

VET Teachers and Trainers in Finland

Publications of the Ministry of Education, Finland 2006:41



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Employment and Education Council
National Coordination Group for
Education and Training
National Education and Training
Committees

National Board of Education

- Support tasks for the Ministry of Education
- National development operation and quality improvement
- VET qualifications

Qualification Committees

State Provincial Offices

- Administrative monitoring
- Support tasks

Committees for Skills
Demonstrations

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Comprehensive responsibility for the field of
vocational education and training

- VET Policies and steering of VET
- Assuring preconditions for VET provision, defining the operational and financial framework and incentives for VET providers
- Normative guidelines and preparation of legislation
- Quality assurance of VET, qualification structures
- Guidelines for national development operations in VET

PROVIDERS OF VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

- Financing of labour market training for unemployed

Social Insurance Institution of Finland

- Student financial aid


Statistics Finland

Educational Evaluation Council

Centre for International Mobility CIMO

- Support tasks for the Ministry of Education and the vocational field
- National development operations

WORKING LIFE AND LEARNERS

The background of the page is a blue-tinted collage. At the top, a large clock face is visible with numbers 11, 12, and 13. Below the clock, there is a pair of scissors and an open book. The book is white with a grid pattern on its cover and the number 18 is visible on one of the pages. The overall theme is educational and professional.

This publication aims to provide an overview of teachers and trainers as part of the Finnish vocational education system. In Finland, the term “vocational teacher” encompasses teachers in vocational This publication aims to provide an overview of teachers and trainers as part of the Finnish vocational education system. In Finland, the term “vocational teacher” encompasses teachers in vocational upper secondary education, vocational adult education and polytechnic education. The focus of this publication is on teachers and trainers within vocational upper secondary education . The main focus is on teachers versus trainers as minimal research and analysis has been carried out on the latter.

1 VET in Finland: increased dialogue within society

The 1990's saw remarkable change in vocational education and training in Finland. The decade saw the change from an institutional VET system to education and training provided in close co-operation with the world of work. The aim was to improve the quality of education and training, to ensure its correspondence with the requirements of working life, to enhance dialogue between education and the world of work and to help students during the transition from institution to workplace. VET reform introduced on-the-job learning periods and skills demonstrations and increased apprenticeship training. On-the-job learning means focused and supervised periods that are compulsory in all fields of study. Responsibility for implementation of these periods rests with training providers – usually teachers at vocational institutions working in co-operation with trainers. Skills demonstrations were incorporated into all upper secondary vocational qualifications in August 2006. Through the skills demonstrations, students demonstrate how well they have achieved objectives set in their respective

VET programmes. Skills demonstrations take place throughout their studies and are arranged in co-operation between institutions and workplaces and trainers.

The number of people involved also grew in parallel with the reform. Instead of the former national administration/local provider axis, organisation of vocational education and training now increasingly involves stakeholders from the world of work, national and local advisory boards, statutory local boards for vocational skills demonstrations and the national education evaluation council. The relationship between these groups as well as their main functions can be seen in Figure on preceding page. In a decentralised system, the main responsibilities lie with VET providers. In addition to institutional VET, providers are responsible for managing and supervising apprenticeship training. The responsibilities range from providing vocational education and training to societal obligations, as can be seen in Figure 1.

¹ Initial vocational education and training in Finland encompasses vocational upper secondary education and training in institutions or as apprenticeship training. Qualifications can be obtained through curriculum-based studies or in skills demonstrations in demonstration-based qualifications. All qualifications are competence-based.

² The term trainer is used in this publication to denote a professional at the workplace who is involved in on-the-job learning activities with students. In Finland, the term workplace instructor is also widely used.

PROVIDERS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Main Tasks

- **Anticipation and interpretation of the need for education and competence**
- **Answering the field-specific need for competence and individual education in working life as a whole:**
 - Vocational upper secondary education and training
 - Vocational further and continuing education and training
 - Working life oriented education models – workplaces as learning environments (apprenticeship training, on-the-job learning, workplace training, jointly purchased training)
 - Adult labour policy education
- **Service and development tasks for working life and SMEs**
- **Individual education and competence services:**
 - Recognition of previously acquired skills
 - Individual study plans
 - Special needs education
 - Vocational top training.
- **Quality assurance in education**
- **Educational cooperation** (basic education schools, general upper secondary schools, higher education schools) and international cooperation

Guiding Principles

- **Working life orientation:**
 - Close interaction with working life – up-to-date knowledge of competence requirements
 - Competence and assurance of it are key
 - National and international frame of reference – activities guided by competence requirements within the region and the field
- **Customer orientation:**
 - Demand capacity (working life, students)
 - Clearing competence bottlenecks
 - Increasing correspondence with working life needs
- **Individuality:**
 - Recognition of individual educational needs
 - Full credit for previously acquired competence
 - Versatility of education choices
 - Flexible provision
- **Social cohesion:**
 - Commitment to preventing social exclusion
 - Competence needs of special needs groups

CORPORATIONS AND OTHER WORKING LIFE ORGANISATIONS

Figure 1: **Main responsibilities and guiding principles of VET providers.**

About 40 per cent of VET providers are municipalities or joint municipal authorities and almost 60 per cent are private. The private providers, however, tend to be small, generally being responsible for single institutions. Thus, even if private VET providers form the majority, based on figures at institutional level, most institutions are maintained by local authorities and joint municipal authorities. 16% of vocational institutions were privately owned in 2005.

The size of VET providers varies considerably. Student numbers of the biggest providers exceed 5,000 students (4 providers) whereas the majority of vocational upper secondary education and training providers (53%) are fairly small with less than 300 students. Approximately 13% of VET providers have less than 50 students. Some of these small VET providers are however important as providers of vocational continuing education and training, labour policy education or liberal adult education. Some of these also focus on providing vocational education in one specific field.

All initial VET providers and polytechnics are co-financed by the government and local authorities, except for further vocational training and university education. Funding for both is channelled to VET providers from the Ministry of Education. As funds

are not earmarked, education and training providers can use them at their discretion. In addition to statutory funding, the government grants discretionary subsidies for development of education and training. Financing for upper secondary VET and polytechnics is primarily allocated to VET providers according to student numbers and is calculated on the basis of unit costs per student. Unit costs are calculated on the basis of actual national costs in each field. As of 2006, unit costs include both operating costs and investments. In addition to public funding, VET providers and polytechnics provide fee-paying services and carry out projects.

Even in cases where a training provider is responsible for financial management, institutions generally have their own budget and this is the responsibility of the principal. In most cases, teachers also influence how budget funds are used. Finances are also reflected in teachers' work through the system of performance-based funding which has been implemented as part of statutory funding as of 2006. This performance-based funding is meant to encourage VET providers to promote employment prospects and continuing education opportunities for students, as well as to increase the completion rate of degrees and reduce dropout rates. Investment in continuing training for teachers is also taken into account.

2 Teachers in vocational education and training

There are 12,000 teachers in vocational upper secondary education and training, 3,000 teachers in continuing adult VET and 6,000 teachers in polytechnic education. The majority (over 80%) of teachers teach vocational studies. The remaining teachers are specialists in core subjects or special needs teachers and guidance counsellors. Principals are also included in these figures.

In Finland, VET teachers are seen as being their own specific group within the teaching profession. The first reason for this is that education and qualification requirements for VET teachers are very different from those for general education teachers. Secondly, the differences in their teaching work and work context are recognised. Specific traits in the work of VET teachers stem from the close connection between theory and practice and the strong presence of the world of work within VET. VET teachers must convey to their students the underlying theories and principles, how to “do the job” in practice as well as professional thinking, e.g. ethics. All this is made possible by the teacher’s own professional background in the field. This background is necessary in order to successfully achieve the aims and objectives of the core curricula, many of which are multidisciplinary.

The teaching profession and teacher education are generally highly valued in Finland. The Ministry of Education wants to strengthen the status of VET teachers and their training further. Polytechnics providing vocational teacher education are being urged to see its importance and to see teacher education as one of their strength areas. Esteem is related to autonomy and to the fact that the work is demanding as it requires thorough familiarity with vocational theory, practice and ethics. Another factor, of course, is the high qualification requirements. Even if the profession is valued, some fields have problems attracting enough qualified teachers because of the higher salary levels offered in enterprises, for example. The attraction is also reduced by the fact that the teaching career offers minimal opportunities for advancement.

³ Core subject studies such as languages, mathematics and natural sciences, humanities and social studies, physical education and other art and practical subjects, as well as health education are included in vocational upper secondary qualifications.

3 The different work contexts of VET teachers

Teachers in Finland enjoy a high level of professional autonomy and influence within their different work contexts. The roles of teachers in these contexts, the education system, the institutional community and the world of work are described in the following sections.

3.1 Teachers in the education system

As mentioned above, vocational teachers can be found in vocational upper secondary and vocational adult education and training, including apprenticeship training and at polytechnics. The structure of the educational system can be seen in Figure 2. The levels of education involving VET teachers are shown in dark blue. Adult education and training is organised at institutions forming part of the education system for young people and at institutions providing adult education and training only.

THE FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

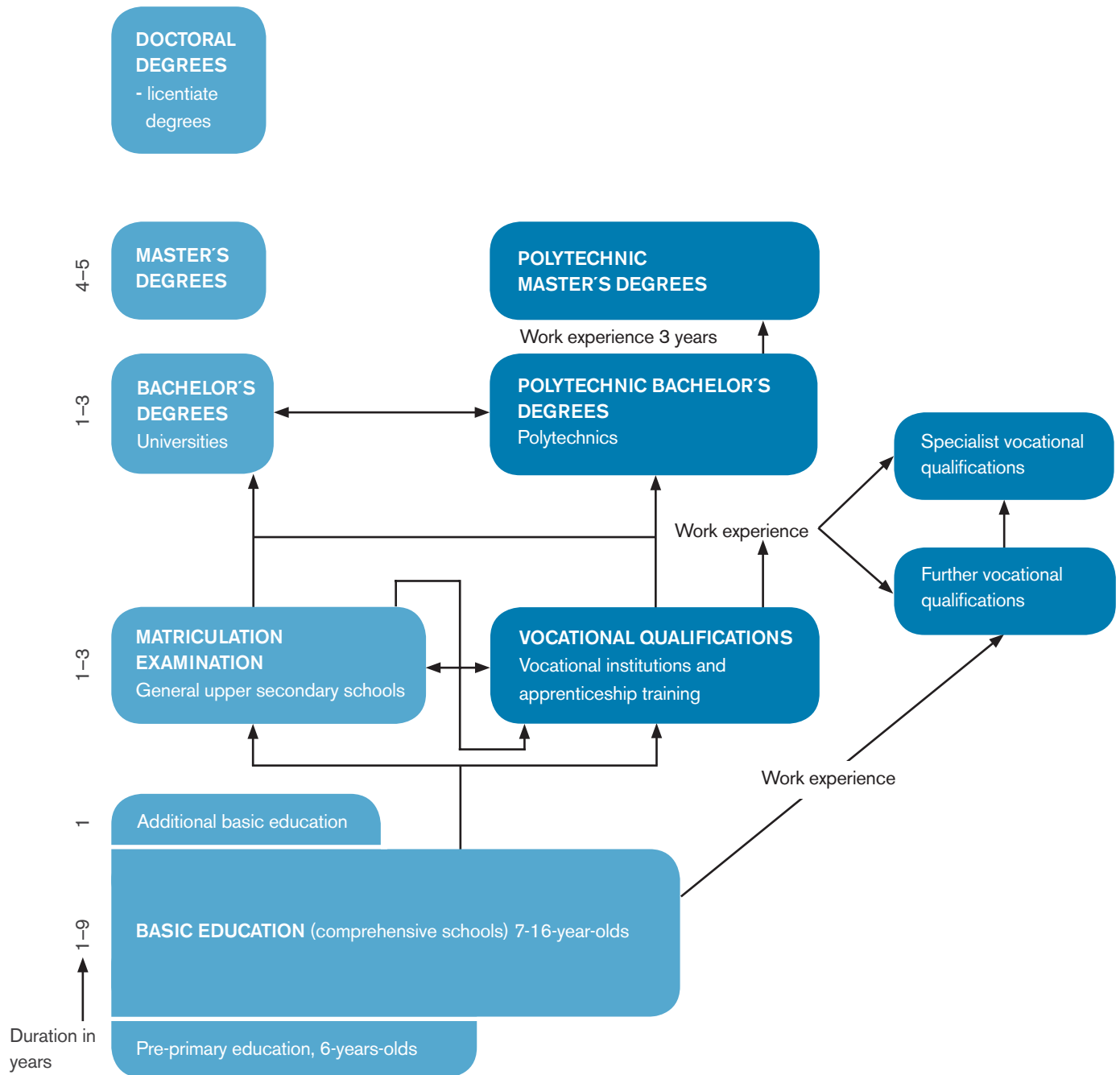


Figure 2. **The structure of the education system in Finland.**
The levels of education involving VET teachers are shown in dark blue.

3.2 Teachers and the institutional community

During the last ten years, the teachers' role has changed and become much broader than ever before. In addition to being able to teach their subject, VET teachers are required to possess administrative, team working, interdisciplinary and communication skills, areas which have received little attention in traditional teacher training. Increased cooperation with the world of work has meant that teachers are faced with the challenge of combining the different cultures of institutions and workplaces.

One of the "survival strategies" available to teachers is cooperation and sharing with colleagues. Thus teachers are seen more and more as being members of their community. The increasing big multi-field vocational institutions are seen by some as being a threat to collegiality and sense of community. Research points to the fact that the vocational field strongly moulds institutional culture. Another factor threatening communality is the increased emphasis on the individuality and autonomy of learners, which tends to distance them from the institutional community.

3.3 Teachers and the world of work

The work context of VET teachers also encompasses the world of work. VET reform has seen the introduction of on-the-job learning periods and skills demonstrations. On-the-job learning periods and skills demonstrations in initial VET and the increased number of apprenticeships have meant that teachers have had to establish wide networks with local enterprises, businesses and public institutions. Teachers and representatives of enterprises and institutions have to negotiate and agree on what students must learn during these periods and how they should be assessed. Teachers have generally felt that this has been somewhat difficult and that it has increased their workload, but have also seen the process as enriching their work. Evidently, both skills demonstrations and on-the-job learning play a central role in continuing training for VET teachers. Teachers also cooperate closely with the world of work in anticipating future training needs and in drawing up school curricula where the regional and local needs of the world of work must be taken into account.

Networking with the world of work is also explicitly expressed in legislation. According to the Vocational Education and Training Act, special attention should be paid to working life needs in education. The most important channels through which social partners and representatives of business life can participate in planning vocational education and training at a national level are the training committees set up by the Ministry of Education and the governing bodies and regional and local consultative committees. Usually, vocational institutions also seek to establish local networks allowing them to become involved in regional business life.

4 Learning facilitators at vocational institutions

Teaching staff at vocational institutions include teachers of VET studies, teachers of core subjects, such as languages and mathematics, teachers providing special needs education and guidance counsellors. The principal is also considered to be a member of the teaching staff. Most vocational institutions also have middle management posts which are not

regulated in legislation, such as heads of department and deputy principals. Heads of department and deputy principals generally have teaching qualifications. An overview of the different teacher groups and their places of teaching as well as their qualification requirements can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. **Teacher groups, institutions and qualification requirements**

	Upper secondary VET institutions	Polytechnics
Polytechnic VET teacher		●
Polytechnic senior lecturer		● ¹
VET teacher	■	
Subject teacher	●	●
Special needs teacher	● ■	
Guidance counsellor	● ■	● ■ ²
Principal	● ■	● ■

● = Master's degree including pedagogical studies

¹ Polytechnic senior lecturers are required to hold a postgraduate licentiate or doctorate.

■ = Master's or Bachelor's degree in the relevant field and pedagogical studies at a vocational teacher education college

² Some polytechnics employ guidance counsellors even if they are not required to do so by law.

The tasks and responsibilities of different teacher groups at an institution overlap as a result of demand for individualisation of studies and inclusion of students with special needs within main-stream education. With the strong tendency towards individualisation of studies, guidance counselling is becoming more and more the responsibility not just of specialised teachers, but also of all teachers. Educational guidance and counselling in general and guidance and counselling in studies and study skills are today seen as being the duty of all teachers and the whole institutional community. Inclusion, in turn, has resulted in a need for competence in the area of special needs. This has motivated many VET teachers to participate in programmes for special needs teachers as part of their professional development.

Training coordinators in apprenticeship training are responsible for apprenticeship training and its coordination. Very often, they have a university degree and experience from the world of work or a background in business. The latter is considered to be vital as they cooperate very closely with the world of work. Training coordinators are responsible for students' individual study plans. They also evaluate whether enterprises and their service or production structure are such that they match individual study plans. They also find a suitable provider of theoretical studies. Finally, they evaluate training and collect feedback from training providers, enterprises and students. VET teacher institutions have similar tasks as training coordinators. In many cases, apprenticeship training is also organised by VET institutions and, in such cases, VET teachers may act as training coordinators or they may teach apprentices during school periods.

As the size of training providers has grown over the last few years, the need for staff to support institutions and teachers in local administration has increased. Many of the bigger providers employ staff as heads of VET divisions, coordinators of international affairs, consultants and planning specialists,

for example. Their tasks and responsibilities are to coordinate and develop education and training within VET the institution.

At VET institutions, as well as teachers, some staff specialise in supporting students with special needs while skilled workers facilitate the practical part of their studies.

Special needs assistants may be employed by a local authority, an institution, a special class or for one or more students with severe disabilities. The nature, duties and operational priorities of individual special needs assistants vary according to their assignments.

School social workers, in turn, help students with problems relating to growth and development or difficulties at school. Typical situations requiring a school social worker's attention include truancy, bullying and problems caused by changing schools or classes.

School psychologists deal with learning and adjustment problems at schools. Their duties are divided between determination, treatment and prevention of problems and provision of consultancy for teachers. Psychologists contribute to charting and improving the circumstances of individual students experiencing school-related and interpersonal difficulties in co-operation with teachers, parents and the students themselves. Most school psychologists work at more than one school.

Skilled workers are learning facilitators that work at some VET institutions. The role of these workers varies greatly but their basic task may be to maintain facilities, service machinery, maintain workshops and other facilities, instruct students in their tasks, help teachers or even function as teachers, for example. At forestry institutions, there are forestry workers and forestry machine operators, while you may, for example find mechanics, machinists, builders and bus drivers at other vocational institutions.

4.1 Attractiveness of the teaching profession

Generally speaking, Finnish teacher education has not as yet faced problems in terms of attracting applicants, with the exception of mathematics and certain natural sciences. Applicant volumes for vocational teacher education and training vary between VET sectors. Some fields such as the social and health care and hotel, restaurant and catering sectors have a surplus of applicants. In some other fields, such as technology, the intake has had to be reduced due to a lack of good applicants. Applicant volumes are also influenced by economic cycles. Even if the situation is good at the moment, the expanding responsibilities, heterogeneous student population, fast changes in society as well as flat career development may have a negative influence on the attractiveness of the profession.

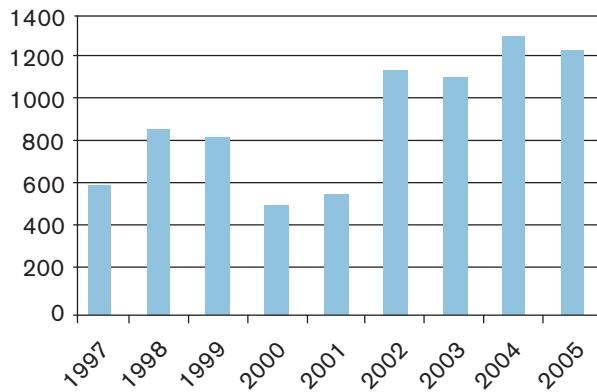
As shown in Figure 3, there has been some variation in the volumes of people completing vocational teacher education and training between 1997 and 2005. Since 2002, the figure for those completing

teacher education and training has exceeded 1,000 people. This increase is linked to that fact that intake numbers were increased to prevent a shortage of teachers. The proportion of men among those who completed vocational teacher education and training is around 40 percent of all those who completed the studies. The average time spent completing the pedagogical studies for vocational teachers was 1.5 years.

The key concerns in terms of teacher recruitment today and in the future include:

- The future attractiveness of the teaching profession;
- Competition for labour with other professional fields for highly educated people;
- Retirement of currently employed teachers;
- Migration of populations from sparsely to densely populated areas
- Availability and permanence of teaching posts;
- Factors related to teachers' pay and career development;
- Changes in the content of the teaching profession.
- The need to pay more attention to working life and sector-specific skills of teacher applicants

Figure 3. **Number of graduates from vocational teacher education programmes, 1997-2005.**



Although there are no official statistics on career mobility for teachers, the general impression is that once teachers enter the profession, they tend to stay in the teaching profession and movement to other fields is not very common. Efforts have been made to change the salary system into one that would allow more individual flexibility. The population in Finland is ageing and this is also true of VET teachers. Of all VET teachers, over 40% are aged 50 or over (cf. Tables 2 and 3). The pension reforms introduced in 2005 encourage employees to stay on until the age of 68 and this might result in a better situation.

At vocational upper secondary institutions in 2005, an average of nearly 53% of teachers were women: 70% of core subject teachers and 49% of vocational studies teachers were women. At adult education centres, the average was 49% in 2005: 70% of core subject teachers and 47% of vocational studies teachers were women. Almost half the principals and vice-principals were women at vocational upper secondary institutions but only 37% at adult education centres.

Table 2. **Age distribution of full-time teachers in upper secondary vocational education and training, 2005.**

Type of teacher	Number	Less than 30	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	64+
Core subject teacher	2,265	6%	8%	11%	15%	16%	16%	19%	9%	0%
Vocational subject teacher	9,716	3%	7%	11%	16%	18%	19%	17%	8%	0%

Source: Statistics Finland

Table 3. **Age distribution of full-time teachers in vocational adult education 2005.**

Type of teacher	Number	Less than 30	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	64+
Core subject teacher	311	9%	12%	16%	19%	14%	14%	10%	4%	0%
Vocational subject teacher	2,750	4%	8%	12%	18%	19%	17%	16%	7%	0%

Source: Statistics Finland

4.2 Qualification requirements: moving towards an academic profession

In order to become a teacher in Finland, you need to fulfil qualification requirements as set out in legislation. There is no separate procedure for accreditation or recognition. All teachers at VET institutions and polytechnics have pedagogical education worth a scope of 60 ECTS credit points.

Education for core subject teachers, such as teachers of mathematics or languages is the same as for basic education and general upper secondary education. Their education is the same regardless of the subject taught. Core subject teachers have a Master's degree with a scope of 300 ECTS including 60 ECTS of pedagogical studies. The average study time for a Master's degree in Finland is six years. It varies, however, as university students enjoy a high level of freedom in terms of what they study and when.

Teachers of vocational subjects are required to have an appropriate Master's degree or a polytechnic degree or, if the field does not allow for this, the highest possible qualification in their own occupational field. In addition, they must complete pedagogical studies with a scope of 60 ECTS and have at least three years of work experience in the field. Polytechnic lecturers are required to have a Master's degree and three years of relevant work experience and senior lecturers need to have a licentiate or doctorate and the same work experience. They are also obliged to complete the pedagogical studies for teachers within three years after taking up their post.

Vocational teacher education builds on two basic requirements: a degree and work experience. When applying for teacher education, students are already professionals with personal experience of a career in a certain field. Student teachers are thus professionals in their own fields and can therefore never be studying for their first qualification. As qualification requirements have been raised to a higher education level, one of the challenges for VET teacher education and policy-making is to ensure that teachers' practical vocational skills are maintained.

Special needs teachers and guidance counsellors are required either in initial education as core subject teachers or as vocational studies teachers in addition to specialisation in special needs education.

As shown in Table 4, vocational studies teachers form the biggest teacher group. Most teachers in vocational education and training are full-time teachers who are fully qualified.

Table 4. **Teachers at vocational upper secondary institutions in 2005.**

Type of teacher	Number	Fully qualified
Core subject teachers	2,265	73.7%
Full-time	2,050	79.0%
Part-time	215	27.0%
Vocational studies teachers	9,716	73.2%
Full-time	9,060	76.0%
Part-time	656	36.0%
Total	11,981	73.3%
Full-time teachers	11,110	76.4%
Part-time teachers	871	33.8%

Source: Statistics Finland 2005

Not all teachers at vocational institutions have the formal qualifications required for their positions. The proportion of non-fully qualified teachers varies from field to field (cf. Tables 5 and 6). Most of these teachers have not completed the required pedagogical studies. It is also possible to select such applicants for teaching posts within vocational education and training if they have not completed the pedagogical studies required for teaching qualifications, provided that they complete these studies within three years. A considerable proportion of students starting vocational teacher education and training are already working as teachers.

Part-time and temporary teachers are required to hold a full teaching qualification but many lack the pedagogical studies as part-time or temporary posts are not attractive to fully qualified teachers.

Table 5. **Proportion of formally qualified full-time vocational studies teachers in vocational upper secondary education and training in 2005 by field of education.**

Main subject taught by the teacher	Number	Formally qualified
Humanities and education	145	71.0%
Culture	1,227	61.9%
Social sciences, business and administration	915	68.2%
Natural sciences	179	35.8%
Technology, communications and transport	3,235	72.8%
Natural resources and the environment	907	68.4%
Social services, health and sports	1,459	81.8%
Tourism, catering and domestic services	1,327	87.3%
Other education	242	74.4%
No indication of subject	80	66.3%
Total	11,981	73.3%

Source: Statistics Finland

Table 6. **Proportion of fully qualified full-time vocational studies teachers in adult education, 2005**

Main subject taught by the teacher	Number	Formally qualified
Humanities and education	83	71%
Culture	58	57%
Social sciences, business and administration	297	46%
Natural sciences	122	43%
Technology, communications and transport	1,020	46%
Natural resources and the environment	84	63%
Social services, health and sports	537	79%
Tourism, catering and domestic services	261	77%
Other education	169	59%
No indication of subject	119	43%
Total	2,750	57%

Source: Statistics Finland

Principals at upper secondary vocational institutions should have a Master's or a Bachelor's degree and the pedagogical qualifications as required of teachers. Furthermore, they should have sufficient teaching experience. They are also required to have obtained a certificate of educational administration accredited by the Finnish National Board of Education, or studies in educational administration at a university, or they must have acquired comparable administrative experience. Admission to the administrative studies required by a principal is free without any entry requirements.

Principals at vocational adult education centres should hold a Master's or Bachelor's degree and have sufficient work experience in the field. They are also required to have completed the same administrative studies as principals at vocational upper secondary institutions. Principals of polytechnics should have a licentiate or doctorate, sufficient knowledge of the educational field as well as administrative experience.

4.3 Vocational teacher education

Vocational teachers are trained at five vocational teacher education colleges and one Swedish-speaking university, the Åbo Akademi. Teacher education colleges operate in conjunction with polytechnics. All vocational teacher education colleges provide multi-field training, meaning that they train teachers for all vocational fields. This dates back to the 1990's when the law on vocational teacher education changed such that basic education for teachers was integrated into higher education. This meant that more than twenty post-secondary level teacher training colleges were merged into seven bigger colleges. This model is considered to be successful, as many issues are common to all fields. Issues such as enhancing cooperation between institutions and the world of work, development of eLearning, internationalisation etc. are in the interests of all fields.

4.3.1 Administration and funding

Polytechnics, as well as all other higher education institutions in Finland, enjoy a high degree of autonomy. Each university faculty and vocational teacher education college draws up their own education programmes.

Polytechnic education providers are mostly municipalities or municipal federations. Polytechnics receive state subsidies for vocational teacher education on an annual basis. In 2005, approximately 11,500,000 euros of state funds were reserved for vocational teacher education. Funding for each teacher education college is based on the number of students and studies completed. These numbers are included as part of the performance targets determined in performance negotiations between polytechnics and the Ministry of Education.

Vocational teacher education and training are provided free of charge for students. In addition, students may receive financial aid. The purpose of student financial aid is to guarantee equality of education by securing students' income. The system is fairly comprehensive, covering some 75% of all students aged over 16 in upper secondary and higher education.

4.3.2 Admission to teacher education

Surveys of teacher needs have been carried out over the past few years. These surveys have shown that there will be a considerable shortage of teachers in some fields in the future. As a result, the annual intake to vocational teacher education has been increased in line with survey results, particularly in those fields, which are expected to face the most severe shortages in terms of vocational teachers.

Vocational teacher education colleges are autonomous and can decide on their own selection criteria. Very commonly, however, the following criteria are taken into account when selecting students:

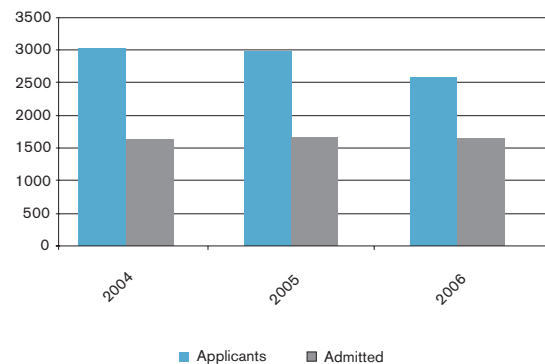
- degrees
- basic studies in education
- work experience (non-teaching)
- teaching experience
- special activities

Teacher education colleges have developed co-operation in terms of student selection and their division of work in order for different field-specific teacher needs to be taken into account. Vocational teacher education colleges agreed on a joint application procedure in 2003, which involves applicants for vocational teacher education and training, vocational student counsellor education and vocational special needs teacher education. Today, most applications are made using the Internet-based application system⁴.

Student selection procedures comply with selection criteria as decided by the vocational teacher education colleges, which include good competence and expertise in the occupational field. In 2005, nearly 70% of applicants had five or more years of work experience.

There are not enough places available in teacher education to accommodate all applicants. Of all applicants, an average of 63% had the required qualifications in 2004 - 2006 (cf. Figure 4).

Figure 4: Number of applicants for vocational teacher education with required qualifications, 2004-2006.



Applicant volumes vary by sector of education. Applicant volumes for the tourism, catering and home economics sector and the health care and social services sector are many times higher than annual intake quotas. Of all the major sectors of education, the number of applicants for teacher education in proportion to intake quotas is lowest in the technology and transport sector. Applicant volumes for teacher education in the business and administration sector have decreased steadily over recent years.

4.3.3 Training models and curricula

At the beginning of 1999, teacher qualifications for general and vocational institutions were harmonised. The same minimum scope of 60 ECTS credits, which corresponds to one year of full-time study, of pedagogical studies is required of teachers for all types of educational institution (basic education, general upper secondary schools, vocational institutions and liberal adult education institutions). The fundamental idea is that students should achieve such core knowledge of teaching and learning that can be generalised to all forms of education and training. Teachers' pedagogical studies thus form the common core material concerning all forms of teacher education.

⁴ The application system can be found online at www.opekorkeahaku.fi.

Core subject teacher education

Pedagogical studies for core subject teachers can be taken concurrently, i.e. in a programme that combines general education in one or more subjects with practical professional teacher education from the outset. A consecutive model is also possible; here students obtain a degree in a particular subject and later take teachers' pedagogical studies. Pedagogical studies can be completed either at pedagogical faculties within universities or at teacher education colleges.

Vocational studies teacher education

Vocational teacher education is always consecutive, meaning that students must hold a Master's or Bachelor's degree in the relevant field before beginning teacher education, which is completed at vocational teacher education colleges. Vocational teacher education studies include basic studies in education, studies in vocational pedagogy and teaching practice as well as optional studies which can comprise studies in adult education or special needs education, for example. Special needs teacher and guidance counsellor education also takes place after completion of teaching qualifications for general or vocational education.

As most vocational teacher students already work as teachers, training programmes are more and more flexible and individually tailored. Students may complete education in one academic year by studying full-time or flexibly as multiform in-service training in 1 to 3 years and they may link their studies to development of their own teaching methods and the working environment of the institution. As a result, education is closely tied to regional issues. The average graduation time is 1.5 years.

Students in teacher education study by means of various multiform arrangements and the intention is to draw up an individual learning programme for teacher education together with each student teacher. On several programmes, prior experience and learning are taken into account. Recognition of prior learning means that a student's programme is individually tailored so that they can further develop their knowledge and skills. Since the autumn of 2005, one vocational teacher education college has

offered a virtual teacher education programme.

Vocational teacher education is similar for all students regardless of their field or subject specialisation. The aim is to provide students with the skills and knowledge to guide learning for different kinds of students and to develop their own field of teaching, taking developments in occupations and working life into account. Studies include basic studies in education, vocational subject pedagogic studies, teaching practice and other studies.

Special needs teacher education

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

The aim is to train experts who, in addition to their own educational work, can supervise the special pedagogical work of other teachers and the institution as a whole.

Guidance counsellor education

Guidance counsellors at vocational institutions have the same basic qualification requirements as subject or vocational subject teachers. In addition, they need to have education with a scope of 60 ECTS.

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

Admission requirements for vocational special needs teacher education as well as for vocational guidance counsellor education include qualifications required of vocational institution teachers and at least one year of teaching experience at a vocational institution.

Contents of programmes

Due to the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by higher education institutions, the requirements and core contents are defined in legislation at a very general level.

Core subject teachers need to have a Master's degree comprising studies in one or two subjects taught at different institutions and teachers' pedagogical studies of 60 ECTS. Pedagogical studies for core subject teachers generally focus on didactics and contain practical training periods at schools (cf. Information box 1).

Vocational studies teachers should have an appropriate Master's degree or an appropriate polytechnic degree or the highest possible qualification in their own occupational field. In addition, they must complete pedagogical studies with a scope of 60 ECTS comprising:

1. basic studies in pedagogy;
2. studies in vocational education;
3. teaching practice;
4. other studies.

The aim is to provide students with the skills and knowledge to guide learning for different kinds of students and to develop their own field of teaching, taking developments in occupations and working life into account. A study programme can comprise for example:

- Introduction to vocational education and training
- Basic pedagogical studies (adult pedagogy, psychology, education and society, learning organisations, introduction to research methodology,)
- Developing vocational education and training (conceptions of learning and work, teaching practice, didactics, assessment, multiculturalism)

Vocational teacher education colleges cooperate in developing the contents of vocational teacher education. Their strategy for 2010 outlines joint targets and challenges (see Information box 2).

Information box 1.

Pedagogical studies for core subject teachers

The example below is from the University of Oulu:

- Module 1:
Orientation to pedagogical studies
- Module 2:
Development of children and young people
- Module 3:
Influencing through education
- Module 4:
Education and its context
- Module 5
Professional growth of a teacher
- Complementary studies such as educational administration, ICT in education, education for students with special needs.

Information box 2.

Vocational teacher education colleges' strategy for 2010

In their strategy for 2010, vocational teacher education colleges have set the following joint goals regarding the competences of Vocational teachers:

1. Knowledge of a teacher's different working environments, methodologies, ideologies and values
2. Research skills
3. Communication skills
4. Guidance skills
5. Collegial skills
6. Skills for critical thinking
7. Learner-centred approaches
8. Skills and readiness for innovation

Special needs teachers at vocational institutions are required either to have qualifications as special needs teachers in general education or core subject teacher or vocational subject teacher qualifications plus vocational special needs teacher education. The contents of a programme for vocational special needs teachers can be as follows:

- Changing the context of vocational special needs education
- Basic studies in vocational special needs teacher education
- Individual learning
- Interaction and cooperation
- Assessment of one's own professional growth and development

Guidance counsellors at vocational institutions are required to have qualifications as guidance counsellors in general education or core subject teacher or vocational subject teacher qualifications plus vocational guidance counsellor education.

A study programme for guidance counsellors at vocational institutions can comprise for example:

- Interpreting the present times and profession of guidance counsellor
- Guidance and learning through a lifetime
- Counselling in different contexts
- Networking in counselling
- Evaluating one's professional growth and development targets

Those studying to become teachers are assessed at the end of their studies. Assessment comprises assignments carried out during studies, the final project (often an independent development project) and assessment of teaching practice.

4.3.4 Continuing training for VET teachers

Generally, teaching staff are obliged to participate in in-service training. In the case of teachers in vocational upper secondary institutions, this is based on collective agreements and the number of days of required in-service training varies from 0-5 outside school hours per school year depending on the vocational field.

This type of continuing training is provided free of charge for teachers and they enjoy full salary benefits during their participation. Responsibility for funding such training rests with teachers' employers, mainly local authorities. The contents and implementation method of training are decided by individual employers. Each employer may organise training itself or may order it from an education provider (universities, polytechnics, organisations, private continuing education and training providers, for example).

VET teachers generally participate in in-service training more than their colleagues in general education. In a sample-based study, the proportion of VET teachers who had not taken part in continuing training in 2005 was 12% compared with 62.5% of basic education teachers. The corresponding figure for general upper secondary teachers is 10.8%. VET principals also participate in continuing training more often than head teachers in general education.

Participation in continuing education and training does not have a direct bearing on teachers' salary and career development. Training is intended to help keep their skills and competences up-to-date.

Typical topics of in-service training based on collective agreements include the contents of teaching subjects and other issues related to curricular work, pedagogical use of ICT and local topics of current interest.

Continuing education focusing on education and training policy priorities is subsidised from state budget funds. The content priorities of this type of education are determined in the State Budget on an annual basis. The topics prioritised in 2006 are:

- eLearning pedagogy and media competence
- Developing the foundation of learning and subject-specific skills.
- Promoting education in entrepreneurship
- Well-being of students and guidance and counselling
- Special needs education
- On-the-job learning and skills demonstrations
- Promoting active citizenship and education for students from multicultural backgrounds
- School management training

This education is provided free of charge for participants. Each employer decides whether individual teachers may participate in education during their working hours and with full salary benefits and whether they receive compensation for any travel and accommodation expenses.

To support VET teachers in increased cooperation with the world of work, the Finnish National Board of Education has drawn up two continuing training programmes, the näyttötutkintomestarikoulutus (= specialist in demonstration-based qualifications) and opettajan työelämäosaamisen opinnot (= studies for teachers to help increase their competence in the world of work). These programmes support the VET reform of the late 1990's which brought on-the-job learning periods and skills demonstrations to all vocational upper secondary education and training. European social fund (ESF) funding has played a significant role when developing new models for on-the-job learning and skills demonstrations. Many VET providers have their own programmes or are involved in projects that provide teachers with the opportunity to take part in on-the-job learning periods and skills demonstrations. Teachers have been very satisfied with these opportunities, but the flip side of the coin is that it is mostly the same teachers that actively participate in these periods as well as other professional development activities. In 2005, almost 22% of vocational studies teachers had done at least a two-month period in an enterprise during the previous five years.

When participating in self-motivated continuing education and training, teachers may receive support for educational costs from their employers. Each employer decides whether individual teachers may participate in such education or training during their normal working hours.

In terms of international mobility, teachers in vocational education and training mostly participate in EU programmes such as Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci as well as the Nordplus programme within the Nordic countries. Funding has also been available from the Ministry of Education and the institutions themselves. The most important motives for international mobility have been:

- mentoring and evaluation in connection with students' on-the-job learning placements abroad
- preparatory visits (setting up cooperation, agreeing on-the-job placements)
- participation in students' on-the-job learning periods (guidance counselling, start-up, evaluation)

Some teachers, particularly in the tourism, catering and home economics sector, are also involved in on-the-job training abroad as part of their in-service training. These periods generally range from one to four weeks. The most visited target countries have been Sweden, the UK, Germany and Estonia.

Today, due to the increasing competence demanded of teachers, there is a growing tendency to consider the competences of schools or institutions as a whole. This allows teachers to specialise as they are not under pressure to be experts in everything. This thinking also reflects the autonomy and accountability of institutions (cf. below).

4.4 Conditions of work for teachers

The following sections describe the autonomy and influence that teachers have in a decentralised system as well as their workload, salaries and career development.

4.4.1 Teachers in a decentralised system

In Finland, teachers are very autonomous in their professions and thus have considerable opportunities to influence their work. The transfer of decision-making powers to institutions and teachers has been characteristic of the Finnish education system since the 1980's. This development trend became particularly strong in the 1990's. The aim of increasing the decision-making powers of institutions was to strengthen the institutions' readiness to meet the needs of their surrounding communities and to take decision-making as close as possible to those affected by the decisions. This is reflected in the autonomy and power of both principals and teachers. In addition to their opportunity to influence curricula and

course design, they are also free to take their own decisions regarding pedagogy, learning materials and student assessment. Very often, Finnish teachers can also participate in making decisions on budgets and, in particular, on allocation of resources within the institution. Planning and designing the learning environment is the responsibility of teachers as this requires familiarity with the field in question.

Principals are seen more and more as being the administrative heads of their institutions. Their role as pedagogical leaders has diminished as teachers have become more autonomous and as the administrative burden has grown with the increasing forward planning and reporting required by the different authorities. Their responsibilities include human resources management and recruitment, strategic and other forward planning, finances, marketing, networking and so on. Even if principals do have overall responsibility for their institution, they are accountable to the local authorities or management boards.

A teacher's workload is mainly defined in the collective agreement and, to some extent, locally as well. In addition to teaching, teachers are required to participate in planning activities at the institution. These activities can be related to cooperation among teachers, networking with local enterprises, contacts with parents, developing the teacher's own instruction and developing the institution. Some of the most central developmental tasks involve drawing up the institution's curricula and self-evaluation of the institution's activities. Teachers' duties also include helping students to draw up their individual study plans and plans for the on-the-job training periods. Teachers guide students in learning during lessons, during students' self-directed studies and on-the-job. The tutoring and guidance role is demanding with a heterogeneous student population. Students may be aged 16-19 years, they may be adults or from multicultural backgrounds. In addition, the theoretical instruction included in apprenticeship training is organised at vocational institutions. Apprenticeship students generally have more work and are more challenging for teachers as their training paths are highly individual. In addition, their previous work experience and background

must be taken into account in all their education. Teachers are also expected to visit and cooperate with enterprises, even if the level of activity in this respect varies considerably.

In many cases, teachers have to function as marketers for their institutions: they inform and guide applicants seeking entrance to their institutions. This marketing function stems from the principle of accountability of the institutions.

The teachers' teaching load generally varies from 17 to 25 lessons per week. In addition to this, teachers can give extra lessons which increase their salary. The school year generally comprises 190 days. In some fields, teachers have a flexible full-time arrangement, which means that the share of teaching and other work is negotiated at institutional level. Part of a guidance counsellor's work can be arranged based on a similar agreement.

4.4.2 Salary and career development

Teachers' career structures in Finland today are flat. The salary increase from initial starting salary to maximum salary after 20 years is among the lowest in Europe. Furthermore, there are not many opportunities for promotion as a teacher, unless being leader of a college team counts in this respect. Career development and promotion means moving on to more administrative posts such as head of department, principal and/or to posts in planning or developing training or educational administration.

Teachers' salaries are agreed nationally as part of collective agreements, which are concluded at intervals of 1-3 years. A teacher's position on the salary scale is determined according to their duties and qualifications. For example, as part of the collective agreement for Finnish municipalities, teachers have been divided into two financial classes according to the cost of living; salaries in the first financial class, including major cities and remote areas, are about 3% higher. Years of service in public administration and teaching experience lead to increases. Various additional duties are compensated either with higher salary grades or bonuses. This collective agreement is negotiated between the Trade Union of Education in Finland and Local Authority Employers in

Finland. The Trade Union of Education has a remarkable mandate as ca. 97% of Finnish teachers are members. The Union also acts on behalf of teachers concerning educational policies and issues in discussions with the national educational administration.

Generally speaking, VET teachers' salaries are higher than those of teachers in basic education and on a par with those of teachers in general upper secondary schools. However, their workload is considerably higher (cf. above 3.4.1). The table 7 gives some examples of VET teacher salaries and salary development.

The average salary of an upper secondary VET principal is 4,197 €/month (variation 3,000-5,000) and 3,411 €/month for adult education institutions (variation 3,000-3,900).

At the moment, the salary system within education is being developed and reshaped considerably. The aim is to develop a system where the salary is defined on the basis of the level of demand and responsibilities. In the future, personal achievements and competences of teachers will also be reflected in salaries.

Table 7. **Examples of salaries⁵ euros/month (1st March 2005)**

Title	Starting salary with 4 extra hours	5 years of experience	10 years of experience	20 years of experience
Vocational institution				
Full-time teacher, vocational subjects	2,730	2,930	3,170	3,680
Full-time teacher, core subjects	2,540	2,720	2,940	3,400
Health-care institution				
Full-time teacher, vocational subjects	2,530	–	–	2,700
Business & administration⁶				
Full-time teacher, vocational subjects	2,650	2,840	3,060	3,545

⁵ Salaries vary depending on degrees awarded.

⁶ Compulsory teaching time for teachers varies; the business and administration fields have the lowest amount of teaching time, vocational institutions have the most

4.5 Quality assurance: from supervision to steering

In Finland, evaluation is seen as being the essential tool for maintaining high standards in education as well as for monitoring that the objectives of legislation are achieved. Evaluation provides the basis for improving both teaching and learning. Evaluation in its present form started as early as at the beginning of the 1990's when the steering system was reformed and inspection in its traditional form ceased. Evaluation concentrates on educational outcomes and performance.

4.5.1 Quality Assurance at institutional level

Education and training is no longer mainly steered in detail through legal norms and follow-up systems built on these, but in a more customer-oriented manner in accordance with objectives set by educational institutions and their maintaining bodies themselves. Consequently, educational institutions have become differentiated and the options that they provide have multiplied. This has partly increased the need for information through evaluation. At an institutional level, evaluation targets include achievement of objectives, completion of pedagogic and curricular reforms and use of resources.

The introduction of a performance-based funding system in vocational education and training in 2002 has also widened the use of self-evaluation and quality assurance systems at VET provider level. The idea behind performance-based funding is to encourage VET providers to promote employment prospects and continuing education opportunities for students, as well as to increase the completion rate of degrees and to decrease drop-out rates.

Teachers play an active role in self-evaluation of their institutions. The teachers themselves, however, are not directly evaluated. The teaching staff and instruction are the responsibility of the principals, who are also pedagogical heads of their institutions. Most institutions have a quality assurance system, which includes annual appraisals. These appraisals are organised to evaluate achievement of objectives set for the previous year and the teaching staff's objectives or needs during the following year.

4.5.2 Quality Assurance of teacher education

The evaluation of teacher education falls within the remit of the Higher Education Evaluation Council. The Council evaluated vocational teacher education and training in 2000. The central outcomes and recommendations given by the Council stress, for example, the importance of pedagogical support for teachers after their initial training. Teacher education colleges should strive to provide "aftercare" as soon as possible for those who have recently finished pedagogical education and for those who have been in working life for a long time. Furthermore, there is a need in teacher education to pay attention to recognising teachers' well-being at work, on-the-job guidance and mentoring and realities of working life.

5 Learning facilitators in the world of work

As mentioned earlier, the 1990's was the decade when an institutional VET system evolved into education and training provided in closer cooperation with the world of work. The aim was to improve the quality of education and training, to ensure its correspondence with the requirements of working life, to enhance dialogue between education and the world of work and to help students in the transition from school to the workplace. On-the-job learning periods and vocational skills demonstrations introduced by this reform also meant that more learning takes place at the workplace. Consequently, there is more responsibility and pressure on the workplace than ever before.

Learning facilitators in the world of work refer to both trainers⁷ and training managers in enterprises within this publication. Enterprises in turn comprise the whole spectrum of the world of work. Enterprises can operate both in the public and private sectors, such as companies involved in production and services, municipal services, social services and health care and different types of associations.

5.1 The working context of learning facilitators

The organisation of training students varies. Some bigger enterprises have more established models and systems; they may, for example, have a training manager who is responsible for on-the-job learning. In small companies, the training is often in the hands of active volunteers. To ensure equal learning opportunities for students at the workplace, national recommendations have been drawn up between the government and social partners. However, there are many challenges ahead, one of them being the variations from one vocational field to another and from one region to another. Many fields are actively involved in development and cooperation projects between institutions and enterprises to enhance on-the-job learning.

5.2 Trainers and training managers

Little national statistical information on trainers is available. Trainers have not been the topic of research as such so far, trainers play a minor role in most surveys dealing with on-the-job learning and its development. There is thus a clear challenge both for practitioners and policy-makers to facilitate and encourage research on trainers.

⁷ Trainers are very often also called workplace instructors in Finland.

Trainers who supervise students during their on-the-job learning periods or apprenticeship training in enterprises are generally experienced foremen and skilled workers. They frequently have a vocational or professional qualification, but hold no pedagogical qualifications. According to a regional study, 75% of instructors had more than 10 years experience in their own field.

Other important personnel in terms of on-the-job learning are training managers within enterprises. Most of these managers work in enterprises that have more than 200 employees. Their duties in terms of on-the-job learning are to actively support the management in choosing trainees, to plan their on-the-job learning period and to introduce them to the enterprise and the field. Management and coordination of processes and maintaining contacts with institutions are vital parts of their work. In small enterprises, these duties and tasks may be carried out by the managing director or owner, for example. Most training managers have a university degree, generally in business, psychology or education. Supporting and instructing trainees from vocational education and training are not their “primary roles” but do take up a lot of resources.

Training managers have expressed a significant need for in-service training in terms of on-the-job learning. They would particularly need information on regulations and procedures. Cooperation with the institutions varies depending on the resources available at both ends.

5.3 Conditions of work for trainers

For students, on-the-job are trainers appointed to the task by the employer are the most important contacts at the workplace. The trainer familiarises the student with the work and the working community. In addition, the trainer is responsible for planning, guiding and supervising the student in practical work situations as well as for assessing the outcomes of the practical training. Safety at work is also the responsibility of the instructor.

The workplace has a big responsibility in terms of the quality of VET. Even if institutions and work-

places do cooperate, VET institutions have little input into how certain qualitative aspects of on-the-job learning periods are arranged at workplaces. Arrangements such as how much time is spent guiding and supervising students vary from one workplace to another. Big enterprises have enough skilled workers who can reserve specific time for supervising and guiding students. One of the biggest problems for trainers is the lack of time for instructing and supervising students. This stems from the realities of the world of work as enterprises are pressed for results and profit. Generally, enterprises in a field suffering from a shortage of skilled workers tend to invest more in their students.

It depends on the collective agreement or on the decision by a specific employer if trainers receive compensation for their work as well as those that they are helping. The role or assignment to function as an instructor can be a sign of esteem in many cases. It is also thought that many of them are satisfied with these tasks. The responsibilities are considered to be a positive thing and time spent with young students away from normal routines is considered to be rewarding. The status of the trainers is also on the increase with new vocational skills demonstrations that involve instructors assessing students. This assessment has a decisive significance in the final qualification.

5.4 Training of trainers: wide gap between expectations and available support?

A lot is expected of trainers today. A larger proportion of vocational education and training is now done at the workplace and the trainers’ role is decisive in terms of the success of on-the-job learning. Trainers have three roles. They function as instructors, demonstrating how theoretical knowledge and authentic work processes integrate. They are mentors, conveying all tacit knowledge present at the workplace to the student. At the same time, trainers function as tutors motivating young students to stay in the trade. Thus the trainers’ task is both responsible and inspiring (cf. Information box 3).

Information box 3.

Different roles of trainers

Trainers have many roles; as professionals in their own field, they are instructors, tutors and supervisors for students. By setting their own examples, they can strongly influence students' attitudes and how students experience the atmosphere at the workplace. Good trainers are enthusiastic about their work both as professionals and as instructors. They get along with different types of people, are able to give concrete advice as well as to encourage and give honest feedback.

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Trainers should be experts in their own field and should have good command of practices at the workplace. Trainers should be interested in and capable of supporting students' professional growth. The work requires trainers to have sound knowledge of the education system and qualifications. They should also be able to create and maintain networks that benefit VET. Trainers should be familiar with factors behind the productivity, efficiency and quality of their own enterprises. They also understand the importance of continuously developing their competence as trainers. Since the inclusion of skills demonstrations into all vocational upper secondary qualifications, the workplace and the instructors have more responsibility for assessing students' learning outcomes.

According to a study on the quality of on-the-job learning in the field of social services and health, students considered a good placement as being one where they were positively received, where the learning environment was secure, interaction functioned well and they were given relevant and challenging tasks. In the worst cases, students had experienced working communities with a negative atmosphere and where students were neglected and left to carry out routine tasks. In this study, trainers mainly saw their function as being to transfer skills.

Nevertheless, they expected students to be critical when receiving instruction.

5.4.1 Formal training for trainers

Legislation sets qualitative demands on trainers. Staff made responsible for instructing and supervising students at the workplace must be competent in terms of their professional skills, work experience and training. There are, however, no formal qualification requirements for trainers. The formal training available today is the 2-credit course (ca. 80 hours of work), which is based on the core curricula approved by the Finnish National Board of Education and provided by VET institutions, polytechnics and the National Centre for Professional Development in Education (OPEKO) that operates under the auspices of the Finnish National Board of Education. In 2005, approximately 40% of trainers had taken this training. The training has been especially organised with ESF funding. One of the future challenges is how to make this training a permanent part of the system without relying on external funding. A further challenge relates to trainers in small enterprises who have difficulties securing training organised away from the workplace.

The training consists of four main areas: vocational education and training and cooperation between institutions and enterprises, student-centred guidance, on-the-job learning and skills demonstrations and student assessment. An outline of the contents can be seen in Information box 4.

There is no other formal in-service training available for instructors after they have completed this training. To some extent, training is organised within development projects locally. Some companies also organise their own in-service training for instructors. However, instructors would need more training in a context which is becoming increasingly complex. Instructors not only instruct and supervise students, but they are also involved in assessing how students have reached targets set for students and their learning outcomes in practical situations. For example, integration of students with special needs into mainstream education also means that trainers

Information box 4.

Training for trainers - core curricula

Vocational education and working life cooperation

The goal is for trainers:

- to be familiar with the general structure of vocational education and training and different forms of organising education in their own field
- to understand the goals of vocational upper secondary education in their own field
- to develop vocational education in a more working-life oriented direction
- to plan on-the-job learning and vocational skills demonstrations at their own workplace.

Student-oriented supervision and instruction

The goal is for trainers:

- to create opportunities for students to learn and collect information in different ways
- to create individual on-the-job learning situations for students from different backgrounds
- to settle conflict situations constructively.

Realisation of on-the-job learning and vocational skills demonstrations

The goal is for trainers:

- to integrate the student into the work
- to supervise and instruct on-the-job learning and realise vocational skills demonstrations as per contracts
- to stabilise on-the-job learning to become part of the working community's operation in cooperation with the employer.

Student evaluation at the workplace

The goal is for trainers:

- to assess on-the-job learning and vocational skills demonstrations expertly and focusing

should possess more skills and competences related to special needs education. This is all the more true as the tendency is to increase the amount of on-the-job learning with students who may suffer from a lack of concentration, for example.

Enterprises and trainers have a particularly central and responsible role in apprenticeship training, especially as some education providers have given enterprises prime responsibility for training. Consequently, trainers in apprenticeship training would need more professional support. Although the 80-hour training described above is also meant for them, in reality contents tend to be directed more to trainers involved in on-the-job learning as part of upper secondary qualifications. The needs of apprenticeship trainers are also different to some extent, because most of the training takes place at workplaces.

5.4.2 Future training needs of trainers

Efforts have been made to assess the training needs of trainers. The outcome is that the variation is very big and that it is difficult to assess the whole situation. Studies point to the reality that most trainers feel that they need continuing training. Many instructors find that skills for motivating students would be necessary as students sometimes have a negative attitude towards work and learning. There are also variations in how well instructors know the curricula of their field: the best situation is in the health and social sector.

Trainers also play a demanding role in assessing students. They are expected to participate in assessment of students' skills demonstrations and on-the-job learning periods. This assessment is practice-oriented and qualitative. It should be valid, reliable, objective, transparent and fair. As a result, assessors' professionalism and training play a key role as they influence students' further development and prospects in the labour market.

The broad understanding is that trainers need more support in their work which is becoming increasingly important and complex. Consequently, several development projects are taking place re-

garding training for trainers. The trend is also to include guidance and instruction for students on on-the-job learning periods and in skills demonstrations within different VET qualifications. These are already possible in some further vocational qualifications in the construction field. The ultimate aim is to include studies in guiding and instructing students into more vocational qualifications. Closer cooperation between teachers and instructors would also be a solution for small enterprises which have problems allocating time for continuing training for instructors. Teachers could then train instructors while supervising students. Some projects have produced models where the teacher trains the instructor while also carrying out his/her own on-the-job period.

In addition to formal training, networking between institutions and workplaces offers a way of supporting trainers. Teachers and trainers both see the key incentives for networking as being supervision, assessment and student follow-up. Trainers wish to cooperate more closely with teachers so that they can learn about new methods in guidance and pedagogy. They also need to cooperate to find out about students' backgrounds and aims.

6 Conclusion: future challenges for VET teachers and trainers

Globalisation and changes in the economy and labour market require constant development of Vocational Education and Training. Both teachers and trainers play a key role when meeting these challenges. But equally important is the role of VET providers. The management of institutions have to see development of VET in a broader context, where further development of the skills and competences of teachers and trainers is essential and which has to be done in close cooperation with the world of work. This calls for leadership and good governance and should be encouraged by sound training policy.

Being a teacher or trainer in a decentralised system such as Finland is both rewarding and challenging. Challenges arise from the responsibility for converting national core qualification requirements into local curricula and from the curricula to practical implementation and freely choosing the teaching methodologies and approaches. On the other hand, the reward also stems from independence which creates ownership of the learning process and outcomes.

[More focus on cooperation with working life and society](#)

In addition to their roles as pedagogues, teachers and trainers are the ones who set up and manage networks between institutions and the world of work. They are also very much involved in development of regional and local innovation.

VET can be said to have a service function in meeting the needs of working life. Strengthening this service function within vocational institutions is seen as being increasingly important. This means more challenges for teachers and trainers as initiators and key people ensuring working cooperation between the institution and the workplace. At regional and local level, vocational education and training is increasingly involved in developing and raising the competitiveness of enterprises. Teachers often play a leading role in numerous development projects that institutions are involved in, for example.

In addition to the service function, teachers have a wider responsibility to society. Both teachers and trainers play a remarkable role in preventing exclusion and students from dropping out of education. They enable individualisation of study paths and provide vital support and guidance for students. Similarly, they have a role in bringing on talented students. In the case of students with problems, teachers are involved as members of the institution's multi-professional team supporting the student. They also liaise with homes and sometimes even have to support parents as they bring up their children.

Continuous updating of skills and competences of teachers

Being a teacher or trainer involves a development process. The foundation for this development process needs to be laid during the initial training and supported by ongoing training. The challenge lies in the dialogue that should exist between these. If and when the dialogue works, the core contents could be divided between initial and continuing training and the different educational needs during the different phases of a teacher's career could be taken into account.

From the policy point of view, the challenge for teacher education is to "produce" vocational teachers who, are reflective practitioners on the one hand and possess sound and up-to-date vocational competences on the other. A particular challenge is posed by those teachers who progressed from general upper secondary education straight to higher education and who have only worked in expert or managerial positions within enterprises. They often lack the skills needed for practical tasks and the insight of working conditions at workplaces. Thus there is pressure to attract more applicants into teacher education who, in addition to the required university or higher education degree, also have a vocational qualification or have acquired practical vocational skills and competences during their earlier careers.

During their careers, teachers must have the opportunity to be able to update their vocational skills and knowledge regularly. This includes keeping up the theoretical and practical knowledge of their trade to enable them both to plan students' individual study and skills demonstration plans and to implement them.

If we want continuing training to really influence a teacher's methods and pedagogical thinking, it should be integrated more into the teacher's own teaching and school environment, and it should be systematic and long-term. In this respect, those that run VET institutions play a crucial role. Effective principals promote the professional growth of teachers. They also function as pedagogical leaders of their institutions and are thus keys to innovation.

Sharing and learning from colleagues within vocational institutions is also an area that needs support and attention and this is commonly seen as a major challenge by principals of VET institutions. Nowadays, many new institutions in Finland are formed through mergers. The combination of different cultures and ways of working as well as making teachers from different fields work together are big challenges. There are obstacles such as lack of time, teacher autonomy and mere size of institution which means that there are communities with different working cultures within the same organisation.

Increased role of workplace trainers

Aside from these challenges within the school community, the quality of learning at the workplace and cooperation between institutions and enterprises require increased attention. Recent developments in VET in Finland and the increased weight of work-based learning (introduction of skills demonstrations, for example) mean that trainers at workplaces have become important players in VET.

This means challenges both for teachers and trainers and for collaboration between them. For teachers, the challenge lies in updating their vocational skills and knowledge of modern practice at the workplace. Teachers need to familiarise the workplace with regulations and documents steering on-the-job learning and ensure that trainers understand and are able to assess students' on-the-job performance.

Consequently, workplace trainers are now involved more closely and at an earlier stage in planning training. Trainers should familiarise students with the requirements of and the working methods at workplaces. For trainers, the challenge lies in having insight into the key objectives of qualification requirements, curricula and vocational pedagogy, in particular guidance and assessment of learners. At best, trainers develop both the work itself and the training in their role as links between workplaces and vocational institutions.

Workplace trainers need more support. Their training needs can not be overlooked and more systematic approaches need to be developed. Student

guidance and assessment, for example, could already be included as topics in upper secondary vocational qualifications and should be addressed through continuing training.

On the whole, more cooperation and support is needed from enterprises. According to a survey carried out by the Economic Information Office in Finland in 2005, the motivation for enterprises to engage in on-the-job learning is more tied to their own needs, such as training future employees and their reputation, than the needs of society and the desire to affect the contents of training. Trainers themselves feel that they do not have enough time to guide and assess students. Future policies should therefore encourage enterprises to play a larger role and take more responsibility as part of VET provision and encourage management to ensure adequate resources for on-the-job learning.

Challenges for teacher training and policy-makers

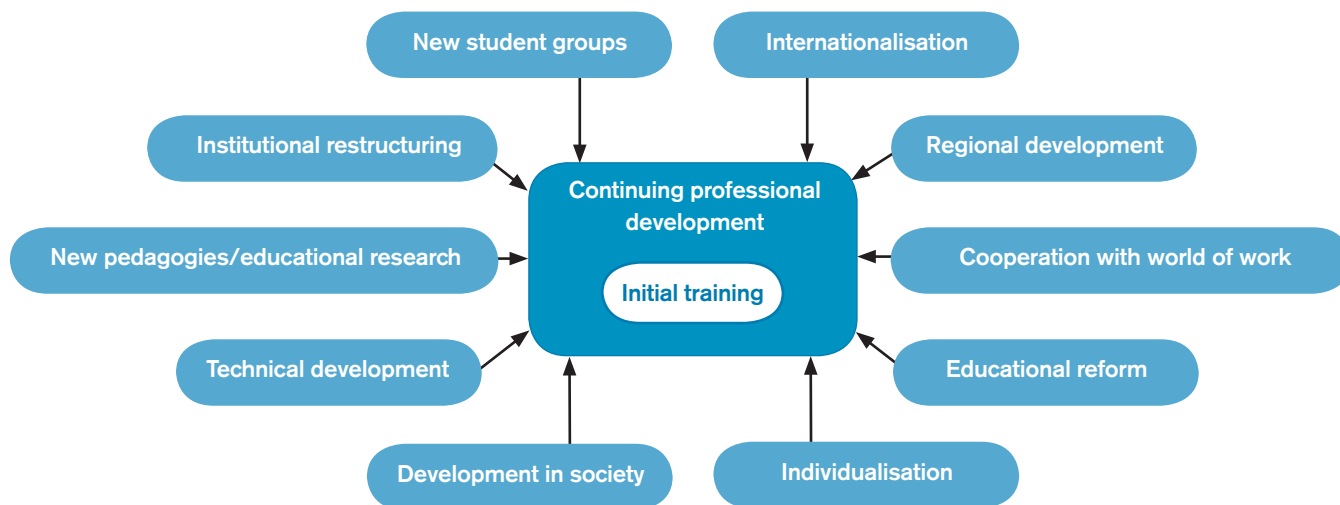
The teaching profession is one which is ever-changing. Looking back over the last ten years, we can recognise a whole host of developments which have affected the profession all over Europe. These include the new role of teachers and trainers as tutors, as learning supporters and facilitators instead

of transmitters of knowledge. Further challenges have arisen from the entry of new target groups into VET, such as adults and immigrants, the increasing use of ICT and development of virtual study opportunities, internationalisation and so on (Figure 5).

Vocational teacher education colleges in Finland have anticipated that the biggest challenges for the profession and for teacher education relate to VET reform and changes in society. These include cooperation with the world of work, introduction of skills demonstrations and increased on-the-job learning and apprenticeship training as well as prevention of exclusion and demand for internationalisation. More and more on-the-job learning and skills demonstrations will take place abroad, requiring teacher language skills and cultural competences, as well as knowledge of education and training systems and practices in other countries.

Teachers and trainers are key to achieving the Lisbon and Copenhagen goals in terms of quality, effectiveness and attractiveness and accessibility in education. A profession which used to be about simple and straightforward transfer of knowledge and skills to students has become very complex. This complexity means that the professionalisation of and support for both teachers and trainers should be high on the political agenda.

Figure 5: **Challenges and developments influencing the teaching and training profession**



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Recommendation for work-based learning and skills demonstrations

17.11.2005

The undersigned representatives of the Government and social partners recommend the following:

Skilled workers and entrepreneurs capable of renewal guarantee Finland's competitiveness and welfare.

The aim of development of vocational education and training is to boost the competitiveness of Finnish working life and vocational education and training (VET) in the increasingly international operating environment by raising the level of vocational skills among the population and supporting work-based innovation. Central aims of this development are to enhance the quality of training, its relevance to the world of work and its impact and to step up students' entry into working life. These aims highlight the need for more in-depth cooperation between VET and working life.

The planning, implementation and evaluation of VET entail far-reaching cooperation between training providers and corporate and other employers, as well as collaboration at all levels of administration. Cooperation is especially important in terms of work-based learning periods on the job, apprenticeship training and skills demonstrations.

VET has included work-based learning of at least 20 credits since 1999. Development of the content and quality of work-based learning is an important

task. Apprenticeship training is a work-based form of VET. With a view to improving the quality and impact of apprenticeship training, measures will be taken to develop on-the-job training and related theoretical training.

By 1st August 2006, all vocational qualifications will include skills demonstrations. With a view to implementing skills demonstrations, training providers will set up organisations made up of members representing training providers, teachers, students, and business and industry. Through skills demonstrations, students show through practical tasks how well they have attained the vocational skills required in working life. In the collective agreement for 2005-2007, labour market organisations agreed to promote adoption of skills demonstrations. The aim of this recommendation is to

- improve the availability of skilled work force, promote placement of people with vocational qualifications,
- secure opportunities for acquiring high-standard vocational skills,
- guarantee on-the-job learning places for young people,
- secure opportunities for skills demonstrations,
- boost the attractiveness and appreciation of VET.

Through cooperation, the undersigned commit themselves to

- providing a sufficient number of high-quality places for work-based learning and skills demonstrations,
- developing student guidance and study support at vocational institutes and on the job,
- enhancing on-the-job instruction, expanding training for on-the-job instructors and strengthening working life expertise within VET,
- developing and expanding teacher secondments and cooperation in enhancing the relevance of training to working life,
- promoting the role of quality management, occupational safety and vocational skills in staff and organisational development,
- increasing the input of working life into the planning, implementation and evaluation of work-based learning and skills demonstrations,
- undertaking projects geared to promotion and development of work-based learning and skills demonstrations.

A training provider and an employer agree in writing on implementation of work-based learning. They also agree in writing on skills demonstrations. Work-based learning and skills demonstrations are primarily implemented without employment contracts, meaning that neither the trainee nor the employer is paid or compensated. Apprenticeship training is based on a fixed term contract between the trainee and the employer. The recommended measures are not intended to replace any staff members within an enterprise or other organisation or to affect the employment relations of existing personnel.

Signatures

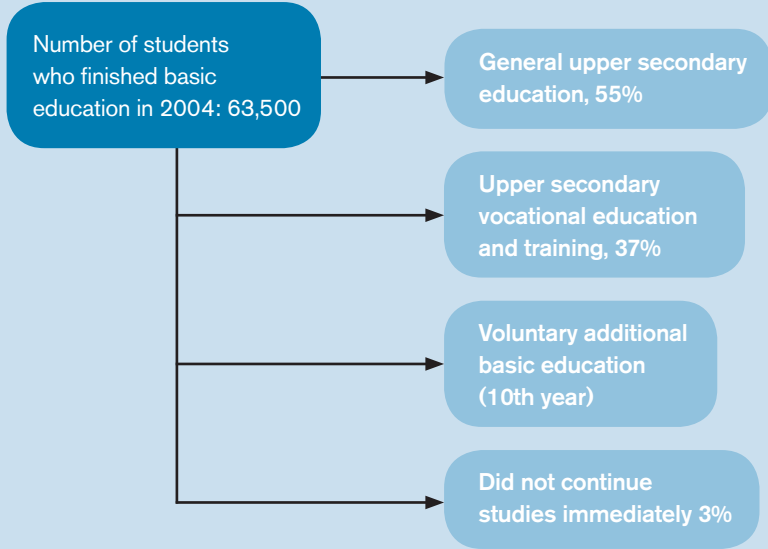
Helsinki, 2nd November 2005

Matti Vanhanen
Prime Minister

Antti Kalliomäki
Minister of Education and Science

Confederation of Unions for Academic
Professionals in Finland
Confederation of Finnish Industries
Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees
Local Authority Employers in Finland
Trade Union of Education in Finland
Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions
Association of Finnish Local
and Regional Authorities
Federation of Finnish Enterprises
State Employer's Office

Placement of comprehensive school leavers in further education immediately after completion of basic education in 2004



Field of education in vocational upper secondary education and training	Students
Natural Resources Sector	7,988
Technology and Transport Sector	48,282
Business and Administration Sector	22,666
Tourism, Catering and Home Economics Sector	18,233
Health and Social Services Sector	20,582
Culture Sector	10,167
Leisure and Physical Education Sector	2,791
Total	130,710



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