



European
Commission



Education and Training Monitor 2014

Finland

1. Key indicators and benchmarks

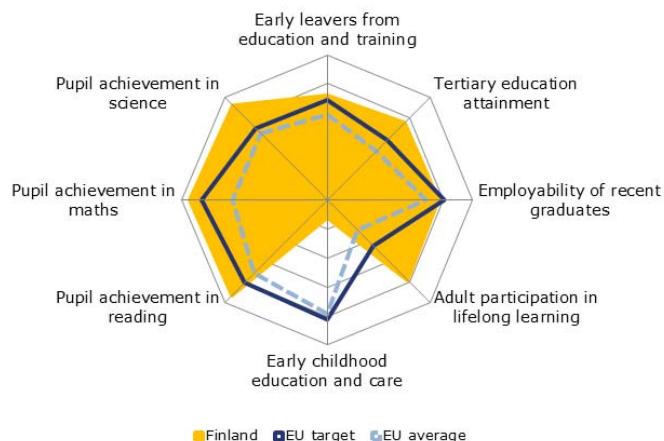
			Finland		Trend	EU28 average		Europe 2020 target / Benchmark			
			2010	2013		2010	2013				
<i>Europe 2020 headline target</i>											
1. Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)			10.3%	9.3%	▼	13.9%	12.0%	EU target: 10% National target: 8%			
2. Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)			45.7%	45.1%	▼	33.6%	36.9%	EU target: 40% National target: 42%			
<i>ET 2020 Benchmarks</i>											
3. Early childhood education and care (4-years-old until the starting age of compulsory education)			71.9% ⁰⁹	75.1% ¹²	▲	92.1% ⁰⁹	93.9% ¹²	95%			
4. Basic skills			Reading			8.1% ⁰⁹	11.3% ¹²	▲	19.7% ⁰⁹	17.8% ¹²	15%
Low achievers (15 year-olds; Level 1 or lower in PISA study)			Mathematics			7.8% ⁰⁹	12.3% ¹²	▲	22.3% ⁰⁹	22.1% ¹²	15%
			Science			6.0% ⁰⁹	7.7% ¹²	▲	17.8% ⁰⁹	16.6% ¹²	15%
5. Learning mobility			Initial vocational training (IVET)		a. Students participating in Leonardo da Vinci programmes as a share of vocational students at ISCED 3	0.5%	0.7% ¹²	▲	0.6%	0.7% ¹²	
			Higher Education		b. Erasmus inbound students as % of student population in host country	-	2.2% ¹²	:	-	1.2% ¹²	
					c. Inbound international degree mobile students as % of student population in the host country	4.1%	5.1% ¹²	▲	6.0%	6.9% ¹²	
6. Employment rate of recent graduates (age 20-34) having left education 1-3 years before reference year			ISCED 3-6			79.7%	79.8%	=	77.4%	75.5%	82%
			ISCED 3-4			76.3%	75.9%	▼	72.1%	69.5%	
			ISCED 5-6			84.9%	85.7%	▲	82.7%	80.9%	
7. Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)			23.0%	24.9%	▲	9.1%	10.5% ^b				15%
<i>Other ET 2020 Indicators</i>											
8. Investment in education and training			a. General government expenditure on education (% of GDP)			6.6%	6.3% ¹²	▼	5.5%	5.3% ¹²	
			b. Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil/student in € PPS			€ 7,036	€ 7,297 ¹¹	▲	€6,063.74 ^e	€6,297.16 ^{11, e}	
					ISCED 3-4	€ 6,128	€ 6,369 ¹¹	▲	€7,022.35 ^e	€6,650.87 ^{11, e}	
					ISCED 5-6	€ 12,945	€ 13,541 ¹¹	▲	€9,764.30 ^e	€9,474.80 ^{11, e}	
9. Transversal competences			Digital competences		a. Pupils in grade 4 (ISCED 1) using computers at school	:	80.6% ¹¹	:	60.7% ⁰⁷	64.7% ¹¹	
					b. Individuals aged 16-74 with high computer skills ¹	33.0% ⁰⁹	41.0% ¹²	▲	25.0% ⁰⁹	26.0% ¹²	
			Problem solving in technology rich environments		c. Low achievers (no or insuff. computer experience) ²	:	8.7% ¹²	:	:	16.9% ^{12, EU17}	
					d. High achievers (PIAAC level 2 and above)	:	41.6% ¹²	:	:	33.2% ^{12, EU13}	
			Entrepreneurial competences		e. Individuals aged 18-64 who believe to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business	:	33.0%	:	:	42.3% ^{a, EU18}	
			Foreign language skills		f. ISCED 2 students at proficiency level B1 or higher in first foreign language ³	:	:	:	:	43.5% ^{11, EU13}	
					g. ISCED 2 students learning two or more foreign languages	98.2%	96.5% ¹²	▼	60.6%	63.0% ¹¹	
10. Basic skills of adults			Literacy		Low achievers (< PIAAC proficiency level 2)	:	10.6% ¹²	:	:	19.9% ^{12, EU17}	
					High achievers (PIAAC proficiency level 3 and >)	:	62.9% ¹²	:	:	43.3% ^{12, EU17}	
			Numeracy		Low achievers (< PIAAC proficiency level 2)	:	12.8% ¹²	:	:	23.6% ^{12, EU17}	
					High achievers (PIAAC proficiency level 3 and >)	:	57.9% ¹²	:	:	40.9% ^{12, EU17}	
11. Skills for future labour market			High qualification			:	+9.6%	:	:	+12.4%	
			Medium qualification			:	+2.0%	:	:	+2.1%	
			Low qualification			:	-11.9%	:	:	-13.2%	
12. Teachers			a. Teachers aged >50 teaching in public and private at ISCED 2-3 - as % of total teachers teaching in ISCED 2-3 ⁴			36.7%	37.0% ¹²	▲	:	:	¹²
			b. Percentage of teachers who undertook some professional development activities in the previous 12 months			:	79.3%	:	:	84.6% ^{EU19}	
13. Vocational education and training			Percentage of vocational students at ISCED 3			69.7%	70.1% ¹²	▲	50.1%	50.4% ¹²	

Source: Cedefop: 11 / EAC: 5ab / European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC): 9f / Eurostat (COFOG): 8a / Eurostat (ISS): 9b / Eurostat (LFS): 1, 2, 6, 7 / Eurostat (UOE): 3, 5, 8b, 9g, 12a, 13 / Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 9e / IEA TIMSS: 9a / OECD (PIAAC): 9cd, 10 / OECD (PISA): 4 / OECD (TALIS): 12b

Notes: ⁰⁷ =2007, ⁰⁸ =2008, ⁰⁹ =2009, ¹⁰ =2010, ¹¹ =2011, ¹² =2012, a= unweighted average, b= break, e= estimate, p= provisional.

¹= having carried out 5-6 specific computer related activities. Caution is advised when interpreting comparability over time, due to developments in the implementation of questions related to computer skills, ²= results cover people who have no computer experience or failed the ICT test, ³= average of skills tested in reading, listening, writing, ⁴= in some Member States, ISCED 3 includes level 4 (CZ, EE, ES, IE, NL, FI, UK), while in others (IT, LU, NL) only public institutions figures are reported.

Figure: Position in relation to highest (outer ring) and lowest performers (centre)



Source: DG Education and Culture calculations, based on data from Eurostat (LFS 2013 and UOE 2012) and OECD (PISA 2012). Note: all scores are set between a maximum (the highest performers visualised by the outer ring) and a minimum (the lowest performers visualised by the centre of the chart).

2. Main challenges

Finland's overall performance in education and training remains good, but a number of problems have become apparent in certain areas (e.g. migrants' level of basic skills, older workers' participation in lifelong learning and the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training). These are affecting the labour market situation and employability of the working age population.

The 2014 European Semester country specific recommendation on education and training focuses on the provision of vocational education and training and targeted activation measures to young people and to the long-term unemployed, in order to improve their labour market prospects¹.

3. Improving resource efficiency and effectiveness

3.1 Investment in education

General government expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP remained fairly stable in Finland during the period 2008-12, ranging from 5.9% of GDP in 2008 to 6.4% of GDP in 2012. It was significantly higher than the overall EU average of 5.3% in 2012.²

The recent budgetary consolidation measures have however brought significant reductions to public spending on education. The structural policy programme adopted in 2013 reduces government expenditure on education by a significant amount over the period 2014-17.³ This measure affects local authorities in particular, as it is they who are responsible for education under the highly decentralised Finnish administrative model. The tighter budgetary restrictions may make it necessary to reorganise the upper secondary school network and/or the provision of pre-school education by local authorities.

3.2 A focus on teachers

According to the 2013 OECD TALIS survey,⁴ Finnish teachers perceive their status in society to be high, in comparison to teachers in other EU countries: 59% of teachers in Finland think the teaching profession is valued by Finnish society (the highest proportion in any EU country). Moreover, the proportion of teachers working in schools whose school leaders report a shortage of qualified staff is very low (17% compared to an EU average of 36%). The Eurydice report *Key data on teachers and school leaders* shows that a high proportion of teachers in Finland are specialised in reading and mathematics, and in special educational needs.⁵

¹ See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/csr2014_council_finland_en.pdf.

² For more data from the Classification of the functions of government please see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Government_expenditure_on_education.

³ See the 2014 Draft Budgetary Plan for Finland: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/dbp/fi_2013-10-15_dbp_en.pdf.

⁴ The 2013 OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/talis.htm>.

⁵ See the Eurydice report *Key data on teachers and school leaders* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/151EN.pdf.

On the other hand, only 16% of teachers in Finland took part in a formal induction programme while in their first permanent post (compared to an EU average of 49%) and the proportion of teachers taking part in some sort of professional development activities in the last 12 months is somewhat lower than the EU average (79% compared to 85%). Finland has a very specific system of teacher feedback which is different from the usual appraisal known in other countries.. Finland also has the lowest proportion of teachers using information and communication technologies (ICT) for students' projects or class work (18%) of all EU countries. The proportion of teachers who feel they can motivate students with a low level of interest in schoolwork is relatively low (60% compared to an EU average of 71%).

All teachers working in government funded schools have the opportunity to take part in continuing professional development. This helps to ensure that teachers are equipped with the skills they will need in the future. The national programme for teachers' continuing education (*Osaava*)⁶ has focused on particular target groups. It allows education providers and teachers to create communities and learning networks where they can share ideas on training models and good practice. ICT is actively used and promoted throughout the programme.

Finally, the Ministry of Education and Culture has made additional funding available for measures designed to encourage teachers to make greater use of ICT in their teaching. The new measures aim to help teachers improve their ICT skills and learn new methods of teaching and to make it easier for teachers to work collaboratively by providing better tools for doing so. Using new technology in teaching is also seen as a way of increasing students' motivation.

4. Raising employability

4.1 Work-based learning, apprenticeships and adult learning

The participation of upper secondary students in vocational education and training has traditionally been very high in Finland, with 70.1% following vocational courses in 2011 compared to an EU average of 50.4%. The number of participants in apprenticeship training has traditionally been relatively low in Finland, but student volumes have increased considerably in recent years (ca. 70.000 in 2009, corresponding to ca.1/4 of all iVET students)⁷. The employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates⁸ stood at 75.9% in 2013, which is above the EU average.

The level of adult participation in lifelong learning is the third highest in the EU (24.9% in 2013, well above the EU average of 10.5%). Participation rates for older and low-skilled adults were also higher than the EU average, but considerably lower than that of the general adult population in Finland: the estimated participation rate for those aged 55-64 was 13.5%, while for the low-skilled it was just 10.7%. Unlike in many other Member States, participation of people born outside Finland was actually higher (28%) than of those born in the country (24.3%).

Finland achieved very good results for the level of adults' basic skills. In the 2013 OECD Survey of Adult Skills⁹, adults (aged 16-65) in Finland achieved the best scores in the EU in both the literacy and numeracy proficiency tests. Moreover, the proportion of low-skilled adults in the population is one of the lowest, with around 10% of adults having a low level in literacy and 12% in numeracy (compared with EU averages of 19% and 24%, respectively). A large proportion of the population (over 40%) show a high level of skills in problem-solving in a technology rich environment. The difference in the scores achieved by different age groups is very large, for both literacy and numeracy, with young adults performing much better than older people: e.g. the difference in literacy skills between people aged 25-34 and 55-65 is equivalent to the skills usually acquired in the course of five years of education.

With regard to adult learning, it is clear that older and low-skilled workers could benefit from targeted measures designed to enable them to continue participating actively in the labour market for longer, to increase their social participation and to encourage them to be active in their role as citizens. Moreover, human resource policies in traditional industries should include a particular focus on older workers, notably in order to prevent skill shortages emerging in areas where there are new and often evolving production processes. In the future, Finland will also have to face the challenge of skill mismatches, a consequence of the ongoing structural change taking

⁶ See <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2009/Osaava.html>.

⁷ See 'Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union', Final report, European Commission, 2012. More on <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6633&visible=1>

⁸ People aged 20-34 having left education between one and three years before the reference year.

⁹ More information is available in the country profile from the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies <http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/Country%20note%20-%20Finland.pdf>.

place in the economy. The skills offered by workers leaving more traditional, often declining sectors do not correspond to those required in the sectors that are currently expanding, which tend to be more technologically intensive.

Finland is now working on establishing a lifelong learning system based on individual needs. The provision of lifelong learning is currently determined from the supply side, and the training provided does not therefore necessarily correspond to individual needs. In order to develop a more demand-driven system, the Ministry of Education and Culture has proposed introducing personal training accounts for learners.

Finland has also been implementing a major initiative to inter alia increase the provision of vocational education and training and apprenticeships, '*The social guarantee for young people: education, work and tailored services*'.¹⁰ The initiative, which has been in existence since 2006, was expanded in January 2013. The Youth Guarantee is now in the full implementation phase and its impact was evaluated for the first time in March 2014 by the Ministry for Employment and the Economy.¹¹ As indicated by the Finnish Youth Guarantee implementation report (presented in spring 2014), the general opinion of the evaluators is that the youth guarantee has largely been implemented, and that further progress towards full implementation will be made in the near future. Implementation of the educational guarantee part is considered to have been more successful than that of other services and measures. The programme has been most successfully implemented in the area of local services for young people, where workshops and outreach work have been introduced. Not enough has been done however to meet the requirements of the programme as relates to social, health and rehabilitation services

One of the main components of the Youth Guarantee is increased provision of vocational education and training and additional apprenticeship places. Finland has already increased the number of available places on vocational study courses in the areas where demand is highest, and has created around 1 700 new apprenticeship placements. Apprenticeship places have been increased particularly in geographical areas where there were previously low numbers of placements available relative to the population of the relevant age group. This is a positive, albeit fairly limited development, as the number of apprenticeships available remains far from sufficient.

4.2 Modernising and internationalising higher education

Finland's tertiary educational attainment rate was 45.1% compared to an EU average of 36.9% in 2013, when measured according to the EU definition of the indicator. The rate of tertiary educational attainment among people born outside Finland remains lower than among those born in the country, at 33% compared to 47% in 2012 (measured according to the EU definition). The drop-out rate from higher education was 24.2% in 2011 in Finland, compared to an OECD average of 31.6%.¹²

Nonetheless, the duration of studies in Finland is amongst the longest of all those reported in OECD member countries.¹³ In view of this, the university funding model was revised in 2013 to better take into account the number of qualifications completed by students and their progress in their studies. The reform aims to improve completion rates and to accelerate the transition into working life. In 2014, the funding model for universities of applied sciences (universities offering tertiary vocational education) will be revised along the same lines. In addition, as from August 2014, financial aid given to students will be index-linked. The system of financial aid for students will be reformed so as to promote full-time studies and faster completion of courses. The reform of the selection process for entry into higher education (the national e-application system) was also introduced by Finland.

The Education Evaluation Centre was created in 2014 from the merger of the valuation activities of three institutions, with the aim of providing more efficient, effective and consistent evaluation of education institutions, including higher education as well.

¹⁰ See http://www.nuorisotakuu.fi/en/youth_guarantee.

¹¹ The Finnish youth guarantee resulted in a reduction in unemployment amongst young people, with an estimated 83.5% of guarantee beneficiaries successfully allocated a job, traineeship, apprenticeship or further education within three months of registering with the Finnish Public employment service, more on <http://www.nuorisotakuu.fi>

¹² See in particular the 2013 OECD report *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* [http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20\(eng\)--FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20(eng)--FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf).

¹³ This issue was also highlighted in the 2013 in-depth review for Finland. For more information please see http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/idr2013_finland_en.pdf.

4.3 Transversal competences, skills relevance, learning mobility, new ways of teaching and new technologies

In 2012, 41% of individuals in Finland aged 16-74 had a high level of computer skills, compared to an EU average of 26%. Of all individuals aged 18-64, 33% believed themselves to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business, while in the EU on average 46% were of this opinion. Learning mobility remained limited, with the exception of inward movement into higher education with 2.2% of students in 2011, compared to an EU average of 1.1%. The proportion of ISCED 2 students in Finland learning two or more foreign languages was 96.5% in 2011, compared to an EU average of 63%.

According to the Cedefop forecast, there is expected to be a very sharp fall in labour market demand for lower qualified workers and a relatively significant increase in demand for the higher qualified workforce.¹⁴ The National Board of Education has published a report forecasting the labour force demand in industry over the period to 2025. It also carried out a project on modelling the future need for different competences and skills (the *VOSE* project), which confirmed this general trend.¹⁵

Finland is in the process of setting up an electronic education centre as part of the action programme on e-services and e-democracy. It will list all adult education and training programmes and will bring together several already existing on-line services.

Lastly, Finland needs to proceed with the adoption of its national qualifications framework and with the possible future referencing of this framework to the European qualifications framework. The relevant legislation has been awaiting adoption by the Finnish Parliament since 2012.

5. Tackling inequalities

5.1 Starting strong: improving early childhood education and care and tackling early school leaving

Finland has traditionally had a relatively low participation rate in early childhood education and care, which is a feature of its particular educational model in this area. In 2012, its participation rate was 75.1%, compared to an EU average of 93.9%. The participation rate to the non-mandatory pre-school at the age of six is 98%.

Finland is performing better than the EU average in tackling early school leaving (with a rate of 9.3% of early school leavers compared to an EU average of 12.0% in 2013), but its rate has remained fairly stable over the last decade, while the EU average has improved. The early school leaving rate tends to be significantly higher among migrants (14.9% in 2012) and boys.¹⁶ The Finnish authorities decided in 2013 to introduce a mandatory pre-school year that children would start at age six. It remains to be seen whether this measures will help in tackling early school leaving.

The Youth Guarantee mentioned above could also help to lower the early school leaving rate in the future, as it encourages people who have left education early to return to education or training through re-entry into education.

5.2 Basic skills of students

The results of the most recent OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey (from 2012)¹⁷ measuring the skills of young adults (15 year olds) were somewhat disappointing for Finland. The country's overall performance worsened significantly in all three areas as compared to 2009, in particular in numeracy. Nonetheless, Finland maintained its position as one of the EU's top performers and is still among the top five countries worldwide in science.

The results for students with migrant backgrounds are much worse than for those of Finnish origin. Finland plans to introduce a preparatory education for general upper secondary education that is aimed for migrants. It should contribute to the better integration of migrants into general upper secondary education, academic studies and to the Finnish society.

¹⁴ See http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4078_en.pdf.

¹⁵ See the 2014 Eurydice report *Education and training in Europe 2020; responses from the Member States* http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/163EN.pdf.

¹⁶ See the additional country charts for the Europe 2020 headline target and the Education and Training 2020 benchmark at <http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor>.

¹⁷ See <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results.htm>.

Despite a fall in its overall international ranking since 2009, the PISA survey shows that Finland still succeeds in combining high levels of performance with equity in education. Early detection and intervention mechanisms, such as the regular individual assessment of students carried out by several groups of teachers, allow educators to identify students who are struggling. As a result, students are offered the necessary support early on, and these efforts aim to ensure that they can continue their education at the same pace as their peers.

The Finnish National Board of Education is in the process of revising the teaching curricula, for both general and vocational education and training. It is currently preparing the new national core curricula for pre-school and compulsory school education, as well as general upper secondary schools, which are to be introduced by the beginning of the 2016 school year. The new curricula will be aligned with the new distribution of teaching time which will be decided upon by the Finnish government before the end of the year.