



spotlight on VET

FINLAND

VET in Finland

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) is responsible for strategic and normative steering of vocational education and training (VET) and leads national development. National VET objectives and core subjects are determined by the government.

Authorisations to provide VET are granted by the MoEC. They cover VET fields, number of learners, language of instruction, locations, special educational tasks and other issues. VET providers may also be assigned tasks to organise labour policy education.

A VET provider may be a local authority, municipal training consortium, foundation or other registered association or State-owned company. These organise training in their areas, matching provision with local labour market needs. They decide independently on issues such as type of education and training provided, and ways of completing studies, within the limits of their authorisation from the MoEC.

Around 42% of learners who completed basic education start initial VET (IVET) immediately after; most of these obtain their VET qualifications at vocational institutions. Vocational qualifications are available for both young learners and adults.

There are 42 initial vocational qualifications (EQF 4), 65 further (EQF 4) and 56 specialist vocational qualifications (EQF 5). The most popular fields are technology, communications and transport, and social services, health and sports. Half of the learners are female, though the proportion varies greatly by field. Admission to IVET programmes is based on a basic education certificate; for continuing VET (CVET, further and specialist) it is on a case-by-case basis, taking work experience into consideration.

An initial vocational qualification requires 180 competence points (cp) comprising vocational units (compulsory and optional) and the so-called common units (communication, maths, science, citizenship and skills for working life). Nominal duration is three years depending on the individual personal competence development plan. Further vocational qualifications require 120, 150 or 180 cp and specialist vocational qualifications 160, 180 or 210 cp, consisting mainly of vocational units. All include work-based learning. The legislation does not stipulate a maximum or minimum amount on work-based learning (WBL).

WBL is provided mainly in real work environments (companies) or in school facilities if this is not possible. It can be provided for the entire programme duration and cover a full qualification, a module/unit or a smaller part of it. The most suitable method for learners is agreed individually in their personal competence development plan.

All qualifications can be obtained in apprenticeship training, a WBL form of VET that is based on a written fixed-term employment contract (apprenticeship contract) between an employer and an apprentice, who must be at least 15 years old. Most apprentices are adults.

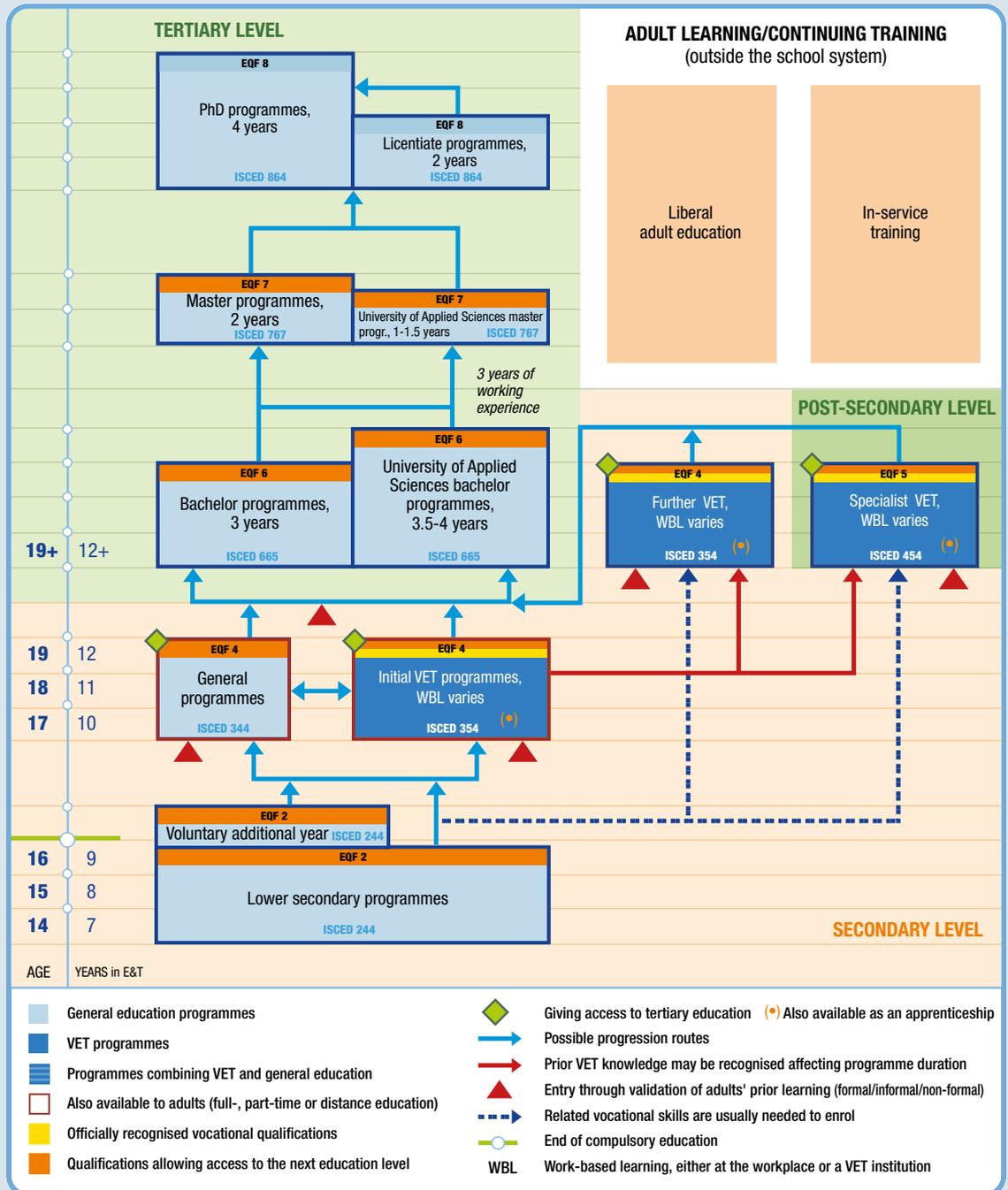
Another form of WBL is a training agreement. In this, learners are not in an employment relationship with the training company, they do not receive a salary and employers do not receive training compensation. Within this system, the learners get some experience during their studies, and the learner and the company get to know each other.

WBL forms may alter within a programme: a learner may transfer from a training agreement to apprenticeship training if the prerequisites for concluding an apprenticeship agreement are met.

All VET programmes ensure eligibility for higher education studies.

National qualification requirements ensure standardised vocational competence and are the basis for evaluating learning outcomes. The Finnish National Agency for Education develops them in broad cooperation with stakeholders (employer organisations, trade and student unions). Representatives from enterprises contribute to development of national qualification requirements; they also organise and plan workplace training and competence tests, as well as assessing the tests.

VET in Finland's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Finland.

Distinctive features of VET

Finnish vocational education and training is competence-based and learner-oriented. A personal competence development plan is drawn up for each learner. It charts and recognises the skills previously acquired by the learner and outlines any further competences the learner needs and how they can be acquired in different learning environments.

VET supports lifelong learning and learners' development as human beings and members of society. It provides learners with knowledge and skills necessary in further studies and promotes employment.

Communication and interaction competence, mathematics and science competence and citizenship and working life competence are included in all IVET programmes.

In Finland, VET is an attractive choice. Nine out of 10 of all Finns think it is of high quality and provides skills needed for jobs. It is attractive because of its flexibility and good job and study prospects: graduates may enrol in higher education or enter the labour market. The fact that vocational education is developed and delivered in cooperation with the labour market serves as a guarantee of its quality and attractiveness. Guided and goal-oriented learning at the workplace takes place in versatile learning environments, both at home and abroad, and is based on practical work tasks.

VET teachers and trainers are respected professionals. A career as a VET teacher is generally considered attractive. This is reflected in the high number of learners applying for VET training programmes, which invariably exceeds intake. Recently, about 30% of eligible applicants were admitted to training.

Challenges and policy responses

Finnish vocational education and training has recently undergone the most extensive reform in almost 20 years. The objective of the 2018 reform was to create a more efficient and flexible, competence-based and customer-oriented VET system, improve its efficiency and better match qualifications to labour market needs. This is done mainly through reducing regulation and introducing more autonomy and responsibility for VET providers.

Increasing the share of WBL is one of the objectives of the reform, though legislation does not stipulate a maximum or minimum amount. Further developing pedagogical thinking and practices, improving learning environments, and cooperation between workplaces and VET providers is required to achieve this objective. Sufficient number of workplaces and competent trainers, support and guidance and quality assurance are also key.

The competence-based approach significantly changes the work and job descriptions of teaching staff, which is greatly challenging the development of their competence and capacities. Teachers' jobs will include more guidance: individual study paths will increase the importance of the guidance and support provided for learners. Teachers must assume a guiding and coaching approach in their work and cooperate even more actively with the labour market than before.

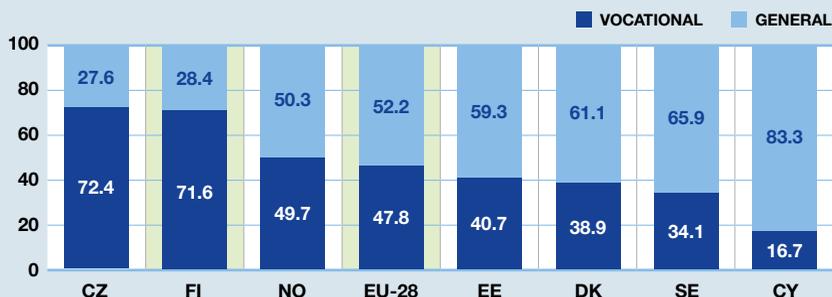
The reform also changes how VET is financed. Since 2018, a single funding system with uniform criteria has covered all VET programmes, including CVET and apprenticeships. The financing model has gradually started to move towards performance and efficiency funding; this will increase to 35% and 15% respectively by 2022, thus reducing the core funding to 50% from the current 95%. Performance funding is based on the number of completed qualifications and qualification units; effectiveness funding is based on learners' access to employment, pursuit of further education and feedback from both learners and the labour market.



Education and training in figures

Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes

% of all students in upper secondary education, 2017



Source: Cedefop calculations, based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 31.5.2019.

Lifelong learning

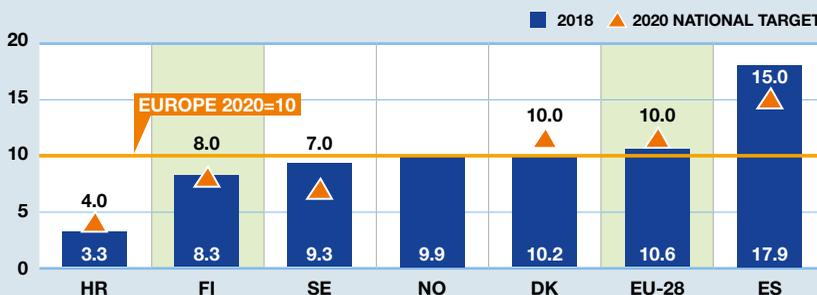
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2018



Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 31.5.2019.

Early leavers from education and training

% of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and who were not in further education or training during the last four weeks prior to the survey, 2018

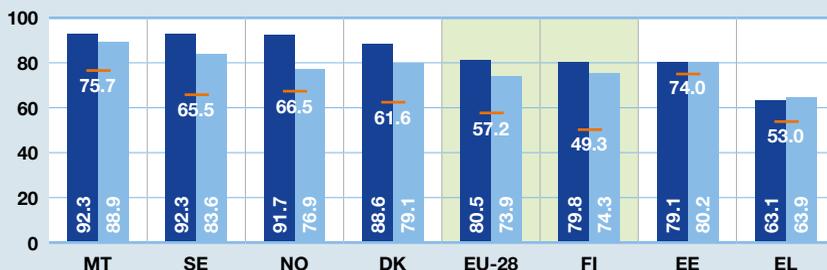


NB: Information on the national target set for Norway is not available.

Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 31.5.2019.

Employment rates of young graduates

% of 20 to 34 year-olds no longer in education and training, 2018



■ Upper vocational secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)
 ■ Upper general secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)
 — Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)

Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 31.5.2019.



Further information

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www.oph.fi/english/sources_of_information/publications/brochures	brochures on VET and vocational adult education
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www.sak.fi/english	Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK)
www.sttk.fi	Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK)
www.oaj.fi	Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ)
www.sakkinet.fi	National union of Finnish upper secondary vocational students (SAKKI)
https://samok.fi	Union of students in Finnish universities of applied sciences (SAMOK)

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