



Ministry of Education and Culture  
Ministère de l'Éducation et de la culture

**Developing VET  
Teachers' professional skills  
The Finnish Experience**

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## Finnish VET in the Spotlight

- VET has many target groups: young people, adults and people in working life who need upskilling or reskilling -> VET is lifelong learning
- VET is a tool to develop working life and promote employment
- VET offers an open pathway to polytechnics and universities
- VET is attractive: 44% of basic school-leavers continue in IVET
- IVET: tuition and meals free of charge (as in all education in Finland)
- CVET: small fees
- IVET graduates: 68% enter the labour market and 9% continue with higher education
- IVET: a drop-out rate below 8%, a passing rate of approximately 60% (3 years nominal duration)
- VET is good quality:
  - VET-providers are licensed by the Ministry of Education and Culture
  - funding is partly based on the performance of the VET provider
  - learning outcomes are evaluated on a regular basis

## VET Teachers in Finland

- 80% of teachers teach vocational studies
- 20% of teachers are:
  - specialists in core subjects like languages, maths, science, arts and social sciences
  - special needs teachers
  - guidance counsellors
- Requirements for VET teachers are high:
  - master's/bachelor's degree (depending on the particular VET field)
  - minimum 3 years work experience in the field
  - VET teacher education: one year of pedagogical studies (mostly combined with teaching in a VET institution) in a vocational teacher education institution
- Approximately 75% of IVET teachers are formally qualified

## Challenges of VET

- Changing, increasing and diversifying skills needs
  - Matching VET to the skills needs of the labour market
- Ageing population
  - Engaging the whole youth cohort in education - VET or academic
  - Skills development of those in working life or who are unemployed
- Engagement of employers
  - Developing incentives for employers to participate in the funding of VET and in training the students
- Changing and diversifying group of learners
  - new learning methods and environments
- Growing expectations and demands on education and training
  - quality, skills needs, effectiveness and cost-efficiency

## Developing VET teachers' professional skills

- VET providers are responsible for VET teachers' competence development
  - Public funding for VET providers also caters to staff development costs
- The government supports the continuing training of VET teachers
  - Training priorities are established annually according to national VET policy
- TVET teachers are actively participating in developing VET
  - Primarily through the development activities of the VET providers
  - Via a pedagogical and learning environment
  - Skills competitions as a tool for developing VET
- Work practice programmes for VET teachers
  - Opportunity for VET teachers to upgrade their professional skills by working in local companies
  - Work practice programmes are organised by VET providers in cooperation with local companies
  - Work practice programmes have been financially supported by the European Social Fund

## Lessons learned – Finnish experiences

- Professional VET teachers with a strong educational background, working life experience and pedagogical teacher training are essential for high-quality VET
- VET teachers' competence development is the cornerstone of success for
  - VET institutions, VET teachers themselves, school leadership, public administration, working life
- Teachers' participation in the development of VET
  - motivates - and enables – teachers to combine teaching and development work, which gives teachers the possibility to develop their professional skills and VET in tandem
  - helps to increase the appreciation of the VET teachers' profession
- The development of teachers' professional skills must be done in close cooperation with the world of work
- Adequate public funding for the continuing training of VET teachers is important