2020-31.7.2022. (The transition period to the new curriculum will end 31.7.2026. Studies started which were started when this curriculum was in effect can be finished until 31.7.2026).

This case study is structured as follows:

- (a) Chapter 2 presents the dominant forms of assessment and their evolution over time and also refers to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on assessment.
- (b) Chapter 3 focuses on the changes of assessment in relation to the enhanced competence-based approach a.
- (c) Chapter 4 discusses the influence of the broadened skills and competence base on assessment.

CHAPTER 2.

Dominant forms of assessment and their evolution

2.1. The Reforms of IVET and transforming assessment

Since 1995 the methods of assessment applied in the Finnish IVET have developed through several phases in relation to on-going reforms and how work-related learning has been organised as part of IVET during each period. In the following the development of assessment in IVET is characterised through four focal periods since the 1990s:

- (a) the period of practical training (–1999);
- (b) the period of developing and adopting vocational skills demonstrations in relation to on-the-job learning (1999–2015);
- (c) the period of training agreements (2018–); and
- (d) post-2022 transition towards generic assessment criteria.

2.1.1. The period of practical training (–1999)

During the period of the practical training the tradition of the Finnish school-based model of IVET was prevalent in the way that the practical training of students was organised in laboratories and training classes for example in the training restaurants within the vocational schools. In addition, it was the duty of vocational education institutions ‘to provide each student an opportunity for work experience in authentic work environment and have training for real-life work processes’ (Opetushallitus [Finnish National Agency for Education], 1995b, 86). The amount of practical training varied between different occupational fields and qualifications. For example, the minimum of practical training demanded from practical nurse students was 25 study weeks out of the total of 120 study weeks each qualification took (Opetushallitus 1995a, p. 74). At the same time the minimum of practical training demanded from students of electrical engineering was set as four study weeks (Opetushallitus 1995b, p. 86). The national core curricula stated that ‘in order to improve opportunities for employment, training at the workplace will be organised based on the individual prerequisites’ (Opetushallitus 1995b, p.86). The practical training could be completed during summer vacation, or alternatively relevant previous work experience in the field could be accredited for the qualification. Also work experience gained abroad could be applicable.

In the late 1990s the practical training -related learning model as part of IVET was increasingly criticized. It was seen to follow traditional behavioristic or neo-behavioristic learning model, where school-based learning had central role for learning vocational skills (Uusitalo, 2001; Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006). In the beginning of the 1990s, the high levels of unemployment raised societal discussion about the inadequacies of previous practical training organised by vocational education institutions. The model was seen as outdated for meeting the demands set by working life (Alatalo et al., 2008). While the 'practical training'-model of learning and related models of assessment adopted in the early 1990s were heavily criticised and the characteristics of the model of learning were pictured in contrast to the adopted new model and ideal of 'vocational skills demonstrations', it is probable that individual vocational institutions and teachers had already adopted more modern approaches to learning and assessment at the time. The transformation toward new model of work-based learning and assessment did not take place overnight. Rather, the change was incremental.

During the late 1990s, the assessment was defined in the national core curriculum provided by the [Finnish National Agency for Education]. According to these national core curriculum **the overall goals set for assessment** were defined to be: 'to support student learning, to enhance students' positive self-image and motivation, to produce information about the level of student's competencies, to provide vocational training institution feedback about the success of its activities, and efficiency of its education, and to provide employers information about the students' and graduates' competence levels' (Opetushallitus [Finnish National Agency for Education], 1995a, p. 76).

The national core curriculum stipulated that assessment should be qualitative by nature. It should focus on students' abilities on broad scale and look at the mastery of work processes and students' abilities to assess their own activities. In 1995, it was expected that the emphasis of assessment practices would be transformed into authentic work situations where application of knowledge in practice, students' production of new knowledge based on their own experience and ethical commitment into occupation could be assessed. The forms of assessment were to be varied and encouraging, based on the interaction between the teacher and the student. The assessment was expected to guide the student to make choices which would enable stimulated learning in collaboration. (Opetushallitus 1995a, p. 76; 1995b, pp. 88–89).

At the time, each vocational education provider prepared its own curriculum based on the national core curriculum. The occupational functions gave the basis for the formulation of the curriculum and provided the basis for assessment. Students were graded for the whole learning units, which were designed as

Skills demonstrations could be used for the accreditation of prior learning. The studies included a final project (in Finnish: *päättötyö*). The final project had to be graded on its own. The scale for the assessment of study units was: satisfactory (1–2), good (3–4), excellent (5). If a student was not able to pass the minimum requirements, the teachers would mark in the certificate that the student has participated in the studies related to the occupational whole, composing a study unit. However, the students could not get the certificate for the whole qualification, if all study units were not passed on the satisfactory level, in the minimum. (See Figures 1–2: Opetushallitus 1995a, p. 76; 1995b, p. 89).

Figure 1. **The national core curriculum in the field of technology and social and health care by the Finnish National Agency for Education, (Opetushallitus 1995a, 1995b)**

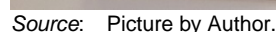
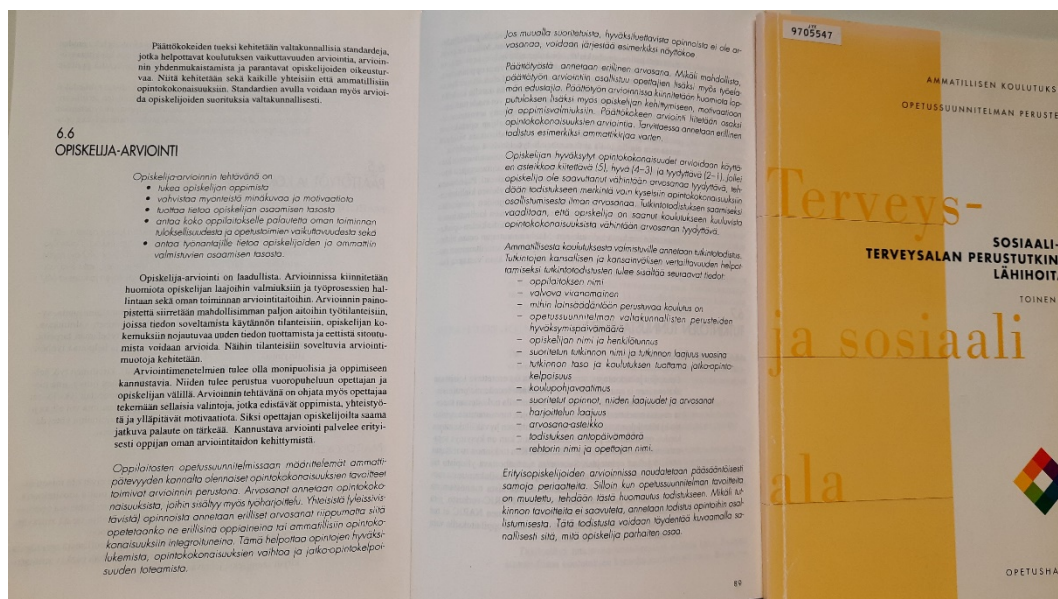


Figure 2. The definition of students' assessment in the national core curriculum by the Finnish National Agency for Education in 1995 (Opetushallitus 1995b, 89)



Source: Picture by Author.

2.1.2. The period of developing and adopting vocational skills demonstrations in relation to on-the-job learning (1999–2015)

Vocational skills demonstrations (later: VSD) were adopted through a pilot phase into Finnish IVET since 1999. At the beginning of the 1990s, the system of competence-based assessment (in Finnish: *näyttötutkintojärjestelmä*) had been developed to acknowledge the skills and competencies which adults had achieved in the working life (Haltia, 2006; Laki 631/1998 ja asetus 812/1998). The experience gained through the establishment of the system for competence-based assessment for adults and the recognition of adults' competencies through skills demonstrations was taken as a model and utilized also for the assessment of young when the skills demonstrations were adopted as part of the youth education (Haltia, 2006).

The adoption of the new form of assessment in the youth education took place gradually through a developmental phase in 1999–2004. During those years the VSD were developed to guarantee the quality of qualifications. (Haltia, 2006). The VSD were included in all IVET since autumn 2006 based on the given legislation (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta annetun lain muuttamisesta* 15 July 2005/601 [Amendment to law given about vocational education and training, 15 July 2005/601]; Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006).

At the time when VSD were adopted into IVET, the completion of an IVET qualification required studying for 120 study weeks, equivalent of three years of

studying. Out of the total of 120 study weeks ninety weeks were allocated to vocational studies, including a minimum of 20 study weeks of on-the-job learning (20/90 study weeks), whereas 30 study weeks were allocated for core common subjects which were included in all qualifications (such as languages, math, science, etc.) and free-choice studies (30/120 study weeks; Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006).

Since 2006, after skills demonstrations were adopted into IVET programmes they were expected to become the primary method of assessment in upper secondary vocational studies. (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta annetun lain muuttamisesta* 15 July 2005/601 [Amendment to law given about vocational education and training, 15 July 2005/601]). The adoption of VSD was related to aims of transforming the previous practical training typical for IVET toward more efficient on-the-job learning and enhancing work-based learning as part of IVET. In addition, in terms of systemic development, the transformation in the forms of assessment was related to alignment of youth and adult national qualification requirements. Further, at organisational level, the aim was to strengthen cooperation between working life and vocational education (Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006).

In the youth education, the VSDs were designed, implemented and assessed as work tasks or work processes by the education provider in cooperation with representatives of the working life (mainly employers, which took trainees for on-the-job training). Skills demonstrations were given throughout the qualification, i.e. students would give several VSDs for a qualification during their studies (Opetushallitus, 2007). It was not necessary though for the VSD to be organized at the workplace and they could be carried out in educational institutions as well. The students' performance in the VSD was to be compared to the criteria given for the performance in the assessment criteria which were described in the national qualification requirements (Haltia, 2006; Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006). In addition to assessment through VSD, students' performance during on-the-job learning was subject to practice-oriented, more short-term and more specific assessment (Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006). During the on-the-job-learning periods, students had the chance to get acquainted with the workplace, learn new skills and competencies, and train their existing skills under the supervision of the workplace guide. Teachers could visit the training places at times (Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006).

In the VSDs, student completed practical assignments at the authentic workplace environment and typical practices followed by the workplace instructor. In the youth education student would receive a grade as the result of the assessment. The grade itself was to be decided through finding a consensus

between the teacher, the representative of the employer and the student, not as a form of representing external control (Poikela & Rääköläinen, 2006, 16–17; Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006). (In contrast, in the system for competence-based assessment for adults the grade was decided by the teacher, the representative of employer and the representative of the workers.)

When the system of VSD was adopted, the representatives of working life were satisfied in the way the VSDs enabled them the assessment of social and interaction skills. Teachers found that they were able to address demonstration situations through formative approach, by preparing students for the demonstrations, guiding them during the demonstration and giving them feedback. In addition, the 'new' format of assessment was seen to enable reflection-on-action following the model of experiential learning (made famous by David Kolb). However, the organisation of VSDs, assessment practices and tasks were found to vary between institutions and the variance raised concerns about equal rights and justice between students and education providers (Poikela & Rääköläinen, 2006). For example, the VSDs were mostly organised at vocational institutions for some qualifications in the early years, like in Vocational Qualification in Restaurant and Catering Services (64,8%) while workplace was typical for VSDs in the field of social and health care (99,5%) (Opetushallitus, 2007, p. 28). Teachers were found to utilise traditional forms of assessment on the side of VSDs, including paper and pen tests, essay writing and tasks to secure the validity of the VSDs. Some teachers found the increased number of decrees and competence criteria which were given for the organization of VSDs as a signal of missing trust in the teachers' professionalism and as a form of introducing more control into their work (Poikela & Rääköläinen, 2006, pp. 16–17).

The utilisation of VSDs as a form of assessment was enhanced when the national qualification requirements were renewed in 2008–2010 (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2013). In accordance, each part of qualification was to be assessed following the national qualification requirements and the specific criteria given for the completion of each sub-unit in question. The scale for grades ranged from one two three, where one was equal to satisfactory competence and three equal to very good competence. The number of VSDs students gave for a qualification, increased (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2013). For example, in the national qualification requirements utilised in 2016–2018 (before the latest overall reform of VET in 2015–2018), the specifications for each study unit were structured by four core components: a) work process, b) work methods, tools and materials, c) the knowledge base of the tasks and c) key skills of life-long learning (Opetushallitus, 2014). Each of these core components was further divided into sub-units which had to be assessed separately.

The renewal of national qualification requirements between 2008–2010 also meant giving more emphasis to work-based learning, freedom of choice, flexibility and key skills of life-long learning (Hievanen et. al., 2013). The key skills of lifelong-learning to be integrated in the skills demonstrations were defined as: learning and problem solving, interaction and collaboration, ethics, health and security, initiative-taking and entrepreneurial attitude, sustainable development, aesthetic skills, communication and media, mathematics and natural sciences, technology and information communication technology, active citizenship and cultural understanding (Hievanen et al., 2013). Out of these key skills, the six first ones were typically integrated to VSDs by more than two thirds of the education providers but the rest of these key skills of lifelong learning were integrated in the VSDs less often. The education providers found that it was difficult to integrate the key skills of life-long learning in the VSDs in a natural way (Hievanen et al. 2013, p. 37).

In sum, the establishment of competence-based qualifications for adults in 1990s based on Vocational Qualifications Act in 1994, was a major structural shift towards validation of informal learning and competences adopted at the world of work in VET (Stenström & Virolainen, 2018, p. 111). It realised the need to acknowledge informal and non-formal learning. Later, the OECD (2007) report underlined the meaning of continuous update of skills to enable transition toward knowledge-based economy. The alignment of national qualification requirements for young and adults in 2005 meant enhancement of work-based learning in IVET. The utilization of national qualification requirements enabled recognition of prior learning in principle (Laurila, 2009).

Since 2005, when the competence-based approach was enhanced in the youth education it was seen a vehicle to acknowledge learning at various contexts, to increase economic efficiency, flexibility and individualised approach of education and to support principles of life-long learning. Further it was seen importance for following European development and Copenhagen process (ET 2020) and comparability of qualifications. (Laurila, 2009). The legislation and decrees given in 2005 and the following renewal of national qualification requirements emphasised personalised study plans and recognition and accreditation of prior learning. The implementation of the principles has been a continuous effort. The latest findings regarding accreditation will be presented in the next sub-section.

2.1.3. The period of training agreements (2018–)

2.1.3.1. *The 2017 law on VET*

In the latest substantial reform of VET between 2015–2018, the former ‘on-the-job-learning periods’ were transformed into ‘training agreements’. The latest reform of VET was introduced as multi-level reform through changes in legislation, administration, and regulation (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta* [Law on vocational education and training] 531/2017). In addition, there were fundamental changes in the funding of VET (Virolainen, 2018).

The study programmes were renewed in 2018. In the reformed national VET qualification requirements, the amount of workplace learning was not regulated, and there was not any minimum or maximum amount demanded for workplace learning in the school-based VET (Rintala & Nokelainen, 2019). Students were also allowed to combine training agreement and apprenticeship training within a qualification (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018). The core idea of the reform was to transform the VET system toward more individualised, client-oriented and competence-based system, and to allow accreditation of learning regardless of the study place where the skills and competencies had been learnt (Karusaari, 2020). As a result of the reform, both the more school-based route of IVET and apprenticeship training as well as education both for the adults and young follow the same national qualification requirements.

At present, VET qualifications are structured into study units based on the central processes and relevant knowledge needed in the occupation. The assessment criteria are given for each study unit, and competencies are demonstrated and assessed preferably during practical tasks completed in authentic work situations during workplace learning. The students have to have an opportunity for self-assessment, but their self-assessment does not have to be taken into account in the grades given (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta* [Law on vocational education and training] 531/2017). There are no final examinations or final project works to control common standards across education providers. (Rintala & Nokelainen, 2019; Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018).

The steps taken in the reform 2015–2018 may be interpreted as a continuation of the development which started in 1993–1994. It was seen that curricula needed to be defined starting from competence areas (taken from the world of work), and study goals were built related to these competence areas and related assessment criteria. (Kärki, 2014; Virolainen, 2018). However, the assessment criteria for youth education were much more generalised in the 1990s than in the present qualification requirements. The trend is toward more generic assessment criteria

though, as there is going to be a transformation toward more generic assessment criteria since 2022.

At present, the assessment criteria are defined unit by unit for each level of competence in the national qualification requirements. For example, the Figure 3 pictures the goals of the study unit and Figure 4 the assessment criteria for the study unit “Supporting growth and development” in the qualification requirements of 2018–2022 for the Vocational qualification in Social and Health Care. (In the appendix one you can see the orders given for assessment of the corresponding study unit in the national core curriculum of 1995). The national qualification requirements and their assessment procedures have followed these same structuring principles in all national qualification requirements.

Figure 3. **Example of study goals set for the module ‘Supporting growth and development’ in the qualification requirements for the Vocational qualification in Social and Health Care (transition period toward new requirements until 31.7.2026) (Opetushallitus, 2017)**

The screenshot shows the ePerusteet website interface. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Opintopolku', 'Oma Opintopolku', 'ePerusteet', and language options 'Pä svenska' and 'In English'. Below this is a menu with categories: 'Varhaiskasvatus', 'Esiopetus', 'Perusopetus', 'Taiteen perusopetus', 'Lukiokoulutus', and 'Ammatillinen koulutus'. The main content area is titled 'Sosiaali- ja terveysalan perustutkinto'. A sidebar on the left lists 'Perusteen sisältö' (Content of the basic unit) with sub-items like 'Perusteen tiedot', 'Tutkinnon osat', 'Tutkinnon muodostuminen', and various specific modules. The main content area displays 'Kasvun ja osallisuuden edistäminen, 25 osp' (Supporting growth and participation, 25 osp). It includes the code 'Koodi: 106233', the order number 'Järjestysnumero: 1', and a list of 'Ammattitaitovaatimukset' (Competence requirements) for the 'Opiskelija osaa' (The student is able to) section. These requirements include tasks like planning, implementing, and evaluating growth and participation in the workplace, as well as ensuring safety and well-being. A section for 'Osaamisen arviointi' (Assessment of competence) is also visible, stating that the student is assessed based on the requirements, standards, and guidelines of the profession.

Source: <https://eperusteet.opintopolku.fi/#/fi/esitys/7381020/reformi/tiedot> (Screen capture by Author).

Figure 4. An example of assessment criteria set for the module ‘Supporting growth and development’ in the national qualification requirements for the Vocational qualification in Social and Health Care (transition period toward new requirements until 31.7.2026) (Opetushallitus, 2017)

t		x	+
tutkinnonosat/7342096			
Opiskelija työskentelee kasvat-, sosiaali- ja terveysalan työn säädösten, määräysten, toimintaperiaatteiden, arvojen ja ammattieettisten ohjeiden mukaan.			
Opiskelija			
Tydyttävä 1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toimii asiakkaan perus- ja ihmisoikeuksia kunnioittaen • noudattaa kasvat-, sosiaali- ja terveysalan lainsäädäntöä, määräyksiä, toimintaperiaatteita ja työpaikan ohjeita työryhmän kanssa • toimii kasvat-, sosiaali- ja terveysalan työn arvojen ja lähihoitajan ammattieettisten ohjeiden mukaan • noudattaa tietosuojaa ja salassapitoa • työskentelee laatusuosituksen ja omavalvontamääräysten mukaan työryhmän ohjaamana • toimii kestävän kehityksen periaatteiden mukaan 	
Tydyttävä 2			
Hyvä 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toimii asiakkaan perus- ja ihmisoikeuksia kunnioittaen • noudattaa kasvat-, sosiaali- ja terveysalan lainsäädäntöä, määräyksiä, toimintaperiaatteita ja työpaikan ohjeita • toimii kasvat-, sosiaali- ja terveysalan työn arvojen ja lähihoitajan ammattieettisten ohjeiden mukaan perustellen toimintaansa • noudattaa tietosuojaa ja salassapitoa • työskentelee laatusuosituksen ja omavalvontamääräysten mukaan • toimii kestävän kehityksen periaatteiden mukaan ja perustelee toimintaansa 	
Hyvä 4			
Kiitettävä 5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toimii asiakkaan perus- ja ihmisoikeuksia kunnioittaen • noudattaa kasvat-, sosiaali- ja terveysalan lainsäädäntöä, määräyksiä, toimintaperiaatteita ja työpaikan ohjeita perustellen toimintaansa • toimii kasvat-, sosiaali- ja terveysalan työn arvojen ja lähihoitajan ammattieettisten periaatteiden mukaan perustellen toimintaansa ja ratkaisee työhönsä liittyviä eettisiä haasteita • noudattaa tietosuojaa ja salassapitoa • työskentelee laatusuosituksen ja omavalvontamääräysten mukaan ja perustelee toimintaansa • toimii kestävän kehityksen periaatteiden mukaan, perustelee toimintaansa ja tekee kehittämis ehdotuksia. 	

Source: <https://eperusteet.opintopolku.fi/#/fi/esitys/7381020/reformi/tiedot> (Screen capture by Author)

In accordance with the goals set in the latest reform 2015–2018, the role of assessment was redefined and various documents stipulating assessment transformed. At present, it is stipulated by law that vocational students have the right to receive feedback about their professional development. The feedback on student's personal progress may be given by teachers responsible for teaching and other personnel responsible for their teaching, guidance, and support. During workplace learning the feedback may be given by the responsible guide at the workplace (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta* 531/2017, §51).

As the reformed legislation further stipulates that students have to show their competencies at authentic work situations and work processes (*näyttö*), the goal of the skills demonstrations is to show how well the student commands the focal occupational skills defined by the qualification requirements. The competencies defined in the common parts of the qualification requirements (general studies) may be shown in other ways (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta* 531/2017, §52). Students with special needs are entitled to show their competence in other ways, different from demonstration in authentic situation. One expert interviewed for this study commented on the assessment of common studies: 'The culture of assessing common, generic studies has changed quite in depth since reform. The goal for showing competence in common, generic studies are in principle similar to those in vocational studies. It should be based on competence not in attendance or behaviour in class. The only difference is that the assessment is completed by one person only, the teacher of common (generic studies) alone. Typically competence is shown through exams.'

The education provider is the responsible body for organising the opportunity for the competence demonstration. The demonstrations will be organised at the workplace preferably. It is possible to organise the demonstration elsewhere if there is a justified reason for that (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta* 531/2017, §52). For example, in the field of social and health care, 94% of demonstrations were given at workplace (when all specifications were considered), 5% both at the workplace and vocational institutions and 1% at vocational institutions only on the average (Kilpeläinen, 2018, p. 35). However, at some specializations within the field, like pedicure, the number of demonstrations given at the vocational institution (32%) or in combination of workplace and vocational institutions (14%) was relatively high when only 54% of demonstrations were given at workplace (Kilpeläinen, 2018, p. 36).

According to the regulations, the assessment will be given by two assessors nominated by the education provider. In the field of social and health care the assessment grade was typically decided by teacher and representative of the employer (for training agreement) together (94%), whereas teacher alone (4%) or

two teachers (2%) or representative of the employer (1%) were deciding the grade quite seldomly (Kilpeläinen, 2018, p. 36).

The overall purpose of the assessment is to get information about the student's competence, to guarantee that the skills and competence demands set in the qualification and qualification requirements are met and student progress in their abilities to self-assessment. The assessment takes place by comparing student's competence to the competence defined in the qualification requirements in diverse ways and the assessment has to address all the skills and competence requirements set in the qualification or in its units. (Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta 531/2017, §53).

The grading of students' competence in each module takes place according to scale: 1-2= satisfactory (*tydyttävä* in Finnish), 3-4=good (*hyvä* in Finnish), 5=very good (*kiitettävä* in Finnish).

The enhancement of flexibility and individualised study paths was one central aim of the VET reform 2015–18 (Korpi et al., 2018). The established competence-based national qualification requirements provided in principle a solid basis for recognition of prior learning. When the implementation of the reform was assessed shortly after the beginning of the reform, the adult education providers were in the opinion that competence-based approach was a regular form of activity. Further, they expected that the reform of national qualification requirements would not have much effect in the activities of education providers (Korpi et al., 2018, p.71, p. 76). The adult education providers stated that student assessment was more qualitative; there was less numeric assessment and more oral feedback given to students. In addition, individual approach, personalisation, and flexibility were seen essential characteristics of assessment. The practices of assessment had become more holistic, and there was less assessment of minor tasks. The relatively moderate experience of change in the practices of assessment was seen to be an outcome of the introduction of competence-based qualifications for adults already in the 1990s (Law 631/1998; Decree 812/1998). The personalisation of study plans and accreditation of prior learning were seen as common practices (Korpi et al., 2018). The present practices for recognition and accreditation of students' competences are explained in detail in the instructions given by the Finnish National Agency for Education (2021).

In the future, when the national qualification requirements will be reformed, the assessment will become (again) much more generalised. Instead of giving assessment criteria for each unit of each qualification separately, a common set of assessment criteria will be applied across the study units. An interviewed expert reflected on the forthcoming change as follows: *'At present we have three kind of approaches to assessment in the initial vocational qualifications [depending on*

when the qualification requirements have been renewed]. And the qualification, where electrical engineering is a specialization, has been renewed already and the new requirements will be applied as of August, 2022. Accordingly, generic assessment criteria will be applied.' 'The generic approach in this context means that in various qualifications the assessment criteria for different competence levels is word by word the same. The level 1 will be described in the same way for practical nurses and electrical engineers and car repairers. Having participated in the working group writing these assessment criteria, myself, I would say that inventing the criteria was something that really took the time. Now that we have the generic criteria, it will be much faster. Of course, the competence requirements will differ between qualifications also in the future... For example, in the qualification requirements for electrical engineering it is stated at the level good (3) that the student is able to carry out the task in an independent way, is collaborative and initiative-taking in interaction, is able to typical problem-solving, utilises occupational skills in varied way and assesses his or her own performance in a realistic way. This criterion could be directly applied in the Vocational qualification in Social and Health Care. The perspective taken here is that the assessment will take place at the context of work, in authentic tasks, and the demonstration will not differ from ordinary working else, but that it will be assessed. The competence requirements vary, but the assessment criteria will be similar'. A second expert commented on the change: 'Personally I see the transformation as valuable, fair and necessary. It contributes to equality in VET'. 'The representatives of employers only have to understand one set of criteria and apply it in different parts of the qualification'.

The assessment criteria specified for the national qualification requirements Electrical equipment installers and repairers valid as August 2022, states that the assessment of common study units should take place on scale, approved/failed.

The common studies include (35 competence points): competencies in communication and interaction [11 competence points]; competencies in mathematics and natural sciences [6 competence points] and competencies in societal and working life participation [9 competence points] and free choice studies. The sub-parts of common studies will be assessed following the scale from one to five and the competence goals and assessment criteria given for the sub-parts (Opetushallitus, 2022).

The generic assessment criteria adopted in the future qualification requirements across vocational studies are pictured in the figure below. The grade 'satisfactory' (equal to grade one) demands that the students: complete task following the orders, act collaboratively, may demand further instructions, utilize

basic information needed in the task and adapt their own actions based on feedback.

In contrast, the 'very good' grade (equal to five) presupposes that the students:

- (a) plan and complete tasks independently taking other actors into account
- (a) act collaboratively and constructively even in demanding interaction situations
- (b) apply knowledge needed in the job for problem-solving in a critical and versatile way
- (c) make justified proposals for improving the work process and work environment
- (d) assess own actions realistically and propose justified solutions for developing their own competence,
- (e) understand their own task's meaning for the larger whole in the work process (see figure below, Opetushallitus 2022).

The forthcoming change in the assessment criteria will decrease the amount of time and expert work utilised for formulation of the assessment criteria for each study unit. Also, the detailed criteria have been found difficult and complicated to apply in practice (based on expert interviews and author's observation). The forthcoming change in the assessment criteria toward a more generalised approach will take place qualification by qualification when new qualification requirements are designed and ready for application, starting from August 2022.

Figure 5. The generic assessment criteria applied as of August, 2022. Picture from the Vocational qualification in Information and Communications Technology (Opetushallitus, 2022, p. 5).

Arviointi

Opiskelija	
Tyydyttävä 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> toteuttaa työn ohjeiden mukaisesti toimii yhteistyökykyisesti tarvitsee joissakin tilanteissa lisäohjeita hyödyntää työssä tarvittavaa perustietoa muuttaa toimintaansa saamansa palautteen mukaisesti
Tyydyttävä 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> toteuttaa työn oma-aloitteisesti ja ohjeiden mukaisesti toimii yhteistyökykyisesti ja vuorovaikutteisesti tarvitsee vain harvoissa tilanteissa lisäohjeita hyödyntää työssä tarvittavaa tietoa tarkoituksenmukaisesti muuttaa toimintaansa saamansa palautteen ja omien havaintojen mukaisesti
Hyvä 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> toteuttaa työkokonaisuuden itsenäisesti toimii yhteistyökykyisesti ja aloitteellisesti vuorovaikutustilanteissa selviytyy tavanomaisista ongelmanratkaisutilanteista hyödyntää työssä tarvittavaa tietoa monipuolisesti arvioi suoriutumistaan realistisesti
Hyvä 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> suunnittelee ja toteuttaa työkokonaisuuden itsenäisesti toimii yhteistyökykyisesti ja rakentavasti vuorovaikutustilanteissa selviytyy ongelmanratkaisutilanteista hyödyntäen monipuolisia ratkaisutapoja soveltaa työssä tarvittavaa tietoa monipuolisesti ja perustellusti arvioi suoriutumistaan realistisesti sekä tunnistaa vahvuuksiaan ja kehittämisen kohteitaan
Kiitettävä 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> suunnittelee ja toteuttaa työkokonaisuuden itsenäisesti ottaen huomioon muut toimijat toimii yhteistyökykyisesti ja rakentavasti haastavissakin vuorovaikutustilanteissa soveltaa työssä tarvittavaa tietoa ongelmanratkaisutilanteissa monipuolisesti ja kriittisesti esittää työhön ja toimintaympäristöön liittyviä perusteltuja kehittämis ehdotuksia arvioi suoriutumistaan realistisesti ja esittää perusteltuja ratkaisuja osaamisensa kehittämiseen ymmärtää oman työnsä merkityksen osana laajempaa kokonaisuutta

2.1.3.2. *The approach to reliability and validity in the Finnish VET*

In Finland, the latest reform of VET underlined individualised and flexible approach to studies as well as the decrease of administrative regulation and overlapping education (Prime Minister's Office [*Valtioneuvoston kanslia*], 2015; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016; Virolainen, 2018). The national qualification requirements have been guiding education both for the young and adults since 2005 (Haltia, 2006). They also provide the basis for understanding the learning and competence goals of the qualifications and the assessment criteria, which are defined quite in detail, study unit by unit. The Finnish tradition of VET has had an emphasis on the combination of formative and summative assessment of VET (see Stenström, Laine & Kurvonen, 2006).

In the expert interview conducted for the Finnish case study, *the key tools for assuring the reliability and validity of assessment and operationalising it* were recognised as: teachers' competence requirements and confidence in their competence; collecting feedback from the employers; the learning outcomes evaluations conducted by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre field by field (Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, 2022); and how the Working life Committees (in Finnish: *työelämätoimikunnat*) assure the quality of VET and its orientation to the world of work. Also, training for the employer representatives responsible for assessment is offered by education providers.

The duties of Working life Committees include: (a) to participate in the quality assurance of the organization of skills demonstrations and competence assessments; (b) to participate in the development of the qualification structure and national vocational qualification requirements, (c) to deal with the students' requests for grade corrections (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022). The individual Working life Committees contribute to the quality assurance of the skills demonstrations in their own field of production through following the organization of vocational qualifications based on national feedback-, follow-up and evaluation data; visiting education providers to find out about the skills' demonstration practices; and by collecting information for the development of the quality of skills demonstration procedures based on the experience and knowledge collected during the visits. Further they bring up good practices. In addition, Working life Committees review the education providers' plans for the organisation of the skills' demonstrations (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022).

It is the duty of education providers to plan the organization of skills demonstrations (*Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta* [Law on vocational education] 531/2017, section 53§; Parasta osaamista, 2019a). Also, they have to have a quality management plan and develop their quality assurance continuously (*Valtioneuvoston asetus ammatillisesta koulutuksesta* 673/2017 [the Governments

decree on Vocational education and training]). Further, contributing to the overall validity of VET, the education providers conduct self-evaluations quite often and collect quantitative data to compare their results, based on the national data depositories (Education Statistics Finland, 2022). The data collected from education providers enables them comparison of the numbers of applicants and entrants, students and qualifications, special needs education, study progress, students' placement after qualification, international activities and student feedback (Education Statistics Finland). Many of them had developed their own quality management procedures already prior to the reform 2015–18 (Paila, 2014).

In addition, the National Agency for Education has supported adaptation to the requirements of the reform 2015–18 through project funding and projects. For example, the national project, '*Parasta osaamista*' [The Best Competence], developed compact guidebooks to teachers, students and workplaces to support common understanding about the procedures for assessment (Vehviläinen, 2020; Parasta osaamista, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). Further, individual associations and representatives of interest groups collect and report data by themselves or in collaboration and discuss it in the various media. This discussions and follow-up by the interest-groups contribute to the overall quality control and societal interest in the quality of VET. For example, the student associations such as SAKKI ry (National Union for Vocational Students in Finland sr) and OTUS ry (the Research Foundation for Studies and Education, Otus sr) collaborated with Ministry of Education and Culture, and Tradeka to collect data from VET students, via Vocational student barometer (in Finnish: '*Amisbarometri*'). It includes questions about the progress of studies and personal development plans. Also, '*Ammattiosaamisen kehittämisyhdistys*, AMKE ry (The Finnish Association for the Development of Vocational Education and Training) conducts surveys to education providers and students from time to time (e.g. Paila, 2014).

The question of reliability of the vocational skills demonstrations has been brought up from the very beginning of expanding it as a practice of assessment in the youth education since 2005 (Stenström, Laine & Kurvinen, 2006; Haltia, 2006). At the same time, it has been brought up that it is very difficult to assure both reliable and valid assessment, unless the assessed skill or competence is defined as very narrow (Davis 1998, p. 124; Haltia 2006 p. 24). In Finland, it was decided that rather broad competence areas would be assessed, when the transition started toward the competence-based approach (Haltia 2006). The logic for taking care of validity is based on the idea that the criteria for assessment utilised in the skills demonstrations is developed in collaboration with the working life and the criteria are in line with the national qualification requirements and demands set by the working life. Thereafter, the skills are assessed in authentic work tasks, which

enable the application of the agreed criteria (Haltia 2006, p. 24; see also Stenström, Laine & Kurvinen, 2006). The following shortcomings of this approach have been pointed out: the circumstances for skills demonstrations vary, it is not possible to standardise them, some tasks can be completed only in rare occasions, or the assessing representative of employer may have a restricted view about the occupation. In principle, employers and representatives of working life are expected to invest in VET and its quality through the provision of training places, education of workplace instructors and participation in students' supervision and assessment. They also have representatives in Working life Committees. Their role has been found quite essential as the latest reform (2015–18) emphasizes workplace learning and individual progress (Niemi & Jahnukainen, 2018).

2.1.4. Overview of the changes 1990–2020

The development in the provision of generic, common studies vs. work-based learning as part of IVET programmes in relation to the overall curriculum development in the Finnish IVET over three decades has been summarized in the Table 1 below (adjusted from the 'The Future of Vocational Education and Training in Europe Work Assignment 2: Case Study Finland', Virolainen 2021). The shifts in the assessment have also been characterised on broad terms, but the latest change toward generic assessment criteria, which will be adopted as of August 2022 for some qualifications (and others later), is not included in the Table 1.

The time periods presented in the Table 1 do not quite fit into the actual turning points historically. Therefore readers interested in more accurate turning points in the regulation should read the report in more detail.

Table 1. Initial VET programmes' curricula changes between 1990s and 2021⁽¹⁾

Characteristics of initial VET qualifications	Time period		
	1990s	2000s	2010-2021
Length of studies	2-3 years 80-120 study weeks	3 years 120 study credits	Flexible study time, personal development plan 180 competence points
Study components measured as	Study weeks (<i>opintoviikko</i>)	Study credits (<i>opintopiste</i>)	Competence points (<i>osaamispiste</i>)
General studies	Common studies (Kaikille yhteiset opinnot) 20 study weeks -studies in mathematics and natural sciences -studies in humanities and societal issues -ethical studies and cultures. Due to free choice, it is possible to study common studies up to 40 study weeks.		Common qualification components (Yhteiset tutkinnon osat) 35 competence points -competencies in communication and interaction -competencies in mathematics and natural sciences, -competencies in societal and working life participation -free choice studies
Learning environments	School and workshop (Apprenticeship as a separate route)	School, workshop and workplace learning	School, workshop and workplace learning, digital (distant) learning
Work-based learning	<i>Practical training</i> (harjoittelu) Training is part of vocational studies Length varies between qualifications: Electricians- minimum 4 study weeks, Practical nurses complete practice related studies in authentic work situations 25 study weeks in the minimum	<i>On the job learning</i> (since 1999): 20 study weeks in the minimum (<i>työssäoppiminen</i>)	<i>Training agreement or apprenticeship</i> (<i>koulutussopimus or oppisopimus</i>) In principle up to 145 competence points depending on students' personal study plan and chosen work environment.
Assessment	Teacher. Typically at school. Generic assessment regulation: assessment based on the goals defined for each study units.	Teacher, student and employer (IVET). Skills demonstrations. Shift toward different assessment criteria defined for each study unit and each qualification specifically.	Teacher and employer. Preferably at workplace. Competence demonstrations. Specified and different assessment criteria for each study unit and each qualification

2.1.5. The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on assessment

Due to Covid-19 pandemic the Finnish Government gave the temporary Law for VET stipulating that it is possible to organise skills' demonstrations at vocational training institutions (*Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laiksi ammatillisesta koulutuksesta annetun lain 52 §:n väliaikaisesta muuttamisesta* HE 85/2020; Laki

ammattillisesta koulutuksesta annetun lain 52 §:n väliaikaisesta muuttamisesta). As reflected by one interviewed expert, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused various problems for VET. There have been difficulties in finding places for training agreements, finding workplace guides and finding time for organising and conducting assessment through skills' demonstrations. It has been possible to organise some skills' demonstrations through mobile devices and digital technology, like Teams. These new arrangements have been found practical and time saving. They will probably be used also in the future for keeping in touch with the workplace instructors and employers to some extent. It is not the aim to have them replace all face-to-face interaction, though (Expert interview.).

According to the survey conducted by the Finnish education evaluation centre, around 35% of VET students were conducting their training agreement or apprenticeship training at the workplace in March-May 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic was expanding in population for the first spring (Goman et al., 2021). One fifth of these students were obliged to discontinue their training at the workplace due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The problems for organizing training agreements and apprenticeship at the workplace were typical in the fields where human interaction is necessary, like services, social and health care (Goman et al. 2021, p. 79). Surveys among VET students were also conducted by the student associations like, SAKKI ry and Suomen Opiskelija-Allianssi, in March-April 2020. According to their findings, around 60% of VET students had been able to continue their training agreement or apprenticeship at the workplace. Only one third of the VET students expected to finalize their qualification following the initial timetable, in the spring of 2020. According to the same survey, one fifth of the students expected delays in their studies and around 40% of students were unsure when they would finish their qualification (Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laiksi ammatillisesta koulutuksesta annetun lain 52 §:n väliaikaisesta muuttamisesta HE 85/2020.) In accordance with the findings of the FINEEC, the survey conducted among education providers by AMKE ry brought up that the impact of Covid-19 pandemic varied a lot between occupational fields (make, 2021).

CHAPTER 3.

Findings: The evolution of assessment in relation to the enhanced competence-based approach and the latest developments

In the previous chapters the reforms of Finnish VET have been described since 1995. These descriptions answer to research question (RQ) 1. Which are the dominant assessment forms applied in IVET and how have these evolved over time? The dominant reforms of assessment can be characterised shortly as follows since 1995. Firstly, during the period of practical training ((–1999), the assessment was expected to take place through a multiform approach, based on interaction between the teacher and the student. A summative final project was included in all qualifications and assessed on its own. General studies were graded individually, vocational studies were assessed based on study units which were built to reflect occupational functions and goals. Students could participate in vocational skills demonstrations to have their existing skills accredited.

During the following period, between 1999-2015, the vocational skills demonstrations (VSDs) were adopted into initial vocational qualifications as a form of assessment through a developmental period between 1999-2005. Since 2006 they were expected to become the primary method of assessment. In the skills demonstrations, the skills and competences of the students were assessed during work tasks or working processes, preferably in authentic work environments during on-the-job training. When the VSDs were developed and applied between 2006-2015 their definition became more and more detailed in the national qualification requirements (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2013). The assessments were completed by teacher, student and employer in collaboration.

In the national qualification requirements utilized in 2015, the assessment criteria, specifications and standards were defined in a different way for each vocational qualification and their study units. This has demanded extensive work from the three-partite working groups defining the national qualification requirements. Since the latest reform in 2015-2018 there has been a shift toward decreasing regulation, which was one of the main goals of this latest reform. In the reform 2015-2018 the former on-the-job training periods were transformed to training agreements and students could combine periods of training agreements and apprenticeship training within a qualification. In the future, since August 2022, the new adopted national qualification requirements will utilise generic assessment criteria. Otherwise the principles of assessment remain the same.

In sum, on the whole in the assessment of VET there has been a shift toward enhanced competence-based approach in the assessment of VET in Finland since 1995. However, the assessment criteria which became more and more specified during 2005-2015 will be transformed into generic assessment criteria in the future. This should make their interpretation and utilisation easier and more flexible allowing adjustment to varying contexts and tasks at various workplaces.

In the Finnish VET, during the investigated period since 1995, the tradition of summative assessment has not been dominating. Rather the approach of formative assessment has been strong and the answer to the RQ 2. 'To what extent are assessment specifications and standards used to support summative assessments?' based on the findings can be summarised as follows. Until 1999, there were final projects completed as part of initial vocational qualifications. When the vocational skills demonstrations were adopted after experimental period since 2006, they were not adopted into IVET to support summative approach for whole qualifications or major parts of qualifications. Instead, summative assessment has been utilised only in relation to giving grades for each study unit. The answer to RQ2 relates to following RQ3: 'To what extent are assessment specifications aligned with qualifications and programme standards?'. The assessment specifications became more and more detailed during the period 2006-2022. They were aligned with programme standards, but partially these standards were not very well applicable. For example, some of the key skills of lifelong learning were not easily integrated into skills demonstrations (Hievanen et al., 2013). Also the specified standards and differentiated, detailed criteria for the assessment of study units varying from qualification to qualification and education to education were found somewhat confusing by the representatives of the working life. The language of the national qualification requirements and assessment criteria was found difficult. (Anttila et al. 2010, p. 40; Hallituksen esitys 2017, p. 78). Since August, 2022, a more generic approach to assessment criteria will be adopted, when new national qualification requirements are established into various vocational fields and occupations. In contrast, the adult education providers did not find the reform of 2015-2018 to change their assessment practices essentially, when the reform was first introduced (Korpi et al., 2018).

Finally, the answer to RQ 4. 'To what extent could a broadening of the skills and competence base of IVET influence assessments a) in view of a strengthened emphasis on general subjects and b) in view of a strengthened focus on transversal skills and competences?' is bound to be somewhat speculative because the extent of possible broadening may vary, and the outcome would be relative to the extent. Nevertheless, it would be dependent on the approach

adopted in the reform 2015–2018. The core idea of the latest reform of VET and the new legislation adopted since 2018 was to increase flexibility and to allow individual flexibility in the progress of studies, to enable accreditation of prior learning and combination of various learning environments and agreements between the education provider, the student and the employer.

Overall, the number of general subjects provided within vocational qualifications did not change very dramatically between 1995 and 2015 even though their relative amount within a qualification decreased (Nylund & Virolainen, 2019). The decrease in the relative amount of general studies could be compensated by the fact that qualifications and studies for IVET became longer (three years) since 1990s, and they enable more individual choice, based on individual preference or due to field-specific or local requirements. Further, students can also choose additional courses that are not required if they want to strengthen their competences. The assessment of general studies has remained somewhat separated from the assessment of vocational studies, despite efforts to embed and combine them with the vocational studies.

In general, the broadening of skills and competence base does not have an effect on the assessment criteria, as they will become generic when new qualification criteria adopted after August 2022. The strengthening of focus on transversal skills and competences is to some extent enabled by the new approach to assessment criteria (generic assessment criteria). These criteria include transversal skills such as: problem-solving skills, initiative-taking, critical and innovative thinking and inter- and intrapersonal skills. Also, students may enhance their competences by choosing study units which broaden the competence based and will be assessed separately, for example they may study for another specialization in the field of Social and Health care.

CHAPTER 4.

Discussion: Broadened skills and competence base and assessment

Since the 1990s the definition of competence demands has been centralised as the criteria for assessment have become described in the national curriculum requirements. Whereas the pedagogy and assessment was before the 2005 reform of VET primarily the duty of education providers and teachers at vocational institutes, the normative role of national qualification requirements was increased and become much more detailed in the present qualification requirement compared to the qualification requirements of 1990s. The development toward more detailed qualification requirements started in the beginning of 2000s, when skills demonstrations were adopted as part of IVET (Haltia, 2006; Isopahkala-Bouret, 2013). The organisation of vocational skills demonstrations based on similar national qualification requirements valid both for young and adults resulted in more detailed descriptions of the level of competencies for each module compared to the national core curriculum which were utilised in the beginning of 1990s.

The shift toward utilizing skills demonstrations for assessment has been justified by enabling assessment in authentic work practices, giving priority to practical skills, and enabling more concrete and targeted assessment. At the same time, the VSDs have been criticised for paying attention to external behaviour, and focusing on skilful completion of limited tasks, which narrows and instrumentalises learning instead of giving room for students' self-directed knowledge-construction and goal setting. Furthermore, it has been suggested, that despite that the explicating of the competence criteria makes the criteria transparent, it is not possible to give comprehensive criteria and the criteria are bound to be interpreted in many ways. It has been further stated that the contextual and situational factors are bound to be varying to some extent despite all the efforts to determine assessment criteria in detail to assure similar competence for performance (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2013).

At the same time, the explication of criteria for good command of vocational skills and competences can be stated to make the vocational skills recognizable increasing and enabling discussion about the skills and competencies that are demanded in an occupation. However, when the speed of change in the world of work is increasing it may be suggested that nationally agreed criteria for assessment, unit by unit which has been utilised until 2022 are necessarily bound

to be lacking behind to up-to-date work practices to some extent as they are formed as a result of a negotiation and development process between parties and representatives of working life, education and administration. Also the work demanded for the design of regulations is quite substantial.

In the future, as from August 2022, more generalised assessment criteria will be adopted in the Finnish VET. Accordingly, education providers and teachers have more autonomy in applying the generalised assessment criteria for the competence of each study unit. This seems to be a rather welcome development from the perspective of practitioners. It reduces the amount of design of regulations, which were found too detailed, not corresponding to work practices and problematic for workplace guide to recognize.

List of abbreviations

IVET	initial vocational education and training
VET	vocational education and training
VSD	vocational skills demonstration

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Interviews

Name	Organisation
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Appendices

Appendix 1. Extract from the description of the study unit “Support and guidance of growth” in the National core curriculum for the Vocational Qualification in Social and Health Care (Opetushallitus, 1995a, p. 29–30)

KASVUN TUKEMINEN JA OHJAUS 15 OV

Opiskelija osallistuu eri ikäisten asiakkaiden kasvun tukemisen ja ohjauksen suunnitteluun, toteuttamiseen ja arviointiin yhteistyössä asiakkaan ja hänen läheistensä kanssa. Opiskelija auttaa asiakkaita tunnistamaan arkielämässä selviytymiseen liittyviä fyysisen, psyykkisen ja sosiaalisen kasvun ja kehityksen tavoitteita, tarpeita ja voimavarojaan. Hän kannustaa ja rohkaisee asiakkaita aktiivisuuteen, voimavarojensa hyödyntämiseen ja elinikäiseen oppimiseen persoonallisuutensa kehittämiseksi. Hän tukee asiakkaiden sosiaalisen identiteetin tasapainoista ja monipuolista kehittymistä.

Opiskelija neuvoo ja ohjaa asiakasta terveyttä ja hyvinvointia edistävissä elämäntavoissa. Hän tukee asiakkaan henkistä kasvua ja mielenterveyttä auttamalla tätä kehittämään arkielämän tilanteissa tietojaa ja taitojaan, jotka edistävät fyysistä, psyykkistä ja sosiaalista kasvua. Hän edistää yksilön ja ryhmän kannalta taroituksenmukaista sosiaalistumista ja kannustaa asiakasta rakentamaan ja pitämään yllä myönteisiä sosiaalisia suhteita. Opiskelija osaa toimia asiakkaan terveydelle, turvallisuudelle ja toimintakykyisyydelle myönteisten kasvuedellytysten luomiseksi ja ohjata asiakasta sosiaali- terveys-, kulttuuri- ja vapaa-ajan palvelujen käytössä.

Opiskelija käyttää tietojaa yksilöstä, tämän elinympäristöstä ja yhteiskunnasta yksilöiden ja ryhmien ohjauksessa. Hän osaa tunnistaa erilaisten kasvatuskäytäntöjen ja -käytäntöjen vaikutuksia ihmisen kasvuun ja kehitykseen sekä eri kasvatussuuntausten taustalla vaikuttavia arvoja. Opiskelija kunnioittaa yksilöitä, heidän läheisiään sekä kulttuuriaan ja ottaa toiminnassaan huomioon erilaisuuden ja kulttuuritaustaltaan erilaisten ihmisten ajattelu- ja toimintatavat. Opiskelija osaa ottaa huomioon erilaisissa ympäristöissä vallitsevat toimintamahdollisuudet ja -rajoitukset, ja hän soveltaa toimintaa ohjaavia säädöksiä ja ammattieettisen toiminnan periaatteita. Hän selviytyy työelämän erilaisissa viestintätilanteissa, osaa kommunikoida selkeästi äidinkielellään ja tulee ymmärrettävästi toimeen asiakkaiden kanssa toisella kotimaisella kielellä. Opiskelija kykenee käyttämään ammatissa tarvittavaa viestintätekniikkaa ja muokkaamaan sanottavansa erilaisissa viestintätilanteissa.

Opiskelija toimii vastuullisesti ja oma-aloitteisesti ja tunnistaa omat rajansa. Hän osoittaa sisäistettyä motivaatiota työhönsä. Hän selkiinnyttää omaa itsetuntemustaan, persoonallista ja kulttuuri-identiteettiään, arvojaan ja asenteitaan ja osaa suhteuttaa ne asiakkaan, sosiaali- ja terveysalan sekä yhteiskunnan arvoihin. Hän käyttää ja kehittää persoonallisuuttaan, luovuuttaan ja erityislahjojaan ihmisten kasvun ja kehityksen tukemisessa ja ohjaamisessa.

Appendix 1. Continued from the previous page

Opiskelija arvioi ja kehittää omaa sekä työyhteisön toimintaa vastaamaan entistä paremmin yksilöiden, ryhmien ja yhteisöjen muuttuvia palvelutarpeita. Hän tunnistaa oman ammatillisen kasvunsa ja kehittymisensä kannalta keskeisiä tekijöitä ja oppii jatkuvasti työstä ja saamastaan palautteesta.

Opiskelija perustaa ajattelu- ja toimintatapansa, työorientaationsa, kokonaisvaltaiseen käsitykseen asiakkaan tarpeista, voimavaroista ja tilanteesta. Toiminnassa kasvun tukeminen ja ohjaus, hoito ja huolenpito sekä kuntoutus muodostavat toisiaan täydentävän kokonaisuuden.