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SPOTLIGHT ON JOBS AND SKILLS FINLAND

2026

Introduction

Drawing on its rich country-level skills intelligence, Cedefop develops its Spotlights on jobs and skills for EU-27 Member States, Iceland and Norway. The Spotlights provide insights into the current labour market landscape, future trends, and skills anticipation in each country. The analysis is based on Cedefop's skills intelligence online tool, its skills forecast, the European Skills Index (ESI), online job advertisements, sectoral and occupational skills intelligence, and country-specific skills anticipation reports.

Recent employment developments

Over the past decade, the unemployment rate in Finland has steadily fallen, reaching 7 % in 2023, compared with an EU average of 6 %. The unemployed rate is highest for people with no or low qualifications (16 %), and significantly lower for those holding a high-level (4 %) or a medium-level qualification (7 %). At 34 %, the share of long-term unemployment ([1]) is disproportionately high among highly qualified unemployed people. Among the unemployed, 18 % with no or low qualifications and 19 % with a medium-level qualification are long-term unemployed.

In 2023, Finland had the highest employment share of researchers and engineers ([2]) in the EU, at 7 % (EU average 4 %). This reflects the digital and high-tech focus of the economy. Most researchers and engineers (32 %) are employed in professional services, much higher than the EU average of 12 %. The employment share of the health and social care sector (16 %) surpasses the EU average (11 %) (Figure 1). The importance of the health sector is also reflected in the shares of care workers (7 %) and health associate professionals (4 %), which are among the highest in the EU. The share of health associate professionals with a high-level qualification (89 %) is more than double the EU average (38 %), while the share of care workers with medium-level qualifications (75 %) is higher than the EU average (64 %).

With almost equal employment shares between female (49 %, EU average 46 %) and male (51 %, EU average 54 %) workers, there is strong gender balance in the Finnish labour market. Women are relatively often employed as clerks (77 %) and service and sales workers (73 %), and they are much more likely to work in energy supply services (39 % compared with 26 % in the EU on average). Female unemployment in Finland has been consistently lower than unemployment among men in recent years, which contrasts with typical patterns in other EU countries. Lower female unemployment partly relates to the stability of employment in sectors such as social services and education. Men are often employed in sectors such as construction and manufacturing, which are more affected by economic fluctuations.

As in many other EU countries, slightly more than half of Finland's employed population is aged between 24 and 49 (EU average 57 %). The shares of this group employed as ICT professionals and business managers is higher than other countries. In 2023, 13 % of young starters on the labour market (aged 15-24) were primarily employed as agricultural labourers, food preparation assistants, or drivers and vehicle operators, a much higher share than the EU average of 3 %.

The share of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in Finland is 8 % (EU average of 9 %) and has declined by 1 percentage point since 2020. In the past decade, Finland has consistently reported a lower NEET rate among young women (6 %) compared with young men (10 %); this contrasts with the situation in most other EU countries, where female NEET rates typically exceed those for men.

Recent skills and learning developments

In 2023, nearly 90 % of people in employment had a medium- or higher-level qualification. The

([1]) The long-term unemployment rate measures those who have been out of work for longer than 12 months.
([2]) To learn more about the classification of sectors, occupations, and qualification levels discussed in this report, see Annex 2 of Cedefop's Skills Forecast Methodological Framework (2023).

overqualification rate among young graduates aged 25-34 was below the EU average in 2023 (16 % versus 23 %) and has fallen 5 percentage points since 2013. While overqualification has declined, female graduates continue to be more affected by overqualification than their male counterparts (19 % versus 14 %).

Most online job advertisements (OJAs) were for jobs in administrative services (40 % of OJAs) or in accommodation and food services (11 %). The most in-demand knowledge area was business and administration, and the most requested skill was the ability to access and analyse digital data. Cedefop's OJA analysis underlines ([3]) the critical importance of the health and social care sector, with the OJA market share for care workers and health associate professionals exceeding that of other EU countries. Medical doctors and nursing professionals are also frequently sought by Finnish employers, accounting for a higher OJA share than the EU average.

Since 2017, Finland has ranked within the top six positions of Cedefop's European Skills Index (ESI), ranking fourth in 2024. The country achieved the highest score in the ESI skills development pillar, thanks to its high share of VET students and its high early childhood and pre-primary education pupil-to-teacher ratio, compared with other countries. Finland has a relatively low share of highly educated workers in low-wage jobs. Finland's weaker points include a relatively high share of involuntary underemployed part-time workers, and a substantial rate of early leaving from education and training.

Reflecting a highly digitalised economy and society, Finland ranks third in the ESI for advanced digital skills and, in 2023, had the highest share of employed individuals with above-basic digital skills in the EU. In total, 73 % of young people aged 25-34 and 54 % of the broader population have above-basic digital skills.

Training participation has been significantly above the EU average throughout the past decade, reaching almost double the EU average level in 2023 (26 % versus 14 %). Women tend to participate in training and learning activities more often than men (31 % versus 22 %). Nearly 30 % of employed individuals aged 25-49 participated in training, and 20 % of those aged 50-64 did so. These participation rates are among the highest in the EU.

Future employment trends

Until 2035, employment in Finland is projected to grow at a rate similar to the EU average (6 % compared with 5 % for the EU). Expected employment growth is highest in the information and communication sector, and the transportation and storage sector, while a significant decline in employment is projected for the education sector. From an occupational perspective, significant employment growth is projected for ICT technicians, legal, social and related associate professionals, and business and administration professionals. By 2035, jobs for science and engineering professionals are expected to account for nearly 8 % of total employment, the highest share in the EU. Population ageing is driving demand for health professionals and personal care workers, which are projected to account for 10 % of job openings.

In line with the overall trend towards skills upgrading across the EU shown in Cedefop's skills forecast, employment for people with high qualifications in Finland is expected to grow by 20 % between 2022 and 2035. Employment for medium-qualified workers is expected to decline slightly (-4 %), while employment for low-qualified workers is expected to shrink rapidly (-30 %) in the years leading up to 2035.

Finland's labour force is expected to grow marginally by 2035, by +0.6 %, in line with the EU average trend , with most age cohorts growing. The 30-34 and 60-64 age cohorts are expected to decline. By contrast, due to population ageing, the 65+ age group will grow significantly, which will increase demand for health and care professionals. Female labour force participation across sectors is projected to grow slightly faster than male participation.

Future skills and learning trends

Finland's labour force is projected to consist predominantly of high- and medium-qualified people,

([3]) Finland had a relatively low share of OJAs in 2023, accounting for just 0.3 % of total postings.

while the low-qualified will make up the smallest share of the labour force. The share of highly qualified people is expected to increase from 47 % in 2022 to 54 % by 2035. Compared with the EU average, the proportion of low- and medium-qualified people in the labour force will be relatively low and aligned with a decreasing demand for low-qualified workers.

Digitalisation and the shift towards a more service-oriented economy will drive the demand for people who can work in high-skilled occupations. Almost two thirds of job openings are expected to require a high-level qualification. Nearly one third will be for medium-qualified individuals, and only 2 % will be for people with no or low qualifications. Employment in high-qualified roles for ICT technicians and legal, social, and related associate professionals is expected grow significantly.

Between 2030 and 2035, employment in the high-tech economy is projected to grow by +8 %, faster than the EU average growth rate of +5 %. By 2035, 66 % of workers in the ICT services sector (58 % in the EU), 51 % in energy supply services (EU average 37 %), and 36 % in water and waste treatment occupations (EU average 22 %) are expected to be employed in high-tech occupations.

Expected skill shortages

With the supply of highly educated workers expected to grow, shortages are anticipated primarily at the low-skilled end of the labour market. Therefore, some medium- and high-skilled people may be forced to take jobs below their qualification level.

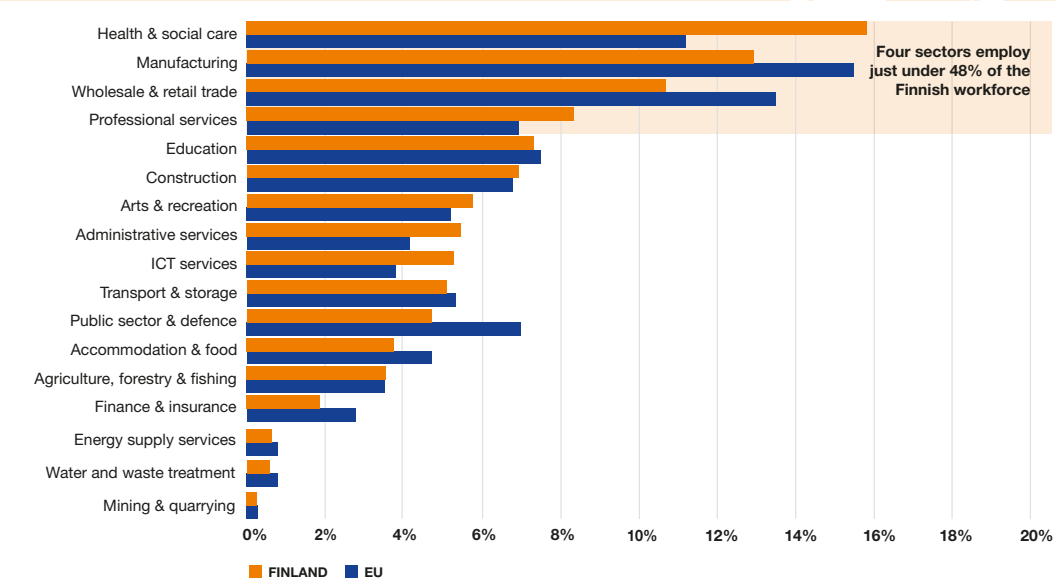
Shortages will also be notable for employers who need to recruit high-skilled workers, particularly in the labour market for professionals and associate professionals. Employers recruiting plant and machine operators, and assemblers will also face sizeable shortages, mainly due to replacement needs. Skilled agricultural and fishery workers will likely be in short supply due to high replacement demand and moderate employment growth.

The most acute skill shortages are expected in sectors where Finnish is the primary working language. The labour availability is considerably better in ICT-related roles.

FINLAND

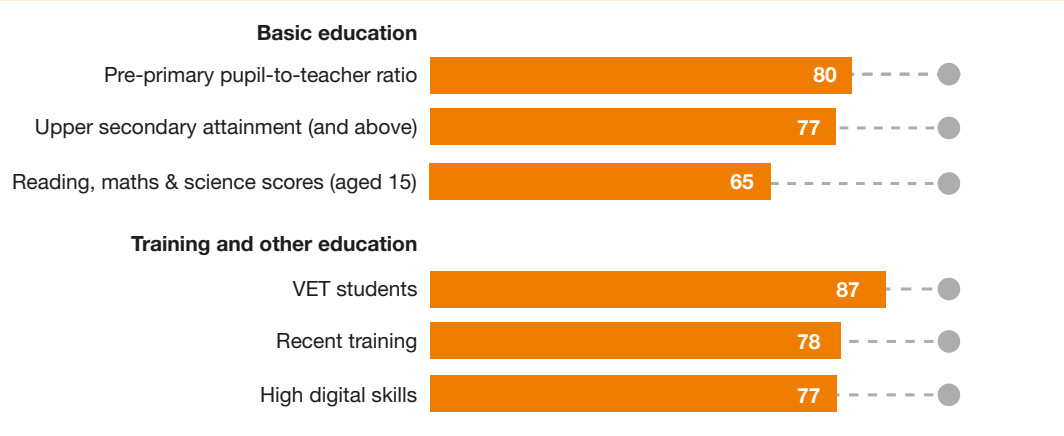
Jobs and skills in figures

Distribution of employment across sectors in Finland and the EU, 2023 (%)



Source: Cedefop Skills Intelligence tool.

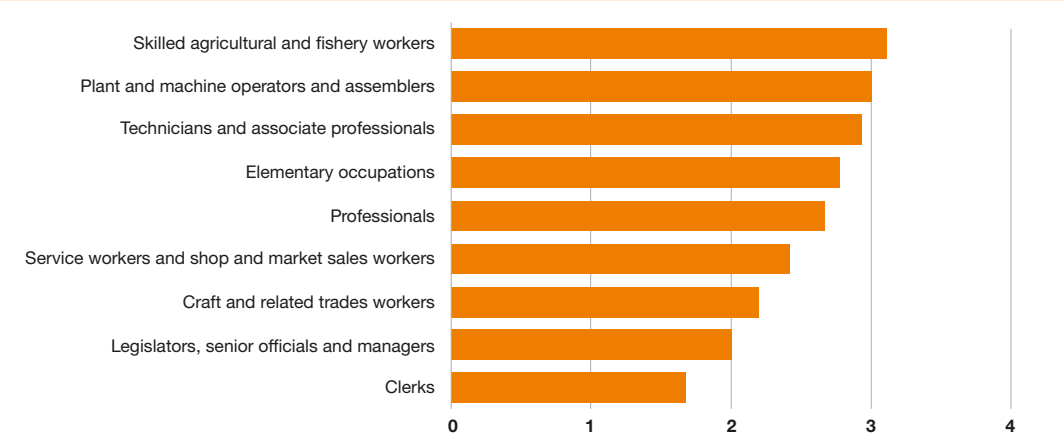
ESI skills activation pillar in Finland, 2024



NB: The ESI measures countries' 'distance to the ideal' performance, i.e. the highest achieved by any country over a period of seven years. The ideal performance is scaled to 100, with national scores computed and compared to that. Example: a score of 65 suggests that the country has reached 65 % of the ideal performance, with 35 % (100-65) room for improvement.

Source: Cedefop ESI.

Cedefop Labour and Skills Shortage Index, 2022-35, Finland



NB: The Labour and Skills Shortage Index is the simple average of the quartiles in each of the three pillars: (1) employment growth; (2) replacement demand; (3) supply/demand imbalance (IFIOD). A score of 4 indicates a higher level of shortage, and 1 no shortage. The outcome of the pillars is based on the relative evaluation in quantiles of the occupation (here for all EU-27).

Source: Cedefop Labour and Skills Shortage Index.

Further information

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Cedefop Skills intelligence tool

Cedefop Skills forecast

Cedefop Skills OVATE

Cedefop European Skills Index

Cedefop Labour and Skills Shortage Index

This Spotlight was drafted by Cedefop's Skills intelligence and foresight team.

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