

# Finnish education export strategy: summary of the strategic lines and measures

**Based on the Decision-in-Principle  
by the Government of Finland on April 24, 2010**

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# Introduction

Education export is part of the global service economy, and it is considered to be a sector which broadly combines different industries. Finland's strengths in education export and in the field of education itself are a competitive education system and a good reputation internationally. There is an evident demand for Finnish know-how on the international education market.

Despite significant international interest in the Finnish education system, no ready-made products exist, or none have at least been identified yet. As a response to this interest, the Minister of Education and Science, Ms Henna Virkkunen, established a working group on 17 June 2009 to identify the bottlenecks and challenges of Finnish education export and outline the strategic lines and measures for it. Finland's challenges consist of a relatively small amount of resources, and legislation which sets certain restrictions on the education export activities of higher education institutes. The strategic lines for the Finnish education export strategy are based on the results of the working group.

Education commerce is a growing business and it provides many opportunities for Finland. The aim is for Finland to become one of the world's leading education-based economies, one

which relies on the high quality of its education system. Another target is that the proportion of education and knowledge exports will, by 2015, have grown significantly in relation to overall exports.

The implementation of the education export strategy consists of improving networking, productisation, quality, marketing development, forming an educational export cluster and activating the higher education institutes as exporters. Successful export of Finnish educational know-how will be built on the country's strong education system and its continuous development.

### ***Shared aspiration:***

*Finland's strengths in the education field must be utilised and education must be developed into successful export articles for Finland. Measures must be taken to maintain and enhance the international competitiveness of the Finnish education system. The aim is that Finland will be one of the world's leading education-based economies resting on the quality of the education system. By 2015 the proportion of education and knowledge exports will have grown significantly in overall exports.*

# 1. A well-working home market is a precondition for exports.

*Successful exportation of Finnish educational know-how will rest on our strong education system and its continuous development. The home market for educational know-how must be further developed.*

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## 2. Exportation of educational know-how will strengthen other export fields.

*Educational know-how will be a Finnish export cluster in the future. Educational know-how will be an increasingly important part of industrial and service products and in this way it will bolster other export sectors. The educational knowledge cluster will enable Finnish export businesses to offer their clients overall solutions which include education and knowledge as a natural part.*

### 3. Networking brings added value.

*The small size of Finnish operators in the education export field entails networking and cooperation. Export support resources will be primarily targeted to action jointly taken by Finnish operators. The aim in Finnish education exports is to offer versatile solutions instead of single products or services. Further, support resources will be allocated to the construction and running of both national and international cooperation networks.*

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## 4. Goal-orientation is an important element in internationalisation.

*The primary targets will be determined both sectorally and geographically. Export support measures and possible support financing will be first targeted to certain limited areas and sectors. With a view to the most efficient targeting possible, Finnish operators in the field of educational exportation will be provided with relevant information compiled by means of market research in chosen areas and fields.*

## 5. Productivisation is a precondition for international marketing.

*Success in the international market entails careful productivisation. Possible exporters of Finnish education need more knowledge and resources for productivisation. The support to this end will be operational support above all, but also co-financing. The operators themselves must also take on some of the economic risk. Higher education institutions and other public educational establishments must also invest in productivisation and thereby in access to the international education market.*

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## 6. Only quality will bring success.

*Finnish operators in the education export field must strengthen and step up their quality assurance. Various certificates and documentation attesting to quality work are important requisites for operation in the international market. The forms of support available for exportation must be conditional on the ability of the operators to present a quality certificate or a similar documentation of the quality of operations.*

## 7. A cluster will speed up exportation.

*Speeding up the exportation of Finnish educational know-how requires that the sector operates in a cluster-like manner. The special feature in the Finnish cluster should be diverse cooperation and solutions developed and tendered to meet the customer's needs. The purpose of the cluster will specifically be to look for and identify new business opportunities, not only to bring operators together.*

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## 8. Higher education institutions as engines of educational exportation.

*Higher education institutions hold a key position in educational exportation. Regulations governing made-to-order education provided by higher education institutions will be further developed to enable them to participate in the education business on a more flexible basis. Increases in the fee-paying operations of higher education institutions abroad would enlarge opportunities for the exportation of education and increase the institutions' operational resources. Higher education institutions will be encouraged to be active and assume a major role as education export operators.*

# Strengths

- The Finnish education system is internationally competitive. It is also known and has an excellent reputation in the world.
- The results obtained by Finnish students in the OECD PISA review have created a large demand for Finnish education in the world.
- Finnish operators have a good reputation as a cooperation partner in international projects.
- The educational administration, educational institutions and personnel in the field are used to, and largely prepared for, international operation.
- The foremost operators share a desire to develop educational know-how into a new export article.
- Educational research and evaluation are of a high quality in Finland.
- The administration is flexible and it is easy to set up joint action.

# Opportunities

- The education market is growing and globalising.
- Many countries are investing strongly in the development of education and education systems.
- Finland has taken measures to make it possible for higher education institutions to provide fee-paying services, and amendments towards greater flexibility in the legislation will give more latitude for operation.
- The higher education institutions provide a wide range of education in English and there are good services for international students.
- The innovation system, teacher education, pedagogic knowledge and a culture of cooperation in Finland offer a good environment for developing and testing education innovations and processing them into products.



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