

WP1/T1.1/D1.1 Review of existing policy and implementation of apprenticeships. National Report: Finland

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Introduction

The entire vocational education and training (VET) in Finland is currently under big changes that will step in force by 2018. In the future, work life requires a new kind of competence, while there are ever fewer financial resources available for education. VET has to respond more swiftly to the changes in work life and operating environment and to adapt to individual competence needs.

Therefore VET for young people and adults will be consolidated, forming a single entity with its own steering and regulation system and financing model. The current supply-oriented approach will be refocused into a demand-driven approach. Education will be competence-based and customer-oriented: Each student will design an individually appropriate path to finish an entire qualification skill set. There are up to 370 different vocational qualifications available in Finland. In the future, the number of qualifications will decrease, and qualification content will be broadened. This supports designing individual study paths and enables more rapid responses to the changing competence needs in work life. The primary importance in education is on what the student learns and is able to do. Digital learning environments and new approaches to pedagogy (e.g. modern simulators) will have a larger role in the future of learning. Learning in the workplace will also be greatly increased. (Ministry of education and culture.)

In Finland, VET is organised by different types of education providers: municipalities, joint municipal authorities, the state and the private sector. An authorisation to provide education is required. In the future, education is regulated through a single authorisation license, and education providers will have increased freedom in organising their activities.

Also in the Finnish higher education the capacity and competence building of the graduates have been in the core of development already for long. Special attention has been directed to increase for example working life approaches, competence based curriculum work, personal study plans and practices to recognize prior learning. Special laws on post-graduate specialization programmes was implemented on 1.1.2015 giving universities and universities of applied sciences a mandate to develop and offer these new programmes. These fairly fresh programmes are at the moment the main development tools to increase the apprenticeship and working life aspects into formal post-graduate education.

This short draft report aims to give an overview of the current apprenticeship schemes, structures and governance in Finland. To put the apprenticeships better in the framework we have described these not only at the Higher Education level but also at vocational education level.

Initial information

1. Is your university/organisation involved in apprenticeship schemes? At what level? Who could know about apprenticeships in your own organisation/institution?

VET level

University staff is occasionally being trained with apprenticeship training funding. University adult education may be financed for the participant through this finance, but it must be non-degree training. See more about apprenticeship model for target groups in the following “HE level”.

Higher Education Level

In Higher Education level University of Turku has participated in the development of Specialization Education Model in Finland by coordinating a project “Recognition of Expertise in the Specialization Education”. The project studied the topic of experts learning in the circumstances of work.

2. If your university/organisation is not involved in apprenticeships, do you know any university/association in your country that have an apprenticeship agreement already in place? Is it a model that could be useful for us? For how long has been in place?

See answer above. In general, apprenticeship training is targeted in VET level in Finland.

Structure and governance

Typology of stakeholders – Public authorities, Entrepreneur associations, Branch associations, Professional associations, Enterprises and SMEs, Research organisations, Trade unions, Universities, Quality agents...

1. Which public bodies have information and/or watches over ongoing apprenticeship schemes?

Public authority:

The national education administration is organised at two levels:

- Ministry of Education and Culture (Education policy)
- The Finnish National Agency for Education (implementation of the policy aims)

Education providers are responsible for practical teaching arrangements as well as the effectiveness and quality of their education. Local authorities determine how much autonomy is passed on to schools. The schools have the right to provide educational services according to their own administrative arrangements and visions, as long as the basic functions, determined by law, are carried out.

Vocational education and training (VET) level

Regional or municipal Apprenticeship Offices coordinate apprenticeships in (VET) level with a network of educational institutions. The apprenticeship training is inspected by the Apprenticeship Offices. The Office may delegate the power to make agreements in the education institutions.

The apprenticeship training providers are listed in a national website www.opintopolku.fi and there are currently 76 providers listed. The work practice place can be searched via another national website www.te-palvelut.fi > CV-netti (CV web) by filling a Curriculum Vitae electronically. A list of open work places can be searched through the same website www.te-palvelut.fi > Avoimet työpaikat (Vacancies).

Higher Education (HE) level

The rector's conferences in universities of applied sciences (Arene) and universities (UNIFI) has reviewed the Specialization Education programmes in the first stage of the new educational model. In the ongoing stage the new programmes are negotiated and prepared by deans of the universities with the substance area in question. Majority of universities with the substance area must participate in the agreement in order it to be valid. Vice-rectors or rectors sign the agreements and a copy of them must be sent to the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Finnish National Agency for Education holds a public list of all Specialization Education programmes

Quality agent: Finnish Education Evaluation Centre FINEEC (Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus, KARVI) reviews the quality. The ideology is to steer through information, support and funding instead of inspections. This agency is responsible for organizing quality evaluations in the whole education system.

Quality is handled in apprenticeship training and Specialization Education in VET and HE the following way.

Vocational education and training (VET) level

In VET level the apprenticeship education is evaluated by collecting feedback from students in three stages (beginning, mid-term and end of training) and with surveys to employers and institutions. The Finnish National Agency for Education analyzes the feedback and reports the quality indicators.

Higher Education (HE) level

In higher education universities of applied sciences and universities are responsible for the evaluation of their own operations and outcomes. This approach is embedded also in the Specialization education at higher education level. FINEEC, the national body responsible for developing the quality of education, co-ordinates quality reviews in both VET and HE as part of their evaluation programme in the future years.

Enterprises and SME's: The Finnish Federation of Enterprises is representative for the viewpoint of Enterprises and SME's in education and training.

Vocational Education and training (VET) level

As part of the reform on VET, enterprises will be having new models for training staff at the workplaces. A new “Education Agreement” will be introduced to train people with less competences. These agreements differ from Apprenticeship training by the fact that the trainee doesn’t have to have a work contract with the employer and the agreement can be made part by part of the qualification. In Apprenticeship education the trainee has to be employed by the organization and the training agreement is made for the entire qualification. Entrepreneurs have an opportunity to qualify themselves by attending a VET degree while working in their company. This qualification can be achieved also as apprenticeship training.

HE level

The Federation of Finnish Enterprises takes part in the planning phase, the hearing of the stakeholders, when the content area of the Specialization Education covers business and entrepreneurship. A Specialization Education programme for Entrepreneurs has been discussed but his hasn’t passed the screening for new programmes in the starting phase of the new educational model.

Trade unions, professional organizations:

These have various roles depending on the level of education we discuss here in this report.

Vocational education and training (VET) level

The social partners are involved in the definition of competences in their respective branches or fields of study. These organizations may also take part in the assessment of the model and the renewal of the competence areas. Apprenticeship training is one form of VET in Finland, because VET qualifications can be achieved in three paths: young people enroll *upper secondary qualifications in VET schools*. Adults who already are in work life receive degrees mostly through the *competence-based qualifications* organized by the schools. Similar to the latter model, adults can also enroll VET training through the *apprenticeship training scheme*. Then even a larger part of the training is happening at the workplace.

Higher Education (HE) level

Social partners are involved in the initial planning stage of the Specialization Studies. The agreement of the Studies must include a hearing of the labour market stakeholders or proof of an ongoing dialogue for defining the competence areas together with the training providers. The social partners are also invited to participate in the process of reviewing the competence areas and updating the programme, but there are no specific instructions on how this is done.

In conclusion, the following can be said about the Finnish model at the moment.

Overview of the apprenticeship training model and specialization education model in Finland

Vocational education and training (VET) level

Approximately 70–80 percent of apprenticeship training takes place in the workplace, where the apprentice's training is entrusted to the responsible workplace instructor(s). Workplace training is supplemented with theoretical studies, which are mainly provided by vocational institutions. The provider of apprenticeship training confirms the apprenticeship contract between the apprentice and the employer.

The Finnish model of apprenticeship training differs from many other European countries in the sense that majority of the learning is achieved at the workplace. The countries with the highest percentage of students in apprenticeship-type training are Germany, Denmark and Switzerland. Approximately 90 per cent of all students completing a vocational upper secondary qualification do so in on-the-job learning, while in Belgium, where the percentage of students in apprenticeship training is high (over 70% of each age group), only 4.3% study in training programmes completed at a workplace (Cedefop 2015).

There are also major differences in study practices. For example: In Germany, France and Austria, apprenticeships are limited to students under 25 years of age, while in Finland and several other countries, there are no such restrictions. There are also differences in the duration of apprenticeship training between countries, but the duration of studies is from one to three years in most countries (see ILO 2012).

Higher Education (HE) level

Specialization studies are targeted at professionals who have at least Bachelor's degree. University Specialization Studies programmes usually have Master's degree as the entry requirement. The new educational model emphasizes work based learning or learning at the workplace. However, the forms of education are still in the making. A research and development project at the University of Turku and University of Tampere studied formation of expertise through a large literary review. The outcomes of this study were shared in national seminars and topical workshops.

At the moment there is no similar reference for Specialization Education model in other countries. In the Finnish case it is seen that there was missing an educational model for expertise development for those who have graduated with a HE degree and have worked several years in the working life. The legislation for the education states that an agreement has to be made between majority of HEI with training responsibilities in the specific branch (e.g. between faculties of Social Sciences). A hearing for the stakeholders in working life has to be carried out for the basis of this agreement. Based on this "ground agreement" the HEI who are interested in producing such an education can make another agreement on carrying out the course together or individually.

2. Who could know about apprenticeships in your city, region, country?

Turku Apprenticeship Office is the nearest contact point for this training. The other regional offices can be found from the website: www.opintopolku.fi.

3. Which type of institution/organisation normally is actively involved in apprenticeships?

In VET level there is more variation in the providers. In HE level the Specialization Education model is restricted to the universities of applied sciences or universities.

Vocational education and training (VET) level

The biggest providers of apprenticeship training are maybe surprisingly the big municipalities, City of Helsinki, City of Tampere and City of Turku. The large VET providers like Salpaus, Keuda and Omnia are among the largest institutions active in apprenticeships.

Higher Education (HE) level

The universities of applied sciences are more active in the Specialization education model than the research universities. In the university sector the programmes started continue the traditions of previous professional development programmes (licensiate training, specialization studies) in social work, psychology, etc. New programmes have been created e.g. in digitalization and intercultural competences, as new or emerging fields of studies.

State of play

Phase of programme development and stakeholder involvement – Promoters, Design, Implementation, Examination, Certification, Programme evaluation...

1. Has your country/region a programme to promote apprenticeships? Who does it? How it works?

Apprenticeship trainings are promoted by Apprenticeship Offices and by the National Board of Education. Also the employment administration is promoting apprenticeships as part of the working life services for career shifters or those in the risk of unemployment or unemployed.

Specialization education is promoted by universities of applied sciences or universities. No national marketing scheme is existing at the moment that would involve e.g. social partners.

2. Which is the standard design of these programmes in your country? Do they need approval from central offices before they can be implemented? Is there any quality control to ensure the quality of these programmes?

Vocational education and training (VET) level

Apprenticeship training can be completed as part of any of the three vocational qualifications: upper secondary, further or specialist vocational qualification. Even vocational further education and training that does not lead to any qualification can be organised as apprenticeship training. Entrepreneurs can complete apprenticeship training in their own enterprise.

Apprenticeship training involves VET primarily provided at a workplace in the form of practical work assignments. At the workplace, the student is assigned a workplace instructor, who is responsible for organising the guidance and training at the workplace, thus allowing the student to gain the vocational

skills requirements specific to the needs of the workplace and in accordance with the qualification criteria. An apprenticeship training workplace must have personnel with the necessary professional skills, educational background and work experience who can be assigned to the student as instructors. The workplace must also have sufficient production and service operations and the necessary equipment on hand.

Quality of individual courses are monitored by the Apprenticeship Offices and model in general by the National Board of Education.

Higher Education (HE) level

Specialization Education studies are regulated by legislation. Usual size of the programmes is 60 credit points, whereas 30 is the minimum. Majority of the learning should take place in the working life, but there are no guidelines on the practicalities. Contact teaching is customary especially in the specialization education programmes in the field of education. Assessment of learning is carried out by the HE. Some training may be organized for the working life instructors or supervisors. The duration of the studies is usually 2 years. Validation of prior learning is advised to take place but there are no national guidelines on to what extent prior non-formal or informal learning has to be accredited.

Quality management is carried out as part of the overall quality management system of the HEI.

3. Which materials (including templates) are easily available? Do you think that what is available covers all the information you would need if you wanted to set up now an apprenticeship programme in your institution/organisation?

In apprenticeship training the forms and templates are created centrally and distributed by the service providers. Marketing is done via the national websites and through the institutions.

In Specialization Education there is no one marketplace for information materials. Each university is advertising their programmes in their own websites. Each education creates own recruiting materials, forms, etc.

4. How are the students assessed? Which type of certification do they receive, if successfully completed?

In apprenticeship training the students are assessed both in school and at the workplace. They receive the same qualification as students who enroll other forms of studies.

In specialization education the universities of applied sciences and universities may design assessment methods as they see fit. Working life orientation is added to assessment but in general the actors are the student him or herself (self-assessment) or the educator (summative, formative assessment). Majority of the programmes include a practical assignment that will be assessed.

5. How many students undertake this type of scheme every year in your country/region? Which is the level of success?

Vocational education and training (VET) level

In 2014, 19 400 students began their apprenticeship training in Finland, with the total number of students in apprenticeship training being 48 800, which is approximately 20 per cent of all VET students. A majority of the apprenticeship training students completing a qualification study for no more than two years. In 2013 nearly all (92 %) apprenticeship training students completed a further and specialist vocational qualification studies in two years or less. Over half of all students completing a further vocational qualification studied for 1.5 years or less.

The completion rate for a vocational upper secondary qualification completed in apprenticeship training was, on average, 41 per cent. However, completion varied between VET fields, with Humanities and education reaching 58 per cent, while in Social sciences, business and administration only 23 percent of students beginning studies in 2007 completed a qualification. The completion per cent among women was higher in all VET fields, with the biggest difference within a given VET field being over 20 percentage points.

Higher Education (HE) level

No statistics are yet available of the Specialization Education programmes as first courses started 2016 and are still ongoing.

The apprenticeship training and Specialization Education are set in the EQF and National qualification framework in the same level as the qualifications of the target group in question. Apprenticeships in VET are in the VET level and Specialization Educations are either in BA, MA or Dr level.

6. Which legislation do you have in place in your country/region/institution about apprenticeships?

The respective legislation in the education sector define apprenticeship training or Specialization Education.

Vocational education and training (VET) level

Laws on education

- law on VET education (L 630/1998, A 811/1998)
- law on VET adult education (L 631/1998, A 812/1998)
- law on funding the education and culture (L 1705/2009 and (A 1766/2009)

Work legislation

- law on work contracts (55/2001)
- work safety law (738/2002)
- collective labour agreement of the branch.

Higher Education (HE) level

- Amendment to the law on universities of applied sciences (1173/2014)
- Amendment to the university law (1172/2014)

7. How are the apprenticeship programmes funded? Is there any national regulation about it?

Students in apprenticeship training receive pay according to the relevant collective agreement, theoretical education free of charge as well as travel and accommodation allowances. They also receive a daily allowance for the period of theoretical studies if their pay does not cover that period. Apprentices with families are also entitled to family allowance. The only charge for the qualification to the participant is the 58€ fee for the examination.

Municipalities have a statutory funding obligation in the provision of apprenticeship training in vocational upper secondary education and training. They pay a 58.11% share of the per capita funding of training costs. Vocational further education and training is entirely funded by the state, without a municipal funding share.

Students in Specialization education may receive adult education benefits.

Government funding ended after the starting stage for the new educational model. The funding included two components, max 120€/credit point/person by the Ministry of Education and Culture and a corresponding component of fee paid by the student (or the employer). In the current stage the participants will be covering the fee entirely by themselves or with the help of their employers.

8. Which level of education is linked to apprenticeship schemes in your country? Is the award received equivalent (in credits and/or recognition) to similar awards that are not linked to apprenticeships?

Apprenticeship training is one of the three forms of VET and the qualification are of similar size and value as the other training forms.

Specialization studies are not considered as degrees same ways as Bachelors or Masters degrees. They fall in the category to adult education.

9. Which subjects/professional areas/economic fields are more popular in this type of programmes?

Vocational education and training (VET) level

In terms of the number of students, the largest VET field is Social sciences, business and administration, which accounts for 35 per cent of all students enrolled in institution-based education. The second-largest VET field is Technology, communications and transport. In 2014 women accounted for approximately 54 per cent of all apprenticeship training students. Of students 55-59 years of age, over 67 per cent were women. A majority of students under 20 years of age were men.

HE level Higher Education (HE) level

No statistics are yet available of the Specialization Education programmes as first courses started 2016 and the programmes are still ongoing.

References and links

[to be added]