



Structures of Education,  
Vocational Training  
and Adult Education  
Systems in Europe

# FINLAND

## 2003

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If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.eu.int>)

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# INTRODUCTION

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Europe is characterised by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) regularly update a set of national monographs entitled *Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe*.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels (from pre-primary to tertiary). Also included are descriptions of initial vocational education and training in alternance and adult education and training within provision for lifelong learning. The initial and in-service training of teachers and their status are also considered.

The information is set out in accordance with a common structure to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasised.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardised so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational provision entirely within schools). The way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational education and training in alternance is the subject of a chapter in its own right. It includes all education and training for young people that is not essentially school-based, and thus covers for example apprenticeships based on the 'dual system' pattern, sandwich course training and any other initiatives and experiments with major elements of 'on-the-job' experience.

This is followed by a chapter on tertiary education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, tuition fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment. The chapter includes any initiatives implemented as part of the Bologna process.

The last chapter deals with continuing education and training for adults (whether in or outside the labour market, employed or unemployed). It provides information on the political, legislative and financial framework of this kind of education, on the authorities concerned and their responsibilities, as well as on the general organisation of training for adults (types of institution, access requirements, programme objectives, the curriculum and quality assurance). There is also a brief description of guidance/counselling services, as well as of questions relating to assessment and accreditation including the recognition of non-formal kinds of learning.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are national statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios, attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialisation.

The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational education and training in alternance, and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the CEDEFOP REFER Network (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation (ETF) in the case of the 12 candidate countries. We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels, CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, and the ETF in Turin for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

Given the number of countries now covered <sup>(1)</sup> and the amount of data available, the description of each system of education and training may be consulted solely electronically on the website of the EURYDICE Network (<http://www.eurydice.org>), which brings it to the attention of the largest possible number of people and enables it to be updated on a more regular basis.

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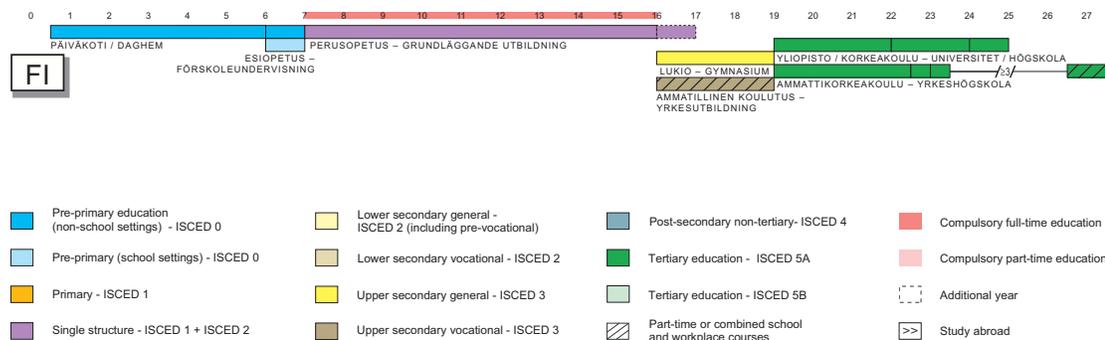
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<sup>(1)</sup> The 30 European countries taking part in the EU Education Programme, Socrates.

## Organisation of the education system in Finland, 2003/04



Source: Eurydice.

# 1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

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## 1.1 Background

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Finland has a land area of 338,000 square kilometres. Its population is about 5.2 million, the population density being then 17.1 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. The population of the capital, Helsinki, is about 560,000. There are two official languages in Finland, Finnish and Swedish, with 92% of the population speaking Finnish as their mother tongue and 6% Swedish. Finnish citizens are entitled to receive public services, including education, in their mother tongue. Sámi speakers, about 0.03% of the population, are entitled to receive education in their mother tongue. The state religions are Lutheran (85%) and Greek Orthodox (1%). About 13% of the population do not belong to any religious denomination.

Finland is a parliamentary republic. The 200 members of the unicameral Parliament are elected by General Election for a four-year term. Parliament enacts all legislation, and the Government must enjoy the confidence of Parliament. The President of the Republic is elected by direct popular vote for a six-year term. Local government is exercised by 6 provinces and 448 municipalities.

The employment sectors are distributed as follows services: services 31.1%, trade 27.5%, manufacturing 20.8%, transport and communications 7.6%, construction 5.9% and agriculture and forestry 5.2%. In 2001 by activity of the population aged 15-74 60% were employed, 9% unemployed and 8% students.

## 1.2 Basis of the education system: principles – legislation

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The legislative framework for the general principles of education policy is enacted by Parliament. *Opetusministeriö* / *Undervisningsministeriet* (Ministry of Education) prepares education legislation and makes the necessary decisions for submission to the Government. *Opetushallitus/Utbildningsstyrelsen* (The National Board of Education) is an expert agency responsible for the development of

education aims, content and methods in comprehensive school, upper secondary school, vocational training and adult education.

The Constitution Act of Finland (1919) stipulates that general compulsory education which is provided free of charge must be enacted by law. It also charges the Government with maintaining or subsidizing vocational education, general education, higher education in applied arts and sciences and university education. The Constitution Act further stipulates that the right to found private schools and reformatories shall be enacted by law and that home tuition shall not be supervised by the authorities. The new Constitution came into force on 1 March 2000 with similar educational guarantees."

Every fifth year the Government approves the guidelines for education and research policy in Finland. The current Development Plan for Education and University Research approved by the Government in December 1999 covers the period 1999-2004.

In the post-war period, the main aim of Finland's education policy has been to raise the level of education and to offer equal education opportunities to all citizens regardless of their place of residence, wealth, mother tongue or sex. This aim has largely been attained. The network of schools and institutions covers the entire country, and there are enough pupil places to satisfy demand.

The focus of education policy has shifted from creating the infrastructure to improving quality. Special attention is being paid to the content of education and the methods of instruction, as well as to educational standards and equality. Increasing overall flexibility and opportunities for individual choice are also considered important; internationalisation has also emerged as a key objective. Educational institutions are encouraged to cooperate with each other and with the surrounding community. The aim is to produce a simple and clear, internationally compatible education structure and a study environment sensitive to the pupil's individual wishes and to the needs of society.

### 1.3 Distribution of responsibilities for the organisation and administration of the education and training system

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*Opetusministeriö / Undervisningsministeriet* (Ministry of Education) is the highest education authority in Finland. Nearly all publicly subsidised education is subordinate to or supervised by the Ministry.

The most important sectors of education falling outside the purview of the Ministry of Education are: children's day care (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health); military training (Ministry of Defence); and police, border guard and fire training (Ministry of the Interior).

#### Central level

The Government, the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education are responsible for implementing the education policy at the central administration level.

The purview of the Ministry of Education includes education and research: comprehensive school, upper secondary school, vocational schools, polytechnics, and universities. The Ministry is also responsible for culture, church, youth and sports affairs. The Ministry of Education is divided into a Department for Education and Science Policy and a Department for Cultural Policy, and the Ministry has two ministers: the Minister of Education and the Minister of Culture.

*Opetushallitus / Utbildningsstyrelsen* (National Board of Education) works in close co-operation with the Ministry of Education. It is a development body responsible for primary and secondary education as well as for adult education and training (not for institutions of higher education, however). The National Board of Education controls the development of educational objectives, content and methods according to the target outcome agreement with the Ministry of Education. It draws up and approves the national core curricula for basic, general upper secondary and vocational education and training and carries out evaluations of learning results, with the exception of the institutions of higher education. It also assists the Ministry of Education in preparing education policy decisions. The National Board of Education is managed by the Managing Board, the members of which represent experts in education, local authorities, teachers and social partners.

There are no other central administrative units in the education sector in Finland. National guidance of the education system is at the discretion of Government and the Ministry of

Education regarding the founding of secondary and higher education institutions and the scaling (setting quotas for different sectors and regions) of vocational education. Educational institutions are guided operatively through the aims enacted by legislation and through the national guidelines for curriculum design. Feedback on the work of the education system is collected through statistics and targeted evaluations. This information in itself has a steering effect on teaching.

#### Regional/local/institutional levels

For the purposes of regional administration, Finland is divided into six provinces. Each province has a general administrative body called *lääninhallitus / länsstyrelse* (provincial state office) under which the education and culture department is in charge of matters concerning educational and cultural aspects. In the past few years, the duties of the provincial governments have decreased; they now manage part of the national student selection system within the province and allocate certain extraordinary public subsidies.

Local administration is managed by the municipalities, which are self-governing and have the right to levy taxes. There are 448 municipalities in Finland. Decision-making power in a municipality rests with the elected municipal council. The Council appoints the municipal executive board and several advisory boards.

Each municipality has at least one board for educational purposes. Most upper secondary schools and comprehensive schools are maintained by the municipalities. The municipal school authority can also be responsible for adult training centres and vocational institutions. State owned and privately owned schools do not come within the sphere of the municipal authority, but are directly subordinate to the central administration.

About 70% of all vocational institutions are maintained by municipalities (usually by two or more municipalities jointly); 3% are state owned and 27% are private.

In Finland, a municipality is obliged to organise comprehensive school education for all children living within its borders or to ensure that children of school age can receive comparable teaching in some other manner. Schools can be maintained by municipalities, intermunicipal authorities (cooperation between municipalities for certain schools), or private organisations or foundations, subject to government approval.

Each school can and usually does have a managing board where teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils/students and parents are represented. The main tasks of the managing board are developing the work of the school and promoting

cooperation inside the school and between the school, parents and the local community. In some schools there is also a pupils'/students' union which, among other things, elects the pupil/student representatives to the managing board. Each municipal authority decides on the distribution of responsibilities between the municipal administration and the managing board of a particular school. Moreover, municipalities can cooperate in school administration and two or more schools can have a managing board in common.

Vocational schools usually have similar managing boards (parents are not represented), but they tend to be more independent and powerful. State and privately run vocational schools always have one. In addition to managing boards, as a rule vocational institutions have one or more advisory boards to promote training and cooperation between school and working life. These boards consist of representatives from the school, its teachers, the main social partners in the relevant fields and other experts.

Curricula for comprehensive school, upper secondary school and vocational institutions are drawn up locally. Every school must have a curriculum decided upon by those maintaining the school or an organ appointed by them, usually the municipality or the School Board. Curricula are based on the national core curricula issued by the National Board of Education. Teaching materials are not inspected or defined in advance in Finland. The decision for choosing teaching material usually rests with individual teachers.

The teachers and institutions themselves are responsible for assessing student performance and for issuing reports. Only the matriculation examination, which concludes general upper secondary school, is organized and marked by *Ylioppilastutkintolautakunta* / *Studentexamensnämnden* (Matriculation Examination Board) appointed by the Ministry of Education.

All universities are maintained by the State. They enjoy a high degree of autonomy in organising teaching, research and other internal matters. At university level it falls within their autonomy to found advisory bodies. There are generally decision-making bodies at three levels: central administration, faculty (by science) and institute (by subject) levels. At each level at least professors, other personnel and students are represented.

## 1.4 Quality assurance

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In Finland centralised steering in education was drastically reduced in the 1990's and instead the local administration's decision-making powers were increased. Education providers and educational institutions have been able to decide on their activities that are based on national targets more and more independently. The development has led to a situation where the position and importance of evaluation has strengthened.

Evaluation in its present form started in the beginning of the 1990's when the steering system was reformed. The evaluation of education is compulsory by law and concerns all areas of education. Under the new educational legislation, effective as from 1 January 1999, educational institutions are obligated to evaluate their own operations and their effects. The national evaluation of educational outcomes will also be partially carried out on the basis of the institutions' self-evaluation.

The aims of the evaluation of education are to ensure that the objectives set in the legislation are achieved and to support the development of education as well as to improve opportunities to learn. The education provider should monitor the education it provides and its effectiveness through self-evaluation and participate in external evaluations. Both external evaluation and self-evaluation aim to intensify educational outcomes, the dimensions of which are efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

### Evaluation at regional and local level

At a local level, the providers of education and the educational institutions that they maintain are responsible for developing the education they provide according to local conditions. Evaluation primarily stems from the educational objectives of the municipal educational administration, which must be based on national objectives.

At a local/municipal level, evaluation may focus on the accessibility of education, the financial accountability of educational institutions and the realisation of the objectives of municipal policies on education and culture, as well as on the differences between various educational institutions. At an institutional level, the evaluation targets include the achievement of objectives, the completion of pedagogic and curricular reforms and the use of resources.

At regional level, the evaluation and monitoring of education are carried out by the Provincial State Offices. Regional evaluation targets include

the serviceability of the network of educational institutions and the satisfaction of the needs set by demand for education. The regional level supports the acquisition of information required for national evaluation.

### Evaluation at national level

The responsibility for external evaluation and its development rests with the Ministry of Education and the Evaluation Council acting in connection with the Ministry. The National Board of Education takes part in the evaluation of educational outcomes and curricula as a member of the network of experts.

The Evaluation Council is nominated for four years at a time. It assists the Ministry of Education and supports the providers of education in evaluation, organises external evaluations related to educational policies and promotes research on evaluation.

The evaluations conducted by the National Board of Education primarily concentrate on educational outcomes and mainly aim to serve the national education policy decision-making and the development of education at all levels. The National Board of Education produces indicators of education and the evaluation of the education sector is based on follow-up, research and expert information, as well as on international comparisons.

According to legislation, responsibility for the evaluation of institutions of higher education lies with the polytechnics and universities. Institutions of higher education are assisted in their evaluation work by the Higher Education Evaluation Council. An expert body organising and conducting evaluations, the Evaluation Council is independent of both the educational administration and institutions of higher education; the establishment of the Evaluation Council and the separation of evaluation activities from the direct operations of the Ministry of Education have included the idea of safeguarding the independence of the evaluations. Similarly, it has been regarded as being appropriate to consider the evaluation of all institutions of higher education, i.e. the polytechnics and universities, as an integrated whole.

## 1.5 Financing

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Responsibility for educational funding and construction of schools is divided between the State and local authorities or other education providers; universities are financed directly from the state budget. A separate Act stipulates the distribution of financial responsibility for

comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools and vocational education.

In addition to their own funding, local education providers are entitled to receive a state subsidy for the establishment and operating costs of their institutions. The funding criteria are the same irrespective of ownership.

State subsidies for investments vary from 25% to 50% of the costs determined by calculations. The state subsidy percentage depends on the amount of the local authority's tax revenue.

In terms of funding of operating costs for primary and secondary education, the average state subsidies and municipal contributions account for 57% and 43% of the calculated costs respectively. Funding criteria are defined according to student quantities or some other performance indicator and according to the unit price per relevant indicator as confirmed by the Ministry of Education.

Teachers' salaries are paid by the school or the education provider, usually the municipality.

## 1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

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In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, there are expert bodies supporting its work, such as the Adult Education Council, the Higher Education Evaluation Council, the Vocational Education and Training Committees, the National Sports Council and the Advisory Council for Youth Affairs. These expert bodies assist the Ministry of Education in issues of their expertise as well as evaluate and follow the educational field of their own.

## 1.7 Private sector

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Non-subsidised private education is practically non-existent in Finland. The general principles of government subsidies and curricular guidance also apply to privately maintained schools. In 2001, there were only 52 private comprehensive schools in Finland (1.4% of all comprehensive schools). The private comprehensive schools are mainly maintained by internationally recognised educational organizations. Some schools are maintained by religious organizations.

General upper secondary schools and the corresponding levels of other schools maintained by private organisations (in total about 8% of all

upper secondary schools) are supervised by the school authorities. School-leaving certificates from these institutions give the same benefits and rights as those awarded by municipal upper secondary schools.

Private vocational institutions operating under the Vocational Education Act are steered by the Ministry of Education, receive state subsidies and have the right to award official qualification certificates. These institutions account for 27% of all vocational institutions. Of all vocational students 17% attend private vocational institutions.

Eleven of the thirty polytechnics are private and all universities are state-owned.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION (*Päivähoito / Dagvård* *Esiopetus / Förskoleundervisning*)

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In Finland, pre-primary education is considered to include systematic education and instruction provided in a day care centre (kindergarten) or, for six-year-olds, at a comprehensive school in the year preceding the beginning of school.

Children's day care is a part of the social welfare system and it is governed by special legislation. The day care system is administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Responsibility for organising day care rests with the social services of the local authorities. By law, each child below compulsory school age has a subjective right to day care. The fees for day care vary according to family size and income as well as the time the child spends in day care. Instead of a day care place, parents can opt for a municipal child care allowance with which they can organise day care for their child the way they see fit.

The aim of day care is to support the parents in bringing up the child and to promote the balanced growth and learning of the child. The supply of day care places for children over three does not always meet demand. If there are not enough places, priority must be given to children who require day care for social or educational reasons.

The main forms of day care are the kindergarten/day care centre (*päiväkoti/daghem*), family day care and supervised play groups.

The pre-school reform, which obligates each local authority to provide a pre-school place for all children in the year preceding the start of basic education, came into force gradually as from 1 August 2000. During the first year of operation, provision of pre-primary education was voluntary for the local authorities. As from 1 August 2001, the local authorities have been obligated to assign a pre-school place to all children entitled to pre-school education (i.e. for six-year-olds), if their parents or other guardians so choose.

There are no special admission requirements for pre-primary education, which can be organised either in day care or in comprehensive schools. The decision regarding children's participation in pre-primary education is made by their parents or other guardians. Pre-primary

education is organised as coeducational and provided free of charge.

The National Board of Education confirmed the national core curriculum for pre-primary education for six-year-olds in December 2000. A central task of pre-primary education is to promote children's favourable growth, development and learning opportunities. Pre-primary education guarantees equal opportunities for children to learn and start school. One of the key objectives of pre-primary education is that problems affecting children's development and learning are detected and addressed sufficiently early.

The objectives of pre-primary education are determined by each child's individual development opportunities and learning potential, on the one hand, and by the needs of society, on the other. General educational and learning objectives have been set out in the national core curriculum for pre-primary education for six-year-olds. The objectives primarily include educational objectives related to living and functioning in pluralistic Finnish society and general objectives aiming at providing the capabilities for learning to learn.

### 2.1 Organisation

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#### **Päiväkoti (day care centre)**

Day care centres are institutions for the day care of children below compulsory school age. They are usually organized by age group (e.g. under-threes and threes-to-sixes). In large day care centres, six-year-olds have a separate pre-primary group. The sizes of day care centres and of groups of children are not regulated. However, there are regulations concerning the minimum number of staff per group, according to the number and age of the children. In practice, most day care centres have 20 to 100 places.

Day care can be full-time or part-time. The maximum daily times for full-time and part-time day care are ten and five hours respectively. Day care centres are usually open for 5 days per week, but can be open for 6 or 7 days,

throughout the whole year. They are usually open between 6.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m., but other arrangements can be made according to local needs.

### **Perhepäivähoito (family day care)**

Family day care takes place in the home of the carer or in another private home. The advantages of this form of day care are the home-like conditions and small groups. One carer is allowed a maximum of four children below school age, plus one part-time day care child who is in school or in pre-primary education.

### **Pre-primary education for six-year-olds**

Each local authority may decide whether to provide pre-primary education at school, in a day-care or family day-care place referred to in the Act on Children's Day Care or at some other appropriate venue. The local authorities may also purchase pre-primary education from private service providers. The local authority concerned is responsible for ensuring that the pre-primary education purchased is implemented in compliance with statutes and regulations.

The minimum scope of pre-primary education is 700 hours per year. The maximum length of a school day in pre-primary education is five hours. Each pre-primary education provider decides on the timetables of education, such as the number of working days, the start and end dates of instruction and other practical arrangements.

Activities in day-care centres are usually organised by age group (for example, children under 3 years, children between 3 and 6). In large day-care centres, pre-primary education for six-year-olds takes place in separate groups. A group with children in pre-primary education may also include children in day care. Pre-primary education for six-year-olds within basic education can be provided either in a separate pre-primary class or integrated into the first form of basic education (or into a combined first and second form).

The Ministry of Education has issued a recommendation that pre-primary teaching groups should cover no more than 13 pupils. The recommendation covers all pre-primary education irrespective of where it is provided. Nevertheless, if there is a special needs assistant, child nurse or some other person with appropriate vocational education participating in group work for most of the time, in addition to the teacher providing pre-primary education, the maximum size of the teaching group may be no more than 20 pupils. The total number of

pupils will also include those in basic education and children in day care belonging to the same group.

## **2.2 Programme of activities**

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The core curriculum for pre-primary education for six-year-olds came in to force in August 2002. It does not specify different subjects, but the education is based on integration. Integrative education is composed of themes related to children's sphere of life, on the one hand, and to contents expanding and analysing children's views of the world, on the other. Different branches of knowledge are taken into account in planning and implementation and examined as part of the theme chosen at each time. With the aid of the contents of the branches of knowledge, children will expand their views of the world and learn about themselves as learners.

The key subject fields in pre-primary education include language and interaction, mathematics, ethics and philosophy, nature and the environment, health, physical and motor development as well as art and culture.

Schoolwork in pre-primary education is based on playful group and individual guidance stemming from each child's development level. The activities take children's need to learn through imagination and play into account. For the children, the activities should be purposeful and challenging. The methods should be diverse.

Pre-primary education is to provide a learning environment, which will guide children's curiosity, interest and learning motivation and provide them with opportunities for play, other activities and peace and quiet. The essential factors of the learning environment include interaction between the teacher and each child and that between the children, different operating methods and learning assignments.

It is also possible to base provision of pre-school education on different pedagogical solutions, which emphasise language or human development through art and practical activities. These include foreign-language instruction and language immersion as well as Steiner or Montessori pedagogy.

## 2.3 Assessment

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Assessment in pre-primary education is based on the achievement of the general objectives of pre-primary education and the individual child's objectives set in a possible pre-primary education plan drawn up for the child or expressed in some other form. The assessment places more emphasis on the progress of the child's growth and learning process, rather than on the mere achievement of objectives. Assessment is carried out on a continuous basis in interaction between the teacher and the child.

Parents or other guardians are provided with feedback in regular discussions with them and possibly also with their children. Pre-primary education promotes children's capabilities for self-assessment, which will support the development of their self-concept and the analysis of their own working methods in particular.

Compulsory education starts in the year when a child has his/her seventh birthday, unless the child needs special education. A child has the right to start primary education one year earlier, if his/her readiness to attend school has been proved in psychological tests (and medical if necessary). Based on these tests, the education provider can also grant permission to start basic education one year later.

According to the Basic Education Act a child is enrolled by the municipality into the school that enables as short and safe school journey as possible. The parents may apply their child to be taken to the school of their choice and in that case they are expected to arrange school transport themselves (as a rule, transportation is arranged by the education provider for distances of 5 km and over).

## 2.4 Teachers

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A class teacher's degree qualifies the holder to provide pre-primary education as does the kindergarten teacher's degree but only in a separate pre-primary class.

Class teachers (*luokanopettajat / klasslärare*) are university-trained generalists with education as their main subject. Completion of an extensive course in a subsidiary subject also gives eligibility for functioning as a subject teacher (*aineenopettaja / ämneslärare*) in basic education. In general, their practical and

theoretical training lasts 5 years and leads to the *maisterin tutkinto / magisterexamen* diploma.

Kindergarten teachers (*lastentarhanopettajat / barnträdgårdslärare*) are university-trained generalists and their practical and theoretical training lasts 3 years leading to the *kasvatustieteen kandidaatin tutkinto / pedagogie kandidatexamen* diploma.

In addition, a person who has taken the 3-year *kandidaatin tutkinto / kandidatexamen* degree in the field of pedagogy at the university is qualified to provide pre-primary education.

Education providers are responsible for employing their teaching staff. They also determine the types and number of posts needed. As a general rule, official posts and positions are declared as being vacant and should be filled by permanent employees wherever possible.

Most teachers work full time and hold tenured posts as municipal or state officials or employees

There is no specific legislation governing continuing teacher education and training. The obligation to participate in in-service training is partly defined in various statutes and partly in collective agreements. Teachers are obligated to participate in in-service training for three or five days a year according to the relevant statutes and collective agreements.

In Finland, continuing education and training for teaching staff are considered as being the responsibility of education providers and of individual teachers themselves. They are supported by government funding in terms of reforms significant to education policy, such as information and communication technologies.

Continuing teacher education is organised by a state-owned training centre, university continuing education units, polytechnics with teacher training units, university departments of teacher education, summer universities and various private organisations.

## 2.5 Statistics

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The pre-school reform was very extensive already from the start in August 2000: only 33 municipalities postponed starting the education to the following year. In 2001 97.4% of the six-year-old children, i.e. 61 677 children, participated in pre-school education (80% of them in conjunction with day care and 20% with basic education).

### 3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION (*Perusopetus/Grundläggande utbildning*)

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All children permanently resident in Finland are obliged to obtain basic education for a period of nine years, beginning in the year they reach seven. The obligation expires in the year they have completed the nine-year comprehensive school curriculum (*perusopetus / grundläggande utbildning*). Compulsory education does not mean compulsory school attendance; pupils are free to acquire the equivalent skills and knowledge from some other source. In practice, almost one hundred per cent all Finns attend the nine-year single-structure comprehensive school.

See also 2.3.

The aims of basic education are to support pupils' growth towards humane and ethically responsible membership of society, and to provide them with the knowledge and skills they will need in life. The instruction is to promote equality in society and pupils' opportunities to participate in education and to otherwise develop themselves during their lives.

The comprehensive school provides general education for the whole age group, and is free of charge including textbooks and other learning material and a warm meal a day. As a rule, transportation is arranged by the education provider for distances of 5 km and over. It is governed by the Basic Education Act and Decree (both from 1998). There are no entrance requirements. If it is impossible for a pupil to attend school, for health or some other reason, the pupil's municipality of residence is obliged to provide comparable teaching in some other form. Comprehensive school can also provide pre-primary education for six-year-olds and an extra tenth year for those who have completed their compulsory education and wish to improve their grades.

The school network covers the whole country. Comprehensive schools are primarily run by local authorities, with the exception of a few private schools. The school buildings may house all forms of basic education (1 – 9), the first six, the last three or sometimes the last three forms (7-9) co-exist with the general upper secondary school. There is a great variation in sizes of comprehensive schools: the smallest schools have fewer than ten pupils and the largest ones nearly 1,000.

Finnish children are provided with teaching in their mother tongue, that is, Finnish, Swedish or Sámi. Each school usually employs only one language. Special arrangements exist for immigrants and refugees. All schools are coeducational.

#### 3.1 Organisation of the school

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The school year begins in mid-August and ends in the 22nd week of the following calendar year and is divided into two semesters. The school year consists of 190 working days; the number of hours of lessons of an individual pupil range from a minimum of 19 to 30 per 5-day week, depending on the grade and the number of optional subjects.

The classes are made up of pupils of the same age. In smaller schools there may be combined classes with pupils from different age groups. During the first six years, instruction is usually given by the class teacher (*luokanopettaja / klasslärare*), who teaches all or most subjects. Instruction in the three highest forms is usually in the form of subject teaching, where different subjects are taught by subject teachers (*aineenopettajat / ämneslärare*).

#### 3.2 Curriculum

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Teaching in comprehensive schools is provided according to the school curriculum, which is drawn up by the local education providers and schools on the basis of the core curriculum drawn up by *Opetushallitus / Utbildningsstyrelsen* (National Board of Education). Municipalities and schools have significant powers in deciding on the curriculum to ensure that teaching meets local needs. The guidelines essentially contain the general aims of the comprehensive school the aims and central content of the various subjects. The subjects included in the curriculum are stipulated in the Basic Education Act and Decree.

The distribution of hours is decided by the Council of State. In forms 1–6, every pupil should basically receive the same education, but schools may focus on different subjects in different ways due to the flexible time allocation. In forms 7–9, both common and elective subjects are included in the curriculum, as well as practical work experience. In addition to subjects, the curriculum also includes so-called inter-curricular issues which must be taught via different subjects.

The current national core curriculum, confirmed at the beginning of 1994, emphasises the active role of the pupil as the organiser of his/her own structure of knowledge. The teacher's role is to be the one who directs the studies and plans learning environments. The core curriculum also stresses that teaching and working methods should foster the readiness to learn and the development of cognitive skills as well as the skills to acquire and adapt information. Teaching shall also take into consideration the individuality of the pupils and the meaning of social interaction in learning.

Weekly lessons per year in forms 1–6 of basic education:

Subject	Minimum over six years
Finnish/Swedish (mother tongue)	32
Language beginning in the grades 1-6 (foreign language or second national language) (A language)	8
Optional language	4
Mathematics	22
Environment studies, Biology, Geography, Civics	15
Religion or ethics	8
History	3
Arts and skills, of which	44
Music	6
Art	6
Handicrafts	8
Physical education	12

The above weekly lessons per year are the total for the first six years of basic education. Each local authority or school may decide how to allocate the lessons to different forms. The minimum number of weekly lessons per year for the common subjects is thus 132 in the first six forms.

Weekly lessons per year in forms 7–9 of basic education:

Subject	Minimum over three years
Mother tongue and literature (Finnish/Swedish)	8
Language started in	
the grades 1-6 (A language)	8
New language started in	
the grades 7-9 (B language)	6
Mathematics	9
Biology, geography	7
Physics, chemistry	6
Religion or ethics	3
History, civics	6
Music	1
Visual arts	2
Home economics	3
Crafts	3
Physical education*	6
Student counselling	2
Common subjects – total minimum	70
Elective subjects – total maximum	20

\*) Some lessons in physical education are used for health education.

The above weekly lessons per year are the total for the last three years of basic education (lower secondary level). The local authority or the school may decide on the allocation of lessons for each year.

Each local authority or individual schools may decide the number and titles of the elective subjects, as well as their allocation to different forms when planning their curricula.

The new time allocation, confirmed by the Government in December 2001, will be adopted together with the new national core curriculum. The time allocation will be implemented as soon as the National Board of Education has approved the national core curriculum. All education providers should have introduced the new curricula no later than August 2006.

The total number of weekly lessons will be unaltered. The new subject, health education, will be integrated into other subjects in forms 1-6. In forms 7-9 three weekly lessons have been allocated to health education. To accommodate this additional subject and to increase the time

allocated to mother tongue, mathematics and history and social studies the number of lessons reserved for optional subjects will be reduced. The curriculum should also strengthen measures targeted at children with special educational needs.

The subject or subject groups in basic education have been grouped in sections combining several forms. Each section includes the minimum number of hours as weekly lessons per year.

Teachers themselves can choose the teaching methods they use in order to achieve the objectives stated in the curriculum. Teachers can decide on their textbooks, teaching material and teaching methods independently.

### 3.3 Assessment/certification

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Pupil assessment has two different roles. The first is educational guidance and encouragement. This is known as continuous assessment. It is based on each pupil's own learning and growth process, its starting points and objectives.

The second task of pupil assessment is the final assessment of basic education, on the basis of which pupils will be selected for further studies when they leave comprehensive school. This assessment must be nationally comparable and it must treat pupils equally. The final assessment is based on the objectives of basic education. For the purposes of the final assessment of basic education, recommended assessment criteria have been prepared for the intermediate grade (8) in all common subjects.

Pupils are assessed by a report at the end of each school year; in addition, pupils are given one or several intermediate reports. Evaluation concerns the pupils' conduct and schoolwork as well as knowledge and skills and their progress in the different subjects.

In the first seven grades of basic education, the evaluation can be either verbal or numerical. Later the evaluation must be numerical, but it can be complemented with a verbal evaluation.

The evaluation in optional subjects can be made verbally, numerically or by a pass/fail mark, or in some other way that is determined in the curriculum.

The evaluation uses a scale of grades from 4 to 10, where 5 means passable, 6 and 7 satisfactory, 8 good, 9 very good and 10 excellent knowledge and skills. Grade 4 is reserved for failed performances. The verbal evaluation comments on the pupil's work at school and the progress s/he has made. The

evaluation is done by the teacher of the subject in question. Conduct and schoolwork are assessed by the class teacher, or, if a pupil has several teachers, jointly by these teachers.

All pupils who successfully complete the comprehensive school obtain a leaving certificate and are equally qualified to continue their studies at general upper secondary school or vocational upper secondary school. After leaving comprehensive school, pupils can choose any educational institution in the country to continue their studies. This is possible since pupils' home municipality is obliged to cover upper secondary or vocational education costs not covered by government subsidies.

### 3.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

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A pupil whose performance has been accepted in all the assessed subjects moves on to the next form, otherwise s/he has to repeat the form. Repeating a form occurs very rarely. Promotion and, finally, the award of the school-leaving certificate are decided by the rector in co-operation with the pupil's teachers.

There may be special classes in comprehensive schools. Special classes may also form a special school. Basic education is also provided for children of compulsory school age in hospitals. The municipality where the hospital is situated is responsible for arranging the instruction.

Furthermore, pupils who are lagging behind in their lessons due to illness, absence for other reasons or temporary learning problems have the right to receive remedial instruction.

Local authorities may provide those who have completed the basic education syllabus with additional instruction with a scope of 1,100 hours. This '10<sup>th</sup> form' is voluntary for the pupils and the local authorities decide whether the form is organised.

In the grades 1-6 of the basic education pupil guidance is integrated (no separate hours) and concentrates on learning skills and methods. In the grades 7-9 it takes the form of individual guidance, small group or class instruction or discussions on further studies and careers. There are usually also study visits to work places, upper secondary and vocational schools.

### 3.5 Teachers

There are four kinds of teachers in comprehensive schools:

- class teachers (*luokanopettajat / klasslärare*), who teach all subjects in the grades 1-6;
- subject teachers (*aineenopettajat / ämneslärare*), who teach one or two subjects in the grades 7-9 and, in some cases, in the grades 1-6, too;
- special teachers (*erityisopettajat / speciallärare*), who teach children suffering from speaking, reading or writing disorders or other problems in normal comprehensive schools, in special classes in normal comprehensive schools or in special schools for severely disabled pupils;
- counsellors (*opintonohjaajat / studiehandledare*), who provide educational and vocational guidance.

The qualification requirements for teaching posts are stipulated by decree. The class teacher training programme consists of 160 credits (5 years of university study) and leads to a Master of Education degree. Class teacher studies include basic studies in several subjects, specialization in one or two teaching subjects, subsidiary subject studies and a period of practical teacher training (1 year).

Subject teachers must have an academic degree from the faculty to which his subject belongs and they are Masters of the actual topic they teach. A subject teacher's degree is a higher academic degree comprised of 160 or 180 credits and it can be taken in 5 – 6 years. It includes studies in pedagogics and a period of practical teacher training.

Most teachers are employed full-time as municipal civil servants. Comprehensive school teachers must participate in in-service training at least three days a year.

### 3.6 Statistics

Schools by teaching language in 2001		
	Finnish	3,619
	Swedish	328
	Other	6
	Total	3,953
Pupils		
	Finnish	557,527
	Swedish	36,016
	Other	2,184
	Total	595,727
Teachers*		
	Finnish	40,685
	Swedish	2,882
	Other	-
	Total	43,567

\*Figures from 1999

Statistics Finland

## 4. POST-COMPULSORY GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION (TOISEN ASTEEN KOULUTUS / UTBILDNINGEN PÅ ANDRA STADIET)

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Post-compulsory education in Finland is divided in general and vocational upper secondary education. The former is provided by general upper secondary schools and the latter by vocational institutions. Approximately 90% of each age group start general (54%) or vocational (36%) upper secondary studies. The remaining 10% either enter the optional 10th year of basic education or the labour market.

One of the main principles of Finnish education policy is to make post-compulsory education available to the entire age group and the completion of upper secondary education is regarded as being the minimum requirement with regard to performance in working life and lifelong learning

Upper secondary education is progressing towards a highly decentralised system. The responsibility for teaching arrangements, course content on the basis of national core curricula and the selection of teaching material have been passed to the local level, giving upper secondary schools the opportunity to cooperate with each other and to increase the educational resources needed in their respective areas and meet the pupils' individual needs.

Vocational education and training is described in 4.B.

### 4.A. General upper secondary education (*Lukiokoulutus / Gymnasieutbildning*)

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The general upper secondary school (*lukio/gymnasium*) provides general education for students aged 16 to 19. It continues the teaching functions of basic education and qualifies the student for university or polytechnic studies and for vocational education based on the upper secondary school syllabus.

The objective of general upper secondary education is to promote the development of students into good, balanced and civilised

individuals and members of society and to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for further studies, working life, their personal interests and the diverse development of their personalities. In addition, the education must support students' opportunities for lifelong learning and self-development during their lives.

Matters related to employment and business life are mainly treated in connection with instruction. Concrete contacts with working life are included in student counselling and occasionally in special projects of different subjects, which include co-operation with enterprises.

Providers of general upper secondary education must function in co-operation with other education providers within its area.

Those wishing to enter an upper secondary school must have completed basic education syllabus or have otherwise deemed to have the necessary capabilities to perform at the general upper secondary school. Upper secondary schools select their students mainly on the basis of previous study record.

The language of instruction of an institution providing general upper secondary education is either Finnish or Swedish. Other possible languages of instruction are the Sámi language, the Romany language or sign language. Moreover, it is also possible to provide instruction primarily or entirely in a language other than those mentioned above (foreign-language instruction) in separate teaching groups or institutions.

Several regulations govern upper secondary education; these regulations were thoroughly revised in 1999. Maintenance of an upper secondary school is subject to approval by *Opetusministeriö/Undervisningsministeriet* (Ministry of Education). The maintaining body can be a municipality, a federation of municipalities, state or a private body.

The scope of the upper secondary school syllabus is three years and students must complete the school within a maximum of four years.

General upper secondary education is primarily free of charge for students; small student fees may be charged for a specific reason with permission from the Ministry of Education. Students are offered a free daily meal but they have to pay for their textbooks.

All upper secondary schools are coeducational. The sizes of schools vary from about 30 to nearly 1,000 students. The number of students in upper secondary schools for adults can be even higher.

#### 4.A.1. Organisation of the school

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Since 1982, teaching in upper secondary schools has been organized into courses, each course consisting of 38 lessons of 45 minutes (in practice the duration of the lessons varies, the total amount of instruction being nevertheless 38 x 45 minutes). The usual practice is to divide the school year into five or six periods. It is up to the individual school to decide what courses are offered in each period. This has to be planned in such a way that it is possible for the student to choose courses in an appropriate way and be able to complete his/her upper secondary school studies in three years.

Legislation does not contain any specific provisions on the number of working days, the school year or holidays.

The term *aikuislukio / vuxengymnasium* (general upper secondary school for adult students) refers to institutions providing basic and general upper secondary education for adults. While upper secondary schools providing education for young people operate in day time, in these schools teaching mainly takes place in the evenings, because they were initially intended for adults studying while at work.

Schools are free to choose textbooks and teaching materials.

The **distance general upper secondary school project** develops an independent study track, where students may complete the entire general upper secondary school syllabus or individual courses at upper secondary schools for adult students, regardless of their domicile. Twelve educational institutions were involved in the first phase of the project in 1997-1999. Most of these provide general upper secondary education for adults. In the present phase (2002-2004) there are 85 educational institutions. These include institutions providing general upper secondary education, general upper secondary education for adults and some

providing vocational upper secondary education and training. The project is co-ordinated by the National Board of Education and receives most of its funding from the European Social Fund. Education providers (generally municipalities) are also committed to funding the distance upper secondary school project. Other partners are the Finnish Broadcasting Company, publishers, major hardware suppliers and network operators. Students can register at one of the institutions involved in the project, which will also register the studies and tests completed.

#### 4.A.2. Curriculum

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The syllabus of the general upper secondary education contains mother tongue and literature, the other national language and foreign languages, studies in mathematics and natural sciences, studies in the humanities and social sciences, religion or ethics, physical and health education, as well as arts and practical subjects. In addition, the syllabus may include vocational studies, as either partially or entirely voluntary or optional subjects, and other studies suitable to the general upper secondary education's task in accordance with what is stipulated in the curriculum. The students must also be provided with student counselling.

The Government decides on the allocation of the time to be used for instruction in different subjects and subject groups and for student counselling ('allocation of classroom hours').

The National Board of Education decides on the objectives and core contents of the different subjects, subject groups and thematic subject modules and on those of student counselling (national core curriculum).

The latest national core curriculum for the general upper secondary school was issued by the National Board of Education in 1994, and the current curricula used in general upper secondary education have been prepared on the basis of this core curriculum. The curriculum shall be drawn up so as to provide a student with an opportunity for individual choices concerning studies by also utilising instruction given by other education providers, where necessary. In order to arrange the schoolwork in each school year, an overall school schedule is drawn up, based on the curriculum.

In the Government Decision on the Time Allocation in the General Upper Secondary School (1993), the general upper secondary school studies are divided into compulsory, specialisation and applied courses. Each student

must complete the compulsory courses. The specialisation courses are primarily follow-up courses directly connected with the compulsory courses, and the schools must provide them for the students to choose from. The applied courses are integrating courses, including elements from various subjects, methodological courses, other school-specific courses or those provided by other educational institutions. The maintaining body of the school decides on the inclusion of applied courses in the curriculum, and they are optional to the students.

The time allocation for the general upper secondary school is given in the following table. The average scope of one course is 38 lessons. Consequently, in order to get the number of lessons, the number of courses in the time allocation table will have to be multiplied by 38. In such general upper secondary education for the young that is provided in the form of contact instruction, the duration of a lesson must be at least 45 minutes.

The Government Decree issued in November 2002 defines the new national objectives and time allocation for general upper secondary education. The new curricula will be introduced in August 2005. The changes to the present time allocation are: one compulsory course in psychology (the minimum number of specialisation courses will be four), two compulsory courses in social studies and four in history (two specialisation courses in both). In addition the number of specialisation courses in mother tongue, biology, chemistry, philosophy and student counselling will be increased by one course.

The distribution of hours in upper secondary school is as follows:

Subject or subject group	Compulsory studies	Advanced courses – minimum offered by the school
Finnish/Swedish	6	2-
Foreign languages		
Language begun in the grades 1-6 of comprehensive school (A language)	6	2-
Language begun in the grades 7-9 of comprehensive school (B language)	5	2-
Other languages		16-
Mathematics		
Basic course	6	2-
Advanced course	10	3-
Environment and natural sciences		
Biology	2	2-
Geography	2	2-
Physics	1	7-
Chemistry	1	3-
Moral subjects		
Religion/ethics	3	2-
Philosophy	1	2-
Psychology		5-
History, Social Studies	5	3-
Arts	3	
Music	1-2	3-
Art	1-2	3-
Physical and health education	3	3-
Student counselling	1	
Compulsory subjects	45-49	
Advanced courses minimum (from those offered)	10	
Applied studies courses (to make up the total minimum)		
Total minimum	75	

Teachers are free to choose the teaching methods they use in order to achieve the objectives set out in the curriculum.

Various subjects are brought together under thematic subject modules in order to integrate the upper secondary school curriculum. This can be achieved, for example, by joint teaching by several teachers and project work, which make

it possible to combine the contents of several subjects.

#### 4.A.3. Assessment/certification

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According to the Upper Secondary Schools Decree, the students and their guardians shall be provided with information concerning the individual students' schoolwork and progress of studies on a sufficiently frequent basis. This provision of information is determined in more detail in the curriculum.

Assessment is based on the objectives defined in the curriculum. A course is assessed, or graded, after it has been completed. The purpose of assessment is to give students feedback on how they have attained the objectives of the course and on the progress of studies in that subject.

According to the General Upper Secondary School Decree, the student's knowledge and skills in each subject or subject group are assessed by the student's teacher or, should there be several teachers, jointly by the teachers concerned. The final assessment is decided by the head together with the student's teachers.

The scale of grades used in numerical assessment is 4 – 10. Grade 5 indicates pass, 6 fair, 7 satisfactory, 8 good, 9 very good and 10 excellent knowledge and skills. Grade 4 is reserved for a failed performance. Some courses are assessed with passed/failed.

If a student gets a fail grade or his/her course performance is otherwise failed, the student must be given an opportunity to take a separate examination to complete the course.

When a student has completed the required number of courses, a leaving certificate is awarded. In addition, students take a national matriculation examination (*ylioppilastutkinto/studentexamen*) at the end of general upper secondary schooling after which, if the completion is successful, a separate certification, the matriculation examination certificate (*ylioppilastutkintotodistus / studentexamensbetyg*), is awarded. The matriculation examination is held in the spring and in the autumn, and a student may complete the examination either in parts within a maximum of three successive examination periods or entirely in one examination period.

The examinations include:

- mother tongue examination (Finnish/Swedish);
- other national language examination (Swedish/Finnish);

- foreign language examination;
- mathematics examination; and
- general studies examination (the humanities and natural sciences).

A candidate must take the compulsory examinations in his/her mother tongue, the other national language and a foreign language and, according to the candidate's choice, either in mathematics or general studies. In addition to the compulsory examinations, the candidate may participate in one or more optional examinations.

The matriculation examination uses a separate assessment system. The examinations are preliminarily checked and assessed by the school's teacher of the subject in question, and finally by the National Matriculation Examination Board (*Ylioppilastutkintolautakunta / Studentexamensnämnden*). The Latin grades and the corresponding points given for the examinations are: *laudatur* (Latin for 'praised', 7), *eximia cum laude approbatur* ('passed with exceptional praise', 6), *magna cum laude approbatur* ('passed with much praise', 5), *cum laude approbatur* ('passed with praise', 4), *lubenter approbatur* ('readily passed', 3), *approbatur* ('passed', 2), and *improbatur* ('failed', 0).

Twenty-nine schools have been since 1995 involved in an experiment concerning the structure of the matriculation examination. As part of the experiment, candidates must participate in the mother tongue test and they must also choose three compulsory tests from a group of tests consisting of the other national language, a foreign language, mathematics and general studies. In addition to the compulsory tests, candidates may take optional tests. This structural experiment will continue until 2007 and from the year 2003 it includes altogether 57 schools.

#### 4.A.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

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General upper secondary schools function without division into forms, which means that students' progress in their studies is not tied to year classes. The syllabus consists of a minimum of 75 courses. The courses, which must be passed to an acceptable standard in order to proceed in a particular subject or subject group, are determined in the curriculum for each subject or subject group.

Educational guidance is provided both in groups and on an individual basis. The independence of education from year classes,

the wide range of options as well as modernised teaching arrangements require effective educational guidance. Within the framework of the new time allocation for general upper secondary schools entering into force 1 August 2005, the student must be provided with the option of choosing at least one advanced course in addition to the one compulsory course. Educational guidance aims to assist students in designing their personal study plans, to support them at different stages of their studies and to develop their abilities to make plans and choices concerning education and careers.

General upper secondary education qualifies the student for university or polytechnic studies and for vocational education based on the upper secondary school syllabus.

Selection criteria vary between different universities and different fields. Student selection may be based on:

- a) grades attained in the matriculation certificate (and in the general upper secondary school leaving certificate) together with the results of an entrance test, which is the most common procedure;
- b) results of an entrance test only; or
- c) grades attained in the matriculation certificate and in the upper secondary school leaving certificate only.

In addition, some fields may place additional emphasis on work experience, studies, practical training, etc.

Polytechnics decide on their student selection criteria independently. The criteria include previous study record (average grade and grades emphasised in the relevant field) and work experience. In addition, an entrance or aptitude test is often organised.

#### 4.A.5. Teachers

General upper secondary school teachers usually have an academic degree like comprehensive school subject teachers (see Chapter 3.5.). The majority have full-time posts and are municipal civil servants. A teaching post can be shared with another educational institution, such as a comprehensive school or vocational institution. Upper secondary school teachers are obliged to devote three days a year to in-service training. For more of in-service training, see 2.4.

#### 4.A.6. Statistics

	Schools	Students	Teachers*
Language of teaching			
Finnish	437	121,772	7,299
Swedish	36	6,876	503
Other	4	695	na
Total	477	129,343	7,802

Statistics Finland 2001

\*Figures from 1997

The choice of graduates after general upper secondary education in 2001	
Graduates (35,500)	
Vocational education and training	4%
Polytechnics	12%
Universities	19%
Did not immediately continue studying	65%

Statistics Finland

#### 4.B Vocational upper secondary education and training (*Ammatillinen peruskoulutus / Grundläggande yrkesutbildning*)

According to the act governing vocational education and training, effective as from the beginning of 1999, vocational institutions are no longer divided into forms of institution according to the field of education they provide. Most institutions provide instruction in several different fields of vocational education, which means that they are now larger and more diverse educational units than previously.

In recent years, the responsibility for providing vocational education and training has been almost entirely transferred from the State to municipalities and federations of municipalities.

The objective of vocational upper secondary education and training is to provide the students with the knowledge and skills necessary for acquiring vocational skills and with the capabilities to find employment or to become self-employed. Its further objectives are to promote the students' development into good and balanced human beings and members of

society, to provide the students with the knowledge and skills necessary in further studies, personal interests and in the diverse development of personality, and to promote lifelong learning.

Vocational education and training has been grouped into sectors of education, which are divided into fields of study and further into qualifications and study programmes.

The sectors of education are as follows: natural resources sector, technology and transport sector, business and administration sector, tourism, catering and home economics sector, health and social services sector, culture sector and leisure and physical education sector.

Education in leisure time activities, physical education, some of the dance education and music education is provided in institutions which belong to the adult education system in Finland (see section 7).

Students in vocational upper secondary education and training are mainly aged 16-25 years.

The three-year vocational qualifications give general eligibility for both polytechnics and universities.

The general educational requirement for acceptance in the vocational upper secondary education and training is the completion of the compulsory basic education, or corresponding education achieved abroad. However, those who have not completed their compulsory education but are at least 17 years of age (extremely few in number) may be approved for special reasons.

It is required in all forms of education that the student's state of health is such that it does not form an obstacle to his/her participating in the education concerned.

The criteria and regulations concerning student selection are determined by the Ministry of Education. The education providers decide on student selection and any possible entrance tests.

Students predominantly apply for vocational education through the national joint application system. The main selection criteria for vocational education are success in previous studies, work experience and other factors comparable to these. Various entrance and aptitude tests are often organised for the applicants. According to the present objectives of social and education policy, young people and applicants with no vocational education are given priority in the selection.

Vocational upper secondary education and training is primarily free of charge for students;

small student fees may be charged for a specific reason (e.g. personal equipment) with permission from the Ministry of Education. Students are offered a free daily meal but they have to pay for their textbooks.

All vocational upper secondary schools are coeducational. The sizes of schools vary, the largest having over 4,000 students.

The institutions form local or regional co-operation networks, where instruction is organised jointly by local vocational institutions and general upper secondary schools. As a result, students have more options to include studies from different institutions in their study plans.

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#### 4.B.1. Organisation of the school

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Educational institutions providing vocational upper secondary education and training are owned by municipalities, federations of municipalities or by private organisations and foundations (27%).

There are no specific provisions on the number of working days, the school year and holidays in legislation; instead, the start and end dates of schoolwork and holidays are established by the education provider.

The studies are organised in a periodic way, each period having different daily and weekly timetable.

The education provider decides on the provision of study units, and the students proceed in their compulsory studies mainly as a group (proceeding individually is also possible, especially in elective studies).

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#### 4.B.2. Curriculum

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The curriculum system of vocational education consists of the national core curricula, the education provider's curricula and personal study plans.

The National Board of Education approves the qualification-specific core curricula and the requirements of each competence-based qualification (see 7.5.B). These are drawn up in co-operation with employers and employees in different fields, other representatives and experts of economic life as well as teachers and students. The core curricula define the basic

competences and the vocational skills required by the labour market in the relevant sector of the qualification.

The national core curricula constitute a legal norm for institutions. Their purpose is to reflect the objectives of education policy, to determine the requirements for nationally uniform vocational competence and the capabilities for learning to learn and functioning as a citizen. Moreover, the core curricula must also function as the basis for the evaluation of national learning outcomes.

The national core curricula for upper secondary vocational qualifications and the requirements for competence-based qualifications are common to education and training for young and adult students. The National Board of Education decides on the objectives and core contents of studies for each qualification. In addition, the national core curricula determine the assessment criteria for study performance in order to demonstrate a uniform vocational competence and to form a basis for student assessment, as well as for the planning of demonstrations to prove vocational skills.

Each national core curriculum is drawn up in such a manner that the qualification will provide extensive basic vocational skills for the various assignments in the field and more specialised competence and the vocational skills required by working life in one sector of the qualification. The vocational skills are defined as functional modules in working life.

The education providers draw up their curricula on the basis of the national core curricula. The detailed contents and methods of studies are not defined in the national core curricula. They are defined in each institution's local curriculum, which is drawn up by the education provider on the basis of the relevant core curricula. The institutions themselves decide how to organise their instruction, and they can take local and changing needs in working life and society into account. The aim is that the education provider designs its education and training together with other local institutions so that students can also include study modules from other fields and from the general upper secondary school in their qualification.

The students are provided with personal study plans, with an individual plan on what, when, how and in which order they study. Creating options and opportunities for individual advancement has been the aim of the development of curricula in recent years.

Since 1 August 2001 all programmes leading to upper secondary vocational qualifications take three years to complete and comprise 120 credits. One year of study consists of 40 credits,

whereas one credit is equivalent to 40 hours of a student's work.

The study programmes leading to vocational qualifications include:

- vocational studies including on-the-job learning supporting these studies (90 credits);
- core subjects (20 credits);
- free-choice studies (10 credits).

These studies include student counselling (minimum 1.5 credits) and a final project (minimum 2 credits).

All three-year qualifications include an on-the-job training period of at least 20 credits and practical training at workshops run by the vocational institutions.

The final project is focused so as to serve working life needs, provide an opportunity to participate in working life and facilitate transition into the labour market.

Students may freely choose **free-choice studies** from those on offer either at their own institution or at any other upper secondary level institution and include them in their qualification according to their own interests or vocational orientation; these may also include appropriate work experience.

The scope of the core subjects common to all fields is 20 credits (21 in instruction given in Swedish).

The **core subjects** include 16 credits of compulsory studies and four credits of elective studies.

Native language (e.g. Finnish, Swedish, Sami)	4 credits
Other national language (Finnish, Swedish)	1 credit
Foreign language	2 credits
Mathematics	3 credits
Social, business and labour-market subjects	1 credit
Physics and chemistry	2 credits
Physical education	1 credit
Health education	1 credit
Arts and culture	1 credit

Where Swedish is the language of instruction, the scope of compulsory studies is 17 credits and that of elective studies three credits, whereas studies in the other national language (Finnish) comprise two credits.

Elective studies are advanced studies in the above-mentioned subjects, or they may be chosen from the following studies: environmental studies, information and communications technology, ethics, other cultures, psychology and entrepreneurship.

The instruction methods are not regulated. Teachers themselves may choose the methods that they apply in order to achieve the objectives defined in the curriculum. At present, the emphasis is on student-centred working methods, development of students' own initiative and enterprise, their sense of responsibility and the importance of learning to learn. Key factors include flexible teaching arrangements, a wide range of working methods and teaching not tied to year classes, integration of theory and practice as well as co-operation and interaction between institutions in the planning and implementation of instruction. In order to integrate instruction into larger modules, it is possible to use methods of joint teaching and project work, which bring together the objectives of several study modules.

### 4.B.3. Assessment/qualifications

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The National Board of Education also issues regulations concerning student assessment and qualification certificates.

The students' knowledge and skills and their progress are assessed at sufficiently regular intervals both during and after the studies. The students' acceptable performances are graded on the following scale: excellent (5), good (4–3) and satisfactory (2–1). Free-choice studies may, with the consent of the student, be given a pass mark without indicating a grade. Assessment is conducted by the teachers and, for on-the-job learning periods, the teacher in charge of the period together with the on-the-job instructor appointed by the employer. The assessment must guide and motivate the students as well as develop their abilities in self-assessment.

Students are awarded the qualification certificate upon completion of all studies included in the personal study plan of the student. A student resigning without completing the vocational qualification is granted a certificate of resignation, which includes the completed studies and their grades. On request,

students may also be granted a certificate for the studies they have completed while still continuing on the programme, the studies yet to be completed are also mentioned in this certificate.

### 4.B.4. Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

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In school-based vocational education and training, studies have traditionally been organised in year classes. However, the aim has been to discard this tradition and the tendency is towards providing students with advancement opportunities that are as individual as possible.

The modularity of the qualifications increases options; the qualifications consist of large modules, which the students may complete in the manner best suited to them. The modular qualification structure increases flexibility and options and makes it easier to get credit for earlier studies.

In vocational education and training, educational guidance aims to provide students with support for drawing up their personal study plan and making the related choices. Students also receive information on the effects of their choices on vocational competence, further studies and job placements. Educational institutions organise counselling and guidance services for students to support their entry into working life and promote and follow job placement. Students can also receive special support when they apply for education.

For the effects of assessment on the progression to further education, see 4.A.4.

### 4.B.5. Teachers

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Teaching staff at vocational institutions and polytechnics may include:

- teachers of core subjects (*yhteisten opintojen opettaja / lärare i gemensamma studier*);
- teachers of vocational studies (*ammattillisten opintojen opettaja/lärare i yrkesinriktade studier*);
- teachers providing special education (*erityisopettaja / speciallärare*);
- student counsellors of vocational institutions (*opinto-ohjaaja / studiehandledare*).

Teaching staff at vocational institutions and polytechnics is required to have:

- work experience in the field of at least three years (not required of the teachers of core subjects);
- completed pedagogical studies of at least 35 credits; and
- either 1) an appropriate higher academic degree (*maisterin tutkinto / magisterexamen*); 2) an appropriate polytechnic degree (*ammattikorkeakoulututkinto / yrkeshögskoleexamen*); or 3) the highest possible qualification in their own occupational field.

Principal or senior lecturers at polytechnics are generally required to have a Licentiate's or Doctor's degree.

Most teachers work full time and hold tenured posts as municipal or state officials or employees.

For in-service training, see 2.4.

#### 4.B.6. Statistics

New students in vocational upper secondary education and training in 2001	
Educational segment	
Natural resources	3,835
Technology and transport	21,322
Business and administration	11,855
Tourism, catering and home economics	7,271
Health and social services	9,310
Culture	3,527
Humanities and education	1,224
Other education	490
Total	58,834

## 5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ALTERNANCE

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### *Oppisopimuskoulutus / Läroavtalsutbildning* (Apprenticeship Training)

#### 5.1 Organisation

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All upper secondary level vocational qualifications available at educational institutions may also be obtained through apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training is also organised for some occupations for which there is no institutional education.

Statutes governing apprenticeship training are incorporated into the acts and decrees issued on vocational education, vocational adult education and the financing of educational and cultural provision. In addition, apprenticeship training is also governed by the provisions of other statutes on working hours, annual leave, safety at work and labour protection with regard to employees.

In the apprenticeship system, training is not based on age groups. The minimum age is 15 and there is no maximum age.

In apprenticeship training, students proceed according to the individual learning programme drawn up on the basis of the national core curriculum or the requirements of the competence-based qualification (*näyttötutkinto / fristående examen*). The qualification consists of functional modules relevant to occupational proficiency. The studies for the qualification may either be conducted all at once or in smaller parts. The apprenticeship contract is terminated when the training is completed or the contract is cancelled.

The organisation of instruction is not regulated in the apprenticeship training. However, the training mainly emphasises on-the-job learning and the integration of practical and theoretical instruction. Approximately 70–80% of the time used for learning takes place in the training workplace. The student works and learns in the working environment, where the student's training is entrusted to the responsible on-the-job instructor(s). Theoretical education is mainly provided by a vocational institution or vocational adult education centre.

#### 5.2 Vocational/initial training establishments

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The practical training period in apprenticeship training takes place at the workplace in connection with ordinary work assignments. This is complemented by theoretical studies, which may be arranged at institutions providing vocational education and training, at vocational adult education centres or at other educational institutions, where necessary. At the education provider's own institutions, theoretical instruction for apprenticeship training leading to an upper secondary vocational qualification may only be arranged in those fields of education, for which the Ministry of Education has granted a licence to provide education and training.

Apprenticeship training is based on a written employment contract of fixed duration between the employer and the trainee. An apprenticeship contract can be concluded if the employer and the education provider have agreed on organising apprenticeship training.

A further requirement for approving the contract is that the training place is engaged in production and service activities of sufficient size and that the work equipment is adequate to fulfil the requirements of the training in accordance with the curriculum or the requirements of the relevant competence-based qualification. In addition, the personnel must also be qualified in terms of vocational skills, education and work experience in order to be assigned as responsible instructors of apprentices.

#### 5.3 Access requirements

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The apprenticeship system requires that the student is no less than 15 years of age (there is no maximum age) at the time of signing the contract and has completed the basic education syllabus or equivalent. In addition, a person, who does not fulfil this criterion but who is deemed by the education provider to have

sufficient capabilities to cope with the training, may also be admitted as a student.

People interested in apprenticeship training usually have to acquire the apprenticeship training place themselves; most contracts are signed so that the person interested in apprenticeship training contacts the employer in order to start the training.

## 5.4 Financing

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In apprenticeship training, the employer pays the student a wage for the apprenticeship period. For the theoretical studies of apprenticeship training, students may receive daily allowance, family allowance as well as financial support for travel, meal and accommodation expenses. The State is responsible for all these costs.

## 5.5 Curriculum

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Apprenticeship training is based on a national core curriculum or the guidelines for the relevant competence-based qualification, according to which the student's individual learning programme is formed. It is drawn up so as to allow for the needs and prerequisites of the workplace and the student. The programme defines the qualification to be completed, the national core curriculum or requirements of the competence-based qualification to be observed in the instruction, the scope of the qualification, central assignments, theoretical instruction included in the training programme, the timing of the completion of studies during the training programme, the instructors responsible for the studies, and other issues relevant to the arrangement of the studies. The student's previous education and work experience must be taken into account and accredited in the learning programme. The learning programme is drawn up by the student, the employer and the local administrative authorities in co-operation, so that it can be appended to the apprenticeship contract when the contract is approved.

## 5.6 Assessment/qualifications

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The assessment is done by the employer and the provider of theoretical studies. Students receive two certificates: 1) a certificate for participating in training and 2) a qualification certificate, which is the actual certificate of vocational skills and which the students are awarded upon completion of a competence-based qualification.

The qualification to be taken is comparable with the upper secondary level vocational qualifications and gives the same eligibility for further studies as the corresponding qualification taken at a vocational institution (see chapter 4.B.). Students may also receive the qualification certificate upon completion of the studies required for the vocational qualification in accordance with the relevant curriculum, without participating in the competence-based examination.

## 5.7 Guidance

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Apprenticeship training is based on education that combines training in the workplace with instruction at educational institutions. The majority of vocational skills are learnt through practical work in an enterprise. The workplace assigns an instructor to guide and supervise the student's work. This provides the student with education closely linked to practical work and the enterprise gets an employee, who masters the specific features of its line of work.

## 5.8 Teachers/trainers

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The personnel in companies must be qualified in terms of vocational skills, education and work experience in order to be assigned as responsible instructors of apprentices.

## 5.9 Statistics

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Participants in apprenticeship training by educational sector 2001

Natural resources	939
Technology and transport	5,444
Business and administration	4,351
Tourism, catering and home economics	1,344
Health and social services	3,457
Culture	237
Humanities and education	871
Total	16,643

Statistics Finland

## 6. TERTIARY EDUCATION (KORKEA-ASTEEN KOULUTUS / HÖGSKOLEUTBILDNINGEN)

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Higher education is offered at universities (*yliopisto / universitet*) and professionally oriented higher education institutions, polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulut / yrkeshögskolor*);

### 6.A. Professionally oriented higher education (*Ammattikorkeakoulut / Yrkeshögskolor*)

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Polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulut / yrkeshögskolor*) have been formed from institutions that earlier provided vocational post-secondary education. They are either municipal or private, co-financed by the government and local authorities. They usually offer teaching in a number of different fields. Students in polytechnics complete higher education degrees with a professional emphasis (*ammattikorkeakoulututkinto / yrkeshögskoleexamen*): the starting points for the development of these degrees are the requirements and needs of working life, and the degrees qualify for different expert functions. The scope of polytechnic degrees is 3½ to 4½ years.

The polytechnic post-graduate degree (*ammattikorkeakoulun jatkotutkinto / påbyggnadsexamen vid yrkeshögskola*) is a new higher education degree and aimed at people who have completed a polytechnic degree or other applicable higher education degree, and have a minimum of three year's work experience in the field after the completion of the degree. The new higher education degree is determined on the basis of working life needs and is implemented in line with adult education goals.

The Ministry of Education granted permission to 20 polytechnics to begin trial degree programmes at the beginning of 2002. Four more polytechnics were included during 2003. The law on the trial polytechnic post-graduate degrees is in force until 31 July 2005.

There are 29 polytechnics in the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education. In addition

the Police College of Finland falls under the administration of the Ministry of the Interior. The autonomous Åland Islands also have their own polytechnic. The Government grants permanent operating licences to the polytechnics. In order for an institution to gain a permanent operating licence, there has to be an educational need for the institution, and it also has to meet the quality and other requirements of higher education.

The Polytechnics Act (2003) establishes the role of the representatives from business and working life: these parties shall be involved in setting the operational objectives for the polytechnics that are central for the national educational policy. They shall also participate in the follow-up. In addition, the law clarifies the position of the practical training periods that strengthen professional skills. Also adult education is emphasised in the new law: by investing more widely in adult education, the polytechnics take part in developing the rapidly changing world of work and will thus be able to respond to the changing requirements and needs for development in professional skills.

In addition to education leading to a polytechnic degree and adult education, polytechnics can also carry out applied research and development work supporting polytechnic education and working life.

#### 6.A.1. Admission requirements

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The general requirement for admission to a polytechnic is a successful completion of general or vocational upper secondary education. In other words, the following applicants qualify for polytechnic studies: those who have taken the matriculation examination (*ylioppilastutkinto, studentexamen*) or completed the general upper secondary school, or have a vocational qualification (*ammattillinen perustutkinto, grundexamen*) (or post-secondary qualification), or a corresponding international or foreign qualification.

Students apply to polytechnics through the joint national application system. The polytechnics determine the principles of student selection

independently. Student selection is based on previous study record and work experience and, in many cases, entrance examinations are also arranged.

Starting from the student selection for the academic year 1999/2000, one applicant may only accept one student place leading to a higher education degree per each academic year. A student place leading to a higher education degree means a student place leading to a lower or higher university degree or to a polytechnic degree.

### 6.A.2. Fees/Financial support for students

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Instruction leading to a polytechnic degree is free for the students.

Student financial support is available for full-time post-comprehensive school studies lasting at least two consecutive months. Student financial aid consists of:

- study grant;
- housing supplement;
- state-guaranteed student loan.

The study grant and the housing supplement are cash benefits granted by the State, and they do not need to be paid back. The grant is taxable income, but if the beneficiary does not have any other income, s/he does not have to pay tax. The amount of the grant ranges from 22 to 259 euros a month. The amount depends on the applicant's age, form of housing and marital status. The housing supplement is 80% of a moderate rent, ranging from 26.90 to 171.55 euros a month.

The student loan is a normal bank loan granted by all Finnish banks upon application. Each student agrees with the bank on the terms and repayment of the loan. As the loan is guaranteed by the State, no other collateral is needed for security. The loan bears interest at the prevalent market rate and the monthly sum is 160–220 euros per month and 360 euros per month for students studying abroad.

Foreign students may receive financial aid if they are permanently resident in Finland. Students without Finnish citizenship are granted financial aid if they have resided in Finland for a minimum of two years for purposes other than study and if the nature of their residence in Finland can be deemed to be permanent. If the period of residence in Finland is shorter than

two years, aid can be granted in the following cases:

- if the applicant is a refugee;
- if the applicant is an asylum seeker who has been granted a residence permit for protective reasons;
- if the applicant is a family member of a person in one of the groups mentioned above;
- if the applicant has repatriated to Finland;
- if the applicant has moved into the country before reaching the age of 18 and the parents or adopted parents have permanent residency in Finland.

### 6.A.3. Academic year

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An academic year in polytechnics as well as universities consists of time between 1 August and 31 July. Instruction at polytechnics starts in August or September, at universities usually in September, and ends in May. Universities and polytechnics decide on their provision of courses independently. Within the limits set by the framework of the degree programme, students decide themselves which courses they will take.

### 6.A.4. Courses

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Polytechnics organise education in the following fields of study:

- Natural Resources and Environment;
- Technology, Communication and Transport;
- Social sciences, Business and Administration;
- Tourism, Catering and Domestic Services;
- Social services, Health and Sports;
- Culture;
- Humanities and education.

Polytechnics are usually multi-field institutions. Their operating licence defines the fields in which the institution is allowed to organise education. The majority of polytechnics have planned and are implementing degree programmes that cross different fields of study. In terms of quantity, the largest fields of study

technology, communication and transport, social sciences, business and administration, as well as social services, health and sports.

Studies leading to polytechnic degrees are organised as degree programmes, which may include different specialisation areas. The degree programmes are designed and organised by the institutions, and they are oriented towards some field of working life requiring professional expertise and development. The Ministry of Education confirms each degree programme, but the institutions themselves design the curricula.

The polytechnic degree programmes consist of basic and professional studies, optional studies, practical training to promote professional skills and a diploma project.

Compulsory practical on-the-job learning, worth a minimum of 20 credits, enables many students to combine their diploma project included in the degree programme with hands-on work experience and to apply their theoretical knowledge in real situations. Topics for diploma projects come primarily from real problems in working life and, in addition, they are often commissioned by representatives of working life.

Polytechnics have in recent years strongly developed their teaching methods. The aim has been to increase students' independent and self-motivated study. There are various forms of project and teamwork, and studies have also increasingly been transferred outside the institution. The role of the teacher has clearly become more instructor-oriented.

The education materials are generally not free of charge but books and other study materials are widely available through the polytechnic and university libraries.

### 6.A.5. Assessment

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Each polytechnic gives orders and instructions on student assessment in its degree regulations. Students have the right to know how assessment criteria are applied to them and to see their graded examination papers or other performance records. A student not satisfied with the assessment may request correction.

Polytechnics grant students a degree certificate when they have completed degree. On request, students may also be granted a certificate for the studies they has completed while still continuing on the degree programme.

On request, polytechnics may also grant a diploma supplement intended especially for

international use to persons who have completed a polytechnic degree . Most polytechnics give this automatically to all graduates. The supplement includes the necessary information on the institution as well as studies and credits referred to on the degree and their level and status in the education system.

### 6.A.6. Teachers

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See 4.B.5.

### 6.A.7. Statistics

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Number of students and student intake in polytechnics

Year	Number of students	Student intake
1996	44,500	19,000
1997	58,500	28,000
1998	78,000	33,000
1999	95,000	33,000
2000	114,000	33,000
2001	121,500	31,500
2002	126,500	31,500

Source: Ministry of Education.

## 6.B Universities (*Yliopistot / Universitet*)

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There are 20 universities in Finland, and the total number of university students is over 162,000. Ten of the universities are traditional multidisciplinary universities and ten are specialised institutions. Three of the specialised universities are schools of economics and business administration, three are universities of technology and the other four are art academies. Art academies include Sibelius Academy (music), the University of Art and Design, the Academy of Fine Arts and the Theatre Academy (theatre and dance).

University-level education in the military field is provided by the National Defence College, which comes under the Ministry of Defence.

At universities the **Bachelor's Degree** (*kandidaatin tutkinto, kandidatexamen*) takes at least three years to complete and can be taken in all fields except engineering and medical sciences. A **Master's Degree** (*maisterin tutkinto, magisterexamen*) takes at least five years of full-time study (or two years after Bachelor's Degree). In the fields of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine the higher academic degree is called **Licentiate Degree** (*liseniaatin tutkinto / licentiatexamen*) and it takes 5-6 years of full-time study. The Licentiate Degree is in other fields an optional pre-doctoral degree taken after the Master's Degree. Full-time study for this degree lasts about two years. The **Doctor's Degree** (*tohtorin tutkinto, doktorsexamen*) requires approximately four years of full-time study after the Master's Degree (or the Licentiate's Degree in the fields of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine) or approximately two years after the Licentiate's Degree in other fields of study. A **specialised higher degree** (*erikoistutkinto, specialiseringsexamen*) may be taken in the fields of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine by students who already hold a Licentiate Degree. This degree is awarded at the end of 3 to 6 years of specialised study.

A two-tier degree structure will be introduced in all fields of education starting from 1.8.2005. At the same time, the national credit system will be replaced by an ECTS-based system. All the national decrees on university degrees will be overhauled and replaced by one single decree.

Adult education at universities is provided by their own continuing education centres, the first of which were founded in the 1970's.

### 6.B.1. Admission requirements

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The Finnish matriculation examination (*Ylioppilastutkinto/studentexamen*) provides general eligibility for university education. The same eligibility is also provided by the International Baccalaureate (IB), European Baccalaureate (EB) and *Reifeprüfung* examinations. In addition, those with a Finnish polytechnic degree, a post-secondary level vocational qualification or at least a three-year upper secondary vocational qualification also have general eligibility for university education. Universities may also admit applicants who have completed the open university studies required by the university in question or who are otherwise considered by the university to have the necessary knowledge and skills to complete the studies. Most new students have completed the matriculation examination.

People who have received their schooling in another country may be admitted if their qualification gives eligibility for corresponding university studies in that country.

Starting from the student selection for the academic year 1999/2000, one applicant may only accept one student place leading to a higher education degree per each academic year. A student place leading to a higher education degree means a student place leading to a lower or higher university degree or to a polytechnic degree.

Universities select their students independently and they decide on the field-specific student intake according to agreed target number of degrees. The numbers are determined in the performance negotiations between the Ministry of Education and the universities. There is restricted entry, *numerus clausus*, to all fields of study. As there are many more applicants than there are places available, universities use different kinds of student selection criteria.

Student selection may be based on:

- a) grades attained in the matriculation certificate (and in the general upper secondary school leaving certificate) together with the results of an entrance test; which is the most common procedure;
- b) results of an entrance test only; or
- c) grades attained in the matriculation certificate and in the upper secondary school leaving certificate only.

In addition, some fields may place additional emphasis on work experience, studies, practical training, etc.

Entrance tests are designed by the university, faculty or department in question to assess the applicant's motivation, suitability and aptitude in the field concerned. The tests are often based on required reading. There may also be interviews or material-based examinations, and students may be required to demonstrate their skills (e.g., at art academies). Students without the certificate of matriculation are usually selected on the basis of the entrance test.

Universities co-operate in organising the student selection to varying degrees. The field of engineering and architecture applies a joint selection system, i.e. a joint entrance examination, to three universities of technology and two faculties of technology in multidisciplinary universities. Each of these universities uses the same selection criteria and the same application form. There is also cooperation between universities in, among others, biology, languages, class teacher and kindergarten teacher education, medicine and economics. However, this co-operation does not constitute an actual joint selection system. There are plans to widen the cooperation.

Once people have been admitted to university, they must confirm their acceptance of the place and register with the university within a certain period of time. If this is not done, their right to study may be cancelled. The standard duration for the completion of degrees has been defined in the decrees governing the degrees, but there are no actual time limits.

### 6.B.2. Fees/Financial support for students

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University education is provided free of charge for the students. Undergraduate students (those on Bachelor's and Master's programmes) pay a small membership fee to the student union every year; in return, they get reduced price meals, health care services and other social benefits. The fee is voluntary for postgraduate students.

For financial support, see 6.A.2.

### 6.B.3. Academic year

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See 6.A.3.

The academic year is divided into two semesters. Most universities are active

throughout the year and offer summer courses and extra examinations.

### 6.B.4. Courses

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University education is divided into the following twenty fields of study, which are regulated by field-specific decrees pertaining to degrees: theology, humanities, law, social sciences, economics and business administration, psychology, education, natural sciences, agriculture and forestry, sports sciences, engineering and architecture, medicine, dentistry, health sciences, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, music, art and design, theatre, drama and dance, as well as fine arts.

Degrees are usually taken according to subject but in some fields there are also multidisciplinary degree programmes. The lower (Bachelor's) and the higher (Master's) academic degrees usually include studies in one main subject and in one or more subsidiary subjects. Some fields may still offer specialisation areas. Recently, the right to study subsidiary subjects more freely across faculty and department boundaries has been promoted.

The decrees on degrees give universities more freedom to plan their degree programmes. The decrees also increase students' options, although the freedom to choose subsidiary subjects and study units varies between different fields. Students may also complete part of their studies in some other Finnish or foreign university. The right to study at these institutions is usually based on separate agreements. In addition, universities have developed special Master's programmes, which are based on Bachelor's programmes. These are often multidisciplinary degree programmes and are based on some new educational need in working life. Universities also organise courses and modules in foreign languages (usually English).

Alongside the traditional forms of teaching – lectures, demonstrations and examinations based on lectures and literature – instruction makes increasing use of other methods, such as essays, projects, seminar and group work. The use of new information technologies in instruction has also increased.

The education materials are generally not free of charge but books and other study materials are widely available through the university libraries.

## Graduate Schools

At the beginning of 1995 a new graduate school system was launched in Finland to complement the traditional researcher education. Since the beginning of 2003 there altogether 114 graduate schools twenty of which are new four-year graduate schools. More than 1,400 graduate students receive funding from the Ministry of Education, and the remaining students are funded by universities and foundations. Approximately 320 of the research students are in ICT and the same number in biotechnology. Most graduate schools have been set up in co-operation between several universities and research institutes. Most full-time postgraduate students study at graduate schools. All universities are involved in the graduate school system.

The graduate schools are linked with centres of excellence in research, high-quality research projects, or nationally comprehensive and scientifically wide-ranging co-operation networks. In addition to universities, research institutes and enterprises participate in the programmes. An important part of the instruction, which is jointly organised, is formed by national and international intensive courses.

## Continuing Education and Open University Instruction

See 7.5.F.

## 6.B.5. Assessment/qualifications

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Student assessment is based on continuous assessment. In most cases, students are assessed on the basis of written examinations at the end of lecture series or larger study units, but there are also oral examinations. In addition, students write papers for seminars and other papers. For the Bachelor's degree and Master's degree, students write theses. At art academies, the thesis can take the form of an artistic production, such as a concert, a play or

some other performance, which also includes a written part.

The examiner is usually the course lecturer or the teacher responsible for the study unit or module, but the final responsibility for assessment remains with the subject professor. Theses are assessed by two or more teachers appointed by the university or faculty.

University-specific decrees include provisions on legal protection for students, in addition to which universities usually have more specific regulations concerning examinations, legal protection for students and the assessment of studies. Students must also be given the opportunity to obtain information on the general assessment criteria and the way they have been applied to them as well as to request correction and, thereafter appeal to the relevant faculty's (or corresponding unit's) legal protection board.

## 6.B.6. Teachers

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University students are taught mainly by professors (*professori/professor*), lecturers (*yliopistonlehtori / universitetslektor, lehtori/lektor*), senior assistants (*yliaassistentti/överassistent*) and assistant teachers (*assistentti/assistent*). Professors are required to have scientific or artistic merits, good teaching skills and normally a *tohtorin tutkinto/ doktorsexamen* degree. Lecturers and senior assistants must generally have an appropriate *lisensiaatintutkinto / licentiatexamen* degree or an appropriate *tohtorintutkinto/doktorsexamen* degree. Pedagogical training with a scope of 35 credits is required of lecturers to be appointed to the post. A candidate with a Master's degree can, however, be appointed to a lecturer's post if s/he has a profound knowledge of the field in question. Assistant teachers must have a *maisterin tutkinto / magisterexamen* degree.

Teaching staff at universities comprised 7,353 persons in 2000. This number consisted of 2,278 professors, 2,588 senior assistants and assistant teachers, 1,868 lecturers and 619 full-time untenured teachers.

## 6.B.7. Statistics

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 University students, degrees and teaching staff by field of study in 2002

Field of study	New students	All students	Degrees <sup>1)</sup>	Average graduation time (years) <sup>2)</sup>	Teaching staff <sup>3)</sup>
Theology	310	2,636	224	7	73
Humanities	2,952	27,143	2,512	7	950
Art and design	237	2,591	312	6	195
Music	155	1,514	151	7.5	248
Theatre and dance	59	432	53	4	63
Education	2,115	14,363	2,122	5	805
Sports sciences	115	766	95	6	44
Social sciences	2,023	17,053	1,609	6.5	571
Psychology	197	1,916	240	6.5	78
Health sciences	342	2,880	371	4.5	94
Law	514	4,685	550	6	146
Economics and business administration	2,156	17,246	1,885	5.5	595
Natural sciences	3,861	25,674	2,287	6.5	1,197
Agriculture and forestry	448	3,519	341	7	170
Engineering and architecture	4,428	36,443	2,689	7 (DI) 10.5 (A)	1,250
Medicine	595	8,007	1,314	6.5	693
Dentistry	85	559	79	6.5	99
Veterinary medicine	56	548	76	7	54
Pharmacy	340	1,771	389	7	84
Fine arts	25	224	29	6	23
Total	21,013	169,970	17,328	6.5	7,849 <sup>⌘</sup>

1) Bachelor's and Master's degrees

2) Master's degrees completed in 2000

3) Number of person-work years,

⌘ Includes teaching staff (=417 persons) that can not be placed under one specific field

Source: Ministry of Education (KOTA database).

## 7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS (*Aikuiskoulutus / Vuxenutbildning*)

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### 7.1. Policy and legislative framework

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Adult education offers citizens the opportunity to obtain education and complete qualifications at any stage of life. During the last few decades, adult education has become an increasingly important part of the national education planning and policy. Educational provision has increased and diversified along with development of financial aid for adult students. The 1980's were a period of development for vocational adult education. In the 1990's, working life and the labour market have changed rapidly and the standards of work assignments have risen. Consequently, lifelong learning has become an important principle, defining the education policy.

In general, participation in education and training is high in Finland, and learning is held in high esteem by the population. Correspondingly, the number of adult education institutions is relatively large compared with the population: adult education is provided by approximately 1,000 institutions under the educational administration. Some of them provide education and training only for mature students, but the majority cater for both young and adult students. Adult education and training is also organised in universities and polytechnics as well as in workplaces (in-service training).

Finnish adult education and training have traditionally been divided into two main areas: general adult education and vocational adult education and training.

Parliament passes laws concerning adult education and training and decides on appropriations for adult education and training within the framework of the state budget. The Government enacts decrees specifying the laws and defines the general principles of educational planning and development in a five-year development plan for Education and Research.

The act (630/1998) issued on vocational education, effective as from the beginning of 1999, governs the organisation of curriculum-

based upper vocational education and training for both young and adult students.

The act (631/1998) governing vocational adult education provides for the upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications taken in competence tests irrespective of the method of acquiring the vocational skills, as well as for the preparatory training for these tests.

The new legislation also includes the separate act (632/1998) governing liberal adult education. The Act determines that the purpose of liberal adult education is to support the development of individuals and the realisation of democracy and equality on the basis of the principle of lifelong learning.

The act (668/1994) on the General Language Proficiency Tests provides citizens with the opportunity to test their language skills through language proficiency tests.

### 7.2. Management/Organisations involved

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The overall responsibility for the development of adult education and training rests with *Opetusministeriö / Undervisningsministeriet* (Ministry of Education). The Ministry is assisted by *Aikuiskoulutusneuvosto/Vuxenutbildningsråd* (Adult Education Council) consisting of representatives of different interest groups. The Ministry's domain includes the preparation of legislation and general decisions concerning education. *Opetushallitus / Utbildningsstyrelsen* (National Board of Education), which is an expert body subordinate to the Ministry of Education, assists the Ministry in preparing decisions on education policy.

*Läninhallitukset / länsstyrelser* (Provincial State Offices), which represent the intermediate level of administration, decide on the allocation of appropriations related to the programme to improve the educational level of the adult population during the years 2003 to 2007. The prime aim of the programme, which has been granted 12 million euros in 2003, is to raise the

educational level of adults with low educational attainments.

Local authorities organise adult education and training on their own initiative: they maintain the majority of general upper secondary schools for adult students, adult education centres, vocational adult education centres and other vocational institutions. They also give significant financial support to summer universities. However, interest in adult education and training varies considerably between municipalities.

The social partners participate in the planning and development of education through representation on various committees:

- Adult Education Council set up by the Government, which deals with matters concerning the development, research and evaluation of adult education and training;
- national training committees operating in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, which have been created to develop contacts between vocational education and working life;
- qualification committees operating under the National Board of Education, which have been established to organise and supervise competence-based qualifications in vocational adult education and are responsible for arranging competence tests, for example;
- consultative committees operating in vocational institutions, with the task of developing the operations of the institution and its contacts with local working life.

Enterprises support and organise adult education and training by

- paying for in-service training and organising company-specific training for personnel;
- maintaining specialised vocational institutions;
- organising apprenticeship training;
- covering some adult employment training costs;
- offering training places for young people and adults studying at vocational institutions;
- financing part of their personnel's self-motivated training by granting paid leave and by paying some training costs;
- granting study leave for the self-motivated study of the personnel.

### 7.3. Funding

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Institutions under public supervision are regulated according to similar legislation in terms of structure: the Government or the Ministry of Education grants permission to establish educational institutions and provide education and decides whether these will be granted financial support by the State on the basis of educational needs. The majority of adult education organisations in Finland receive support from public funds, irrespective of their form of ownership. Adult education organisations are owned by the State, local authorities, joint municipal boards, as well as private organisations, such as associations, foundations and companies.

The State mainly regulates the quantity of adult education and training by financial means. The quantity of voluntary adult education is controlled through state subsidies and adult employment (labour market) training through the acquisition of education and training.

State subsidies are granted to help with both establishment and operating costs. The state subsidy for operating costs is granted on the basis of calculated unit prices, which are confirmed annually per student, teaching hour or some other performance indicator. Other sources of financing for the institutions include contributions from the students' municipalities of residence and the maintaining bodies of the institutions, as well as student payments and course fees. Some adult education institutions finance their activities by selling educational services to both the public and the private sector.

Educational services are purchased in order to organise apprenticeship training and adult employment (labour market) training, for example. Apprenticeship training is financed almost entirely by the State: providers of apprenticeship training are granted state subsidy. Adult employment training is purchased by the employment authorities and the financing is channelled through the Ministry of Labour. Adult employment training falls within the administrative sector of the Ministry of Labour.

In-service training falls outside public funding and regulation to a large degree; the expenses are usually covered by the employer. In-service training is primarily short-term supplementary training and employees are trained according to the company's own operational strategies. Employees usually receive normal salary for time spent training and participation in the training is decided by the employer.

## 7.4. Human resources

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For requirements concerning teachers at different educational institutions, see corresponding chapters in sections 4, 5 and 6.

At institutions of liberal adult education teachers must have an appropriate tertiary degree and the pedagogical training with a scope of 35 credits to be qualified.

## 7.5. Organisation

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### 7.5.A. General adult education

General adult education includes general upper secondary schools for adults (*aikuislukio/vuxengymnasium*) and liberal adult education (*vapaa sivistystyö/fritt bildningsarbete*).

#### 7.5.A.1 Types of training institutions

General upper secondary schools for adults are institutions mainly intended for gainfully employed adults, who wish to complete basic education or general upper secondary education syllabi or parts of these.

Liberal adult education offers non-formal (non-certificate-oriented) studies, which provide adults with opportunities to develop themselves without qualification- or occupation-specific aims at institutions such as adult education centres (*kansalaisopisto/medborgarinstitut*), folk high schools (*kansanopisto/folkhögskola*), study centres (*opintokeskus/studiecentral*), summer universities (*kesäyliopisto/sommaruniversitet*) and physical education centres (*liikunnan koulutuskeskus/idrottsutbildningscenter*).

#### 7.5.A.2 Access requirements

As a rule, the entrance requirement for the applicant to general upper secondary schools for adults is to have reached the age of 18.

There are no entrance requirements to liberal adult education institutions in general, but the number of study places may be limited when participants are selected for example in the order of registration.

#### 7.5.A.3. Objectives of the programmes

See 7.5.A.1.

#### 7.5.A.4. Main principles of the organisation of time and venue

The completion of the study programme of general upper secondary schools for adults should not take more than four years. Teaching mainly takes place in the evenings, because they were initially intended for adults studying while at work. However, day-time instruction has increased. Instruction may also be partially given in the form of distance education or by applying other special forms of instruction.

Studies at folk high schools are usually based on long-term study lines, whereas those at adult education centres, study centres and summer universities usually offer short-term courses.

At some of the liberal adult education institutions instruction is mainly organised outside working hours in the evenings or in the form of intensive courses over weekends or in successive evenings during the week.

#### 7.5.A.5. Curriculum

##### General upper secondary schools for adults

The Government decides on the allocation of the time to be used for instruction in different subjects and subject groups and for student counselling ('allocation of classroom hours').

The National Board of Education decides on the objectives and core contents of the different subjects, subject groups and thematic subject modules and on those of student counselling ('national core curriculum').

The education providers, usually the local education authorities and the schools themselves draw up their own curricula within the framework of the national core curriculum.

The syllabus of the general upper secondary education for adults contains mother tongue and literature, the other national language, foreign languages, religion, ethics, history, social sciences, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and geography as well as philosophy and psychology. In addition, the institutions provide student counselling.

The curriculum of a general upper secondary school for adults may also include other subjects as well as thematic subject modules combined from several different subjects (entrepreneurship training, education for international understanding, etc.). An institution may also specialise in certain educational contents and/or in the instruction of certain target groups, where educational needs so require.

Participation to instruction at upper secondary schools for adults is not necessarily certificate-oriented; students may study for example foreign languages out of general interest.

Foreign students may be taught their native language as mother tongue or they may study Finnish or Swedish as a foreign language. In addition, separate study programmes may be provided for foreign students.

#### **Liberal adult education**

The educational contents of liberal adult education are not regulated.

These institutions provide many different general, social and interest-oriented studies. Subjects may include the mother tongue, foreign languages, data processing, arts, physical education, social skills as well as aesthetic and ethical self-enhancement. In social adult education, the focus is on learning the principles of democratic activities. Courses on aspects concerned with the quality of working life, shop stewards' duties, occupational safety and terms of employment are also organised.

The provision of liberal adult education also includes orientation courses for vocational or higher education in a particular field. With the help of these studies, students may, for example, test their aptitude for some field before engaging in long-term studies leading to an educational qualification.

A special form of adult education is labour market training targeted for unemployed people and those in risk of unemployment. The adult employment training is cost-free to the participants and organised by vocational adult education centres and other suppliers of training services. The studies normally include on-the-job practice which complements learning and enhances the chances of employment.

For more information on summer universities, see 7.5.F.

According to the legislation on immigrant integration, which entered into force in May 1999, an individual integration plan must be drawn up for unemployed immigrants. In line with the legislation, the immigrants should be provided with the opportunity immediately upon arrival to start learning Finnish or Swedish or take part in labour market training in order to facilitate their integration into the Finnish society.

Finnish and Swedish courses for foreigners are available at vocational adult education centres, folk high schools, general adult education centres, upper secondary schools for adults, the language centres of universities and colleges, and summer universities. Special training is also provided for those who cannot read or write.

The educational background of foreigners may not be an adequate basis for further studies in Finland. Therefore a special programme has been designed for them as a way of

supplementing earlier studies and completing the Finnish basic education. Employment training, either vocational training or orientation studies, is also arranged for immigrant groups. Vocational courses may be initial, continuing or further courses or qualification-targeted courses. Orientation studies may take the form of special courses for immigrants with a specific vocational training, or courses designed for a particular sector.

#### **7.5.A.6. Quality assurance**

Under the new educational legislation, effective as from 1 January 1999, educational institutions are obligated to evaluate their own operations and their effectiveness.

The starting point of self-evaluation is that it supports learning and the development of operations both at the individual and community levels, whilst also providing help in management. The aim of self-evaluation is to help individuals at institutions to form an integrated idea of the operations and to make the activities transparent to external interest groups.

#### **7.5.B. Vocational adult education and training**

Vocational adult education and training can be divided into upper secondary and additional vocational education and training. The education or training may be either certificate-oriented or non-formal. Upper secondary vocational education and training is certificate-oriented, whereas additional vocational training may be either. Certificate-oriented education is regulated nationally.

The qualifications in vocational adult and education and training are mainly taken in the form of competence-based qualifications (*näyttötutkinto / fristående examen*). Adult students may demonstrate their vocational skills in competence tests regardless of how and where they have acquired the skills. The requirements of the qualifications determine the vocational skills to be demonstrated in order to acquire the qualification certificate. They also define the elements constituting the qualification and the methods of demonstrating the vocational skills.

There are three levels of competence-based qualifications: upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. The upper secondary vocational qualifications completed in the form of competence-based qualifications correspond to those taken in vocational education and training intended for young people.

The further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications are primarily intended for adults – mainly for persons skilled in different fields to demonstrate their practical competence and vocational skills. Participation in a test is subject to a fee.

#### **7.5.B.1. Types of training institutions**

##### **Institutions providing vocational education and training**

Institutions with licence to provide education may provide upper secondary and additional vocational education and training for adults. Vocational institutions have established special adult education programmes or units.

The qualifications to be taken are the same in adult education and training as for young people. The qualifications can be taken by demonstrating one's vocational skills in a competence test, which is usually preceded by preparatory training.

Theoretical studies in apprenticeship training are usually organised at vocational institutions or at vocational adult education centres.

##### **Specialised vocational institutions**

Specialised vocational institutions are institutions designated as such by the Government. They are mainly owned by businesses and operate in the sectors of trade and industry. Most of these institutions focus on the training of employees for their respective owner companies.

Most of the training provided by specialised vocational institutions is additional vocational training.

##### **Polytechnics**

Polytechnic degree programmes may be completed in adult education.

In addition to degree-oriented education, polytechnics may provide professional specialisation studies.

##### **Universities**

See 7.5.F.

#### **7.5.B.2. Access requirements**

Taking part in competence tests does not require any formal preparation, however, many participants acquire preparatory training, in which they are provided with individual learning programmes.

#### **7.5.B.3. Objectives of the programmes**

The objective of upper secondary vocational education and training in general is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary

to acquire vocational skills and to provide them with the potential for self-employment.

Upper secondary vocational education and training provides preparation for upper secondary vocational qualifications and additional vocational training prepares for further and specialist vocational qualifications.

The primary objective of additional training is to provide citizens with opportunities for self-motivated improvement of their vocational competence independent of the employer. Training is especially targeted at training preparing for studies leading to qualifications or parts of qualifications, but other, short courses to promote vocational skills can also be arranged. Participants in additional training are usually different to those who have recently completed upper secondary vocational education and training for young people, because additional training aims to maintain and improve existing vocational skills.

#### **7.5.B.4. Main principles of the organisation of time and venue**

Upper secondary vocational study programmes in vocational institutions vary from two to three years. There is no maximum age limit for education and adults study alongside young people.

Preparatory training for the competence test can be arranged during the day, in the evenings or as multiform teaching. The duration of study is individual.

#### **7.5.B.5. Curriculum**

The Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education regulate certificate-oriented adult education, i.e. education leading to qualifications. The Ministry of Education confirms the qualifications structure, which includes the titles of qualifications. The National Board of Education is in turn responsible for drawing up national core curricula and requirements of vocational qualifications. These national core curricula and guidelines and their qualification requirements form the basis for the skills required in each individual qualification. Adult students irrespective of their backgrounds can take part in the competence tests organised according to the same principles throughout the country.

Continuing education centres at universities are usually separate institutes, which have their own regulations.

### **7.5.C. Oppisopimuskoulutus / Läroavtalsutbildning (Apprenticeship training)**

See section 5.

Additional vocational training arranged in the form of apprenticeship training lasts from 4 to 12 months and leads to a further or specialist vocational qualification. It may also be other supplementary training, which promotes the maintenance of vocational skills and helps to acquire special skills needed in a particular occupation. This type of training builds on upper secondary vocational education and training and/or work experience.

### **7.5.D. In-service training**

In-service training organised by companies is mainly provided in accordance with the requirements of the job. In-service training has traditionally been short-term supplementary training either in the workplace or at an educational institution. However, a tendency towards certificate-oriented in-service training has become visible to some extent over the last few years. Some large companies have trained their personnel from technicians to engineers, from engineers to Masters of Science in Engineering, and from Masters of Science in Engineering to Doctors of Technology. However, in recent years a new form of certificate-orientation has also been introduced in in-service training, providing personnel with some opportunities to take further or specialist vocational qualifications.

### **7.5.E. Adult employment training**

Adult employment training (labour market training) is intended for adults and financed by the Ministry of Labour. Under 20-year-olds may only participate in this type of training in exceptional cases. Most training is further and supplementary training. The primary target group consists of unemployed people and those at risk of unemployment. Adult employment training also increasingly aims to complete qualifications. Students are selected by employment authorities and applications for training are submitted to the employment offices.

### **7.5.F. Adult education at universities**

Adult education provided by universities is primarily arranged at universities' continuing education centres with an average annual number of 200,000 students. In 2001, 106,726 students attended continuing education courses and 83,228 open university

courses. Each university has a continuing education centre.

The main purpose of continuing education is to provide academically educated people with an opportunity to update their knowledge and skills or to acquire new professional skills or qualifications. This education also focuses on the application of the knowledge obtained through the latest academic research, and of the methods and models based on the most recent scientific ideas. In addition, the provision of education and training arranged on the basis of labour policy considerations is one of the major tasks of continuing education centres.

*Avoin yliopisto / Öppna universitetet* (open university education) corresponds with universities' undergraduate education in terms of course contents and requirements. However, there are no formal admission requirements in this form of education. Open university education provides forms and models of study which diverge from the traditional; the teaching methods applied make it possible to study irrespective of location. Open university education is provided by continuing education centres and various adult education institutions. One third of all open university education is provided in the form of distance learning, which utilises electronic communications complemented by tutoring to ensure the efficient progress of studies.

It is not possible to take degrees at the open university, but students who are subsequently granted the right to study a corresponding field at a university, are entitled to get credit for the studies they have completed at the open university.

### ***Kesäyliopisto/Sommaruniversitet* (Summer university)**

Summer universities are usually private organisations, which are maintained by specifically established associations with members from the region's local authorities, institutions of higher education, student unions and private organisations. There are 21 summer universities, and despite their name, they operate all year round. Summer universities operate in 133 locations. Summer universities are organisations providing education on a regional basis. They provide open university education, additional vocational training, language courses, various general educational and cultural events as well as university activities of the third age. University students may complete degree studies at some summer universities by taking examinations and participating in lectures and seminars. Instruction organised at summer universities is open to all; participants are selected in the order of registration.

### 7.5.B.6. Quality assurance

See 7.5.A.6.

## 7.6. Guidance/counselling services

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In general, at the beginning of the training, the institution and the student work together to draw up an individual learning programme.

For more information on guidance, see 4.A.4., 4.B.4. and 5.7.

For guidance for unemployed and migrants, see 7.5.A.5.

## 7.7. Assessment, accreditation and recognition

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For assessment at upper secondary institutions, see 4.A.3. and 4.B.3.

When drawing up an individual learning programme, previous studies as well as skills and knowledge learnt at work may be taken into account.

## 7.8. Statistics

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Adult education by types of institutions in 2001

Institution	Number of institutions providing adult education	Number of teaching hours
General educational institutions	528	3,595,000
Vocational institutions	289	5,721,000
Polytechnics	30	947,000
Universities	20	314,000
Summer universities	21	87,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>10,664,000</b>

Completed qualifications and degrees in adult education provided by institutions in 2001. Number of persons in adult employment training in 2001.

Institution	Basic education syllabus	General upper secondary syllabus	Matriculation examination	Vocational/polytechnic degree	Adult employment training <sup>1)</sup>
General educational institutions	213	2,302	2,666	1,116	4,221
Vocational institutions	-	-	-	18,833	27,992
Polytechnics	-	-	-	4,129	1,318
Universities	-	-	-	-	1,240
Summer universities	-	-	-	-	148
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>2,302</b>	<b>2,666</b>	<b>24,078</b>	<b>36,801</b>

<sup>1)</sup> In addition 17,319 persons took part in adult employment training outside institutions.

Source: Statistics Finland