



spotlight on VET FINLAND

VET in Finland

Vocational qualifications can be obtained in upper secondary VET, apprenticeship training or as competence-based qualifications:

- most young learners complete their upper secondary vocational qualifications at vocational institutions. All qualifications include at least six months on-the-job learning;
- vocational qualifications may also be completed in apprenticeship training, which contains courses arranged at vocational institutions. Most apprentices are adults. Further, upper secondary vocational qualifications may be obtained through competence tests independent of how vocational skills were acquired;
- competence-based qualifications are usually completed by adults. In addition to the 52 vocational qualifications offered, there are nearly 300 further and specialist qualifications in different fields available. Vocational and further vocational qualifications are upper secondary level qualifications. The specialist vocational qualification is a post-secondary non-tertiary level qualification.

There are no dead-ends within the education system. From the late 1990s the vocational track has given eligibility to access polytechnics and universities. With this reform upper secondary vocational education and training became equal to general upper secondary education as a pathway to higher education.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) is responsible for strategic and normative steering of VET and leads national development. National objectives of VET, structure of qualifications and core subjects included in them are determined by the government. The qualification requirements for VET are drawn up by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) in cooperation with employers' organisations, trade unions, the Trade Union of Education, and student unions. National qualification requirements ensure nationally uniform vocational competence. In addition, qualification requirements function as the basis

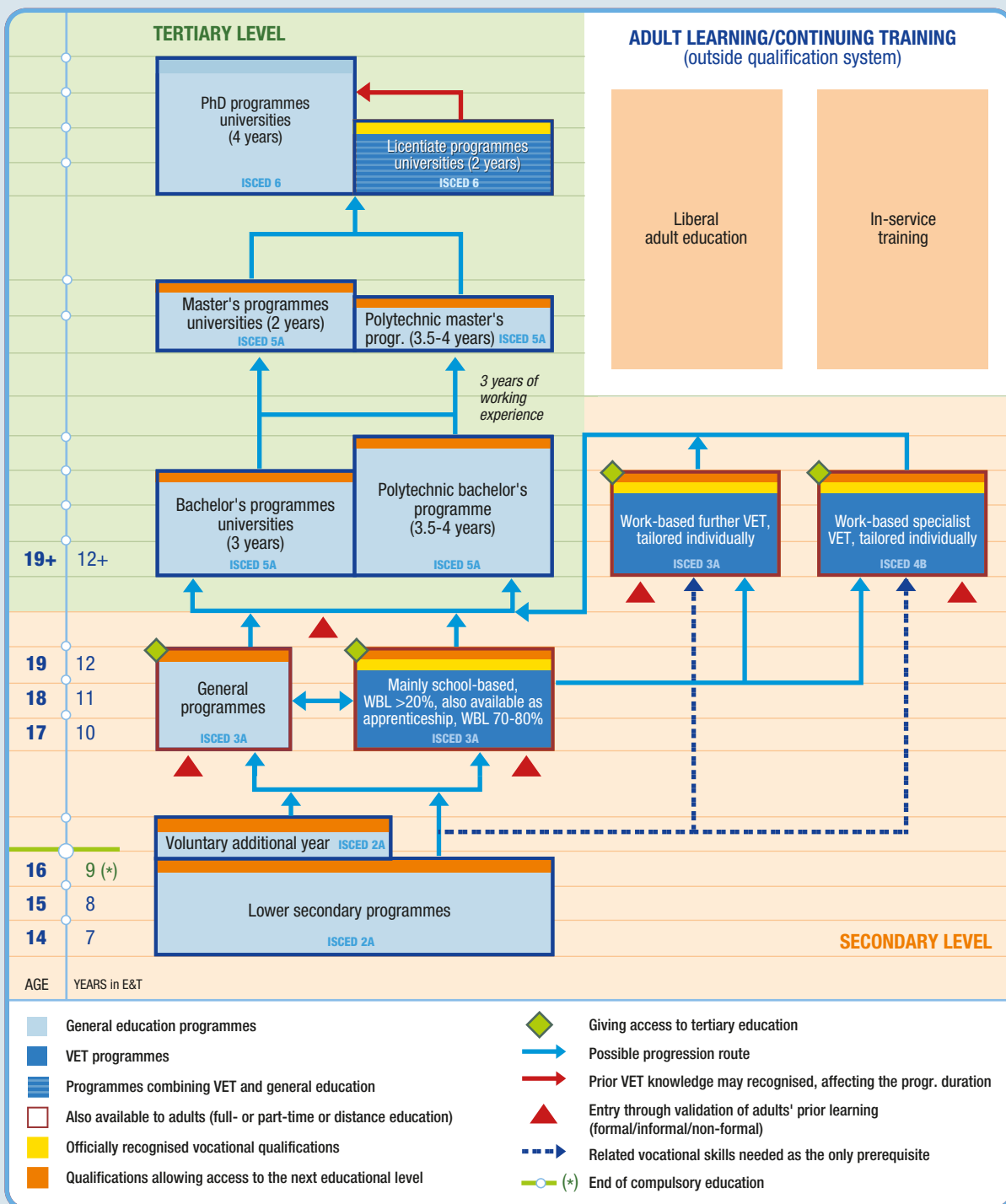
for evaluating learning outcomes.

Authorisations to provide VET are granted by the ministry. They cover provisions on VET fields, qualifications, number of students, language of instruction, locations, special educational tasks and any other issues that may be required. VET providers may also be assigned tasks to develop and serve the world of work.

VET providers are responsible for organising training in their areas, for matching provision with local labour market needs, and for devising curricula based on national qualification requirements. They also decide independently on issues such as type of education and training provided and the method for completion of studies within the limits of their authorisation from the MoEC. A VET provider may be a local authority, municipal training consortium, foundation or other registered association or State company.

Vocational qualification requirements are developed through broad-based cooperation with stakeholders. Consequently, close cooperation with the world of work is essential. In addition to contributing to national qualification requirements, representatives from enterprises participate in work on local curricula, organising and planning training and skills demonstrations, regional committees as well as assessment of both skills demonstrations in upper secondary qualifications and competence tests in competence-based qualifications.

VET in the Finnish education and training system



Distinctive features of VET

More than 40% of the relevant age group start vocational upper secondary studies immediately after basic education. The biggest fields are technology, communications and transport and social services, health and sports. Half the students are female; the proportion, however, varies greatly from field to field. Technology and natural sciences are still very male-dominated areas while healthcare and social services as well as tourism and catering are very female-dominated.

A career as a vocational education and training teacher is generally considered attractive. This is reflected in numbers of applicants for vocational teacher training programmes, which invariably exceed intake numbers. Recently, about 30% of eligible applicants were admitted to training.

National qualification requirements have been based on a learning-outcomes approach since the early 1990s. In the past decade, flexibility and individualisation have become a means to respond to changing requirements of the world of work. Flexibility of vocational qualifications has been increased, for example, by diversifying opportunities to include modules from other vocational qualifications (including further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications) or polytechnic degrees. The goal is more flexibility – this will allow students to create individual learning paths and increase students' motivation for completing their studies. Further, it is meant to give education providers an opportunity to meet demands of regional and local worlds of work more effectively. Studies in upper secondary VET are based on individual study plans, comprising both compulsory and optional study modules. Modularisation allows for a degree of individualisation of qualifications.

Challenges

There is growing concern for risk of social exclusion of youth. Among 20-29 year-olds, around 110 000 only have a basic level of education and 55 000 young people are unemployed job-seekers. Youth unemployment is on the increase. Altogether, it is estimated there are 40 000 untrained young people not working nor in education or training programmes. This costs the nation approximately EUR 300 million a year.

The government implemented the youth guarantee programme from the beginning of 2013. The youth guarantee offers everyone under 25, as well as recent graduates under 30, a job, on-the-job training, a study place or rehabilitation within three months of becoming unemployed.

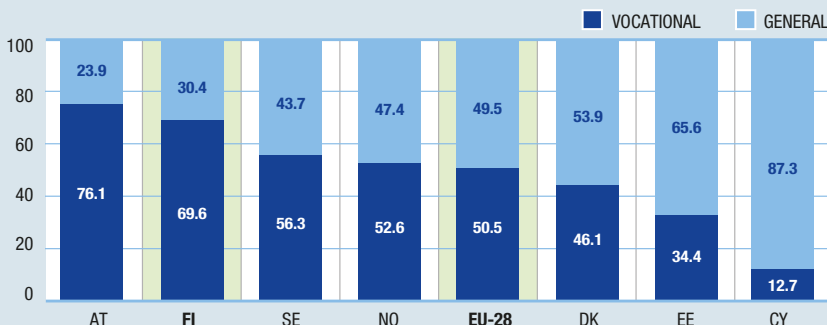
Drop-out from vocational education and training is far more common than from general upper secondary education, although it is not high in European terms (9% in the 2010/11 school year). Prevention of drop-out from education and exclusion from society is a policy priority. The reasoning is that every individual who drops out of education and the labour market is seen as being both a personal tragedy and a significant cost to society. A programme was set up in 2012 to develop anticipatory and individualised procedures in guidance and counselling and create pedagogical solutions and practices supporting completion of studies as well as work-centred learning environments and opportunities. There is also emphasis on creating practices to recognise prior learning more effectively. An additional EUR 4 million has been allocated to this programme.



Education and training in figures

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes

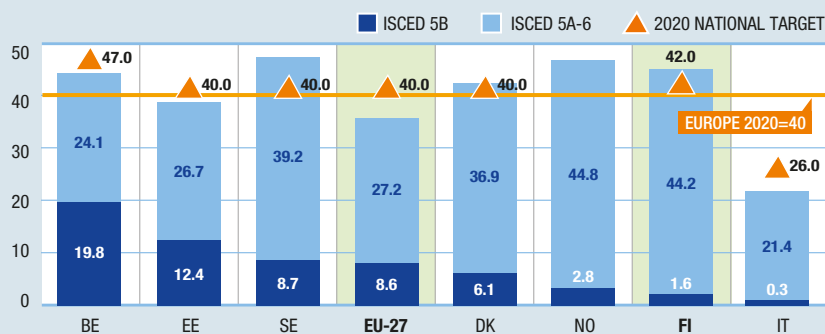
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2011



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 28.6.2013.

Tertiary education by type

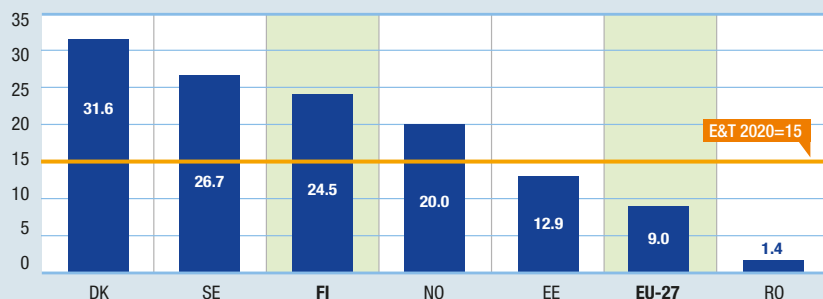
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2012



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 8.7.2013.

Lifelong learning

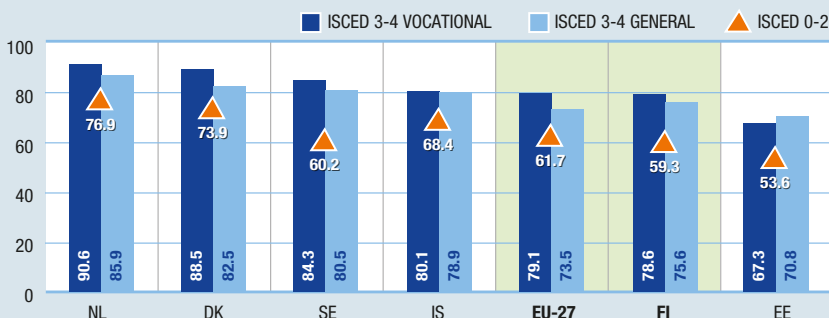
% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2012



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 3.7.2013.

Employment rates by highest level of educational attainment

20-34 year-olds no longer in education by highest level of educational attainment, 2009



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, 2009 ad hoc module of the EU labour force survey, date of extraction 19.9.2012.



Further information

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www.oph.fi/english	Finnish National Board of Education
www.tem.fi/index.phtml?l=en	Ministry of Employment and the Economy
www.oph.fi/english/sources_of_information/publications/brochures	Brochures on VET and vocational adult education
www.stat.fi/index_en.html	Statistics Finland
www.ek.fi/ek/en/index.php	Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK)
www.sak.fi/english	Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK)
www.sttk.fi	Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK)
www.oaj.fi	Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ)
www.cimo.fi/frontpage	Centre for International Mobility (CIMO)
www.sakkinet.fi	National Union of Finnish Upper secondary Vocational Students (SAKKI)
http://samok.fi/en	Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (SAMOK)

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