

2011 national report on  
the implementation of the Strategic  
framework for European cooperation  
in education and training

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# Introduction

In Finland, the Government adopts a plan for the development of education and university research in the Ministry of Education and Culture sector for the year of adoption and the following five calendar years. The Development Plan is based on the objectives set for education and research in the programme of the incumbent government.

The current Development Plan relates to the period 2007–2012<sup>1</sup>. According to it, special focus is given to realising equal opportunities, assuring a high quality in education and access to competent labour force, developing higher education, and safeguarding the availability of competent teachers.

The goals set in the Development Plan contribute to the implementation of the Government's Policy programmes for the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families, for Health Promotion and for Employment, Entrepreneurship and Work Life, and the Child and Youth Policy Programme.

The Government will decide on the new Development Plan for the period 2011–2016 towards the end of 2011.

This Finnish interim report has been compiled by the Department for Education and Science Policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The writers consulted the EU30 subcommittee of the Committee for EU Affairs, which is responsible for matters relating to education and training. Chapter 4 of the report was drafted together with the Centre for International Mobility CIMO<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Education and Research 2007–2012: Development Plan. University Print, Helsinki 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Centre for International Mobility CIMO. <http://www.cimo.fi/english>

# 1 Contribution to National Reform Programmes

## **Summary of the main education and training elements in National Reform Programme**

Because of foreseeable difficulties with access to work force, efforts will be made to lengthen work careers at both ends. International comparisons show that the average age at graduation in Finland is high, especially in higher education institutions. By stepping up the operation of the education system, Finland seeks to ensure success in studies and in later life. Another purpose is to ensure a more cost-effective use of the resources invested in education and to raise the employment rate.

In the spring of 2010, a committee submitted its proposals for ways to step up studies in post-compulsory education as a whole. It was estimated that the projected set of measures would lower the average graduation age by one year.

One of the proposals was that first-time applicants be selected to higher education institutions in a quota of their own and graduates and enrolled students in another. With a view to a more efficient admissions, the existing electronic application systems will be combined and students will use the same system to apply to universities and polytechnics. Students will be admitted to larger entities than now, for example to faculties or fields of education. The relative weight of the matriculation examination and vocational qualifications will be increased in selection.

## 2 Early school leaving

### **Measures to reduce early school leaving**

The measures taken to reduce early school leaving in Finland concern guidance counselling, information and advice relating to education, student admissions, student financial aid, personalised instruction, monitoring of progress, school-home cooperation, and school health care. More about practical action in chapters 2.3. and 2.4.

### **2.1 Measures to analyse current situation and monitor developments in early school leaving**

Early school leaving is monitored by means of data regularly collected by Statistics Finland<sup>3</sup> about early school leaving, repetition of a year and dropout. Young people's placement in further education and training is also monitored regularly. Early support to school-going is followed in the case of pupils within special and intensified instruction. Similarly, data based on indicators describing support given to immigrants and minorities in learning is regularly collected.

### **2.2 The areas of priority**

With a view to combating exclusion and improving the efficiency of the education system, Finland has started to expedite graduation at all levels of education.

### **2.3 Measures to prevent early school leaving**

#### **Flexible basic education (JOPO®) project**

The JOPO® project was launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2006 in order to develop new kinds of teaching methods and action in year-classes 7–9 to prevent early school leaving. Curricular instruction is given to pupils in groups of 10. Each school has a JOPO team comprising teachers and for instance a youth or social worker.

JOPO started in 26 municipalities in the school year 2006–2007; in 2007–2008 the activities were expanded to include altogether 54 municipalities. By the spring of 2009

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics Finland. [http://www.stat.fi/index\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/index_en.html)

the action had catered for some 800 lower secondary pupils. In 2009 another 41 new groups joined the activities, which increased the total number of participants to 1,200.

In terms of both outcome and pupils, one of the crucial prerequisites for success is a sufficiently small group. It is vital for further action and good results that education providers are given sufficient resources for the JOPO activities. Small teaching groups and the contribution of a youth or social worker raise the cost of instruction.

According to Statistics Finland, the number of school-leavers who failed to gain a certificate in 2007–2008 was the smallest in nine years. The proportion fell from 0.23% to 0.17% of the age group (from 152 to 115 pupils). This is a considerable decrease, which indicates that the action is targeted right and really benefits the participating pupils. The effectiveness of the action is also borne out by an impact analysis conducted by the University of Helsinki<sup>4</sup> for the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2008.

### **Upper secondary school pilots**

Guidance counselling and advisory services are crucial in helping upper secondary school students make realistic career choices and continue in further education. In the upper secondary school, guidance counselling should be more concretely a part of the student's personal study plan. In 2010 the Ministry of Education and Culture undertook a development project geared to build cooperation structures between upper secondary schools, between upper secondary schools and higher education institutions, and between upper secondary schools, local labour authorities and local employers.

The focus in the pilot is on developing personal guidance for students. The participating education providers must devise a personal plan for each student to orient them towards further education. Other areas of focus are to enlist the participation of the whole school and the cooperation of higher education institutions, labour authorities and local business and industry in guidance counselling.

### **Instruction preparing immigrants for basic education**

A school-age immigrant living in Finland has the same right to free education as Finns. Under Sections 5 and 7 of the Basic Education Act<sup>5</sup>, the local authority and a licensed education provider can arrange education preparing immigrants for basic education. This instruction is intended for school-age immigrants from age six onward. As recorded in the Development Plan for Education and Research 2003–2008, this preparatory education was extended to one school year (900–1 000 hours) from six months under an amendment<sup>6</sup> to the Basic Education Act and the Act on the Financing of Education and Culture<sup>7</sup>. The education provider decides independently on the formation of the groups. In the autumn of 2009 there were 2,070 pupils in education preparing for basic education. The figure had grown by 3.8% from the previous year. All in all, there were 67 education providers, 64 of which were local authorities and three private providers. The preparatory education is covered by statutory government transfers.

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<sup>4</sup> University of Helsinki. <http://www.helsinki.fi/university/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Basic Education Act 628/1998. <http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1998/en19980628.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Amendments up to 1136/2010 included in the translated Basic Education Act

<sup>7</sup> Act on the Financing of Education and Culture (1705/2009) (available in Finnish and Swedish)

## **Finnish/Swedish as a second language<sup>8</sup>**

In 2010, the budget appropriation intended for the instruction of Finnish/Swedish as a second language and the instruction of pupils' native languages was significantly increased. The number of participants has grown substantially from 2009.

### **Instruction of pupils' native languages**

As far as possible, a pupil belonging to an immigrant or native minority is taught his or her own native language. A local authority that arranges such instruction receives a separate government subsidy for the purpose. This subsidy is granted for two weekly lesson hours per each group of four pupils. The size of the group is determined on the basis of the number of participating pupils at the beginning of the school term or the course. As regards native minorities (Sami and Roma), the group may have only two pupils. In arranging this instruction, the education provider must avoid making the pupils' work load inordinately heavy. The participating pupils may come from pre-primary, basic and upper secondary schools, from different municipalities and also from private and state schools. Native language instruction is not a statutory duty for local authorities.

### **Education in the Sami home area**

According to legislation, the Sami language<sup>9</sup> may be both the language of instruction and a subject in basic and upper secondary schools and in vocational education and training. Under the Basic Education Act, Sami-speaking pupils in the Sami home area in the north of Finland must mainly be taught by the medium of Sami. In the upper secondary school and in vocational education and training, Sami may be the language of instruction, but the education and training providers have no statutory duty to arrange it.

Sami as mother tongue also includes instruction of Finnish. In addition, Sami can be studied as the first foreign language (free-choice subject) at the primary level and as an optional subject at the lower secondary level. According to statutes, Sami must be available as an optional subject in schools that have pupils living in the Sami home area.

Educational legislation obliges the education provider to draw up a separate curriculum for instruction given by the medium of the Sami language.

### **Roma policy programme**

The first Roma policy programme in Finland<sup>10</sup> promotes equality and inclusion of the Roma people in different spheres of life. In the sphere of education, one of the priorities is to include Roma children in education and training at all levels. The aim is to encourage Roma children to participate in early childhood education and to support their school-going and transition to further education and training.

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<sup>8</sup> The national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish.

<sup>9</sup> The Sami languages belong to the Finnic-Ugric branch of the Uralic languages. In 2008 there were 1,778 native speakers of Sami in Finland. The Languages Act, which came into force in 1992, secures the status and use of Sami. Under it, the Sami people have the right to use Sami in written and oral transactions with authorities.

<sup>10</sup> National Policy on Roma. Reports of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2009:48 (abstract in English)  
[http://www.stm.fi/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?folderId=39503&name=DLFE-10533.pdf](http://www.stm.fi/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=39503&name=DLFE-10533.pdf)

Knowledge of the Roma history and culture and proficiency in the Roma language are crucial for the identity of the Roma minority and Roma individuals. The key challenge in the preservation of Roma culture is to develop the instruction of the Roma language and revitalise the language. The Ministry of Education and Culture has taken into account the instruction and research of the Roma language in the financing allocated to the University of Helsinki (90,000 euro in 2011 and in 2012).

### **Intensified and special support**

In the development of the education and the support of pupils needing intensified and special help in learning, action is targeted to develop the instruction of children in pre-primary and compulsory school age, teaching methods, uniform administrative practices across municipalities and closer cooperation between different administrative sectors. Efforts are taken to enhance the instruction of special-needs pupils in pre-primary and basic education within the overall development of basic education, with focus on the earliest possible preventive support.

The aim is to develop forms of action which help schools to cater better for the special-needs pupils. Sufficient support is given at the earliest possible stage in the school where the pupil studies. The instruction develops learning skills and strategies in different subjects, seeking to prevent learning-related problems. The support services involve strong multi-professional and cross-sectoral collaboration with the aim to support the child's growth and development and to promote learning-to-learn skills.

The statutes on special and other support to pupils were revised in 2011 to considerably strengthen planned, early support and to provide that decisions on special support are made for a fixed term instead of indefinitely. Further, the amendments provide that the individual educational plan is a pedagogical document and not an administrative decision, as before. In this context, provisions on the handling, confidentiality and release of personal data were also expanded upon. These amendments came into force in August 2010.

### **'Job start' – education preparing for vocational education and training**

Education guiding to and preparing for vocational education and training is specifically intended for school-leavers who have no idea yet what occupation to choose or do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to apply for or cope with vocational education and training. Job start is intended to lower the threshold for transferring from basic to vocational education and to reduce dropout in the early stages of training and help students to complete their studies and gain qualifications. This form of supportive education was made a permanent part of the education system in 2010 after a piloting phase, during which some 70% of participants found a place in further education and training.

### **Education preparing immigrants for vocational education and training**

In education preparing immigrants for vocational education and training, students improve their proficiency in Finnish or Swedish and other knowledge and skills needed in vocational education and in life management. The aim is to equip the immigrant student with linguistic and other skills for enrolling in and coping with vocational education and training. The core subjects are Finnish or Swedish, mathematics and civics. The personal

study plan includes vocational studies and familiarisation with different occupations. After the preparatory education, the student can apply for a place in training leading to a qualification.

### **Incentive for good performance**

The financing allocated to training providers is partly determined on the basis of performance (3% of the overall funding) according to an outcome index comprising the following indicators: employment, transition to tertiary level education, reduction in dropout, retention, the competence of the teaching staff and human resources development. Statistics Finland compiles annual data on dropout and graduation rates, which are factors in the performance indicators. This system incentivises training providers to reduce dropout and speed up graduation.

## **2.4 Measures to compensate early school leaving**

In Finland youth policy is used to improve young people's living and growth conditions. In order to coordinate youth policy action, the government adopts a development programme every four years; it implements national youth policy objectives and promotes structured work in regional and local administration.<sup>11</sup>

The Ministry of Education and Culture steers and develops youth policy

- by means of legislation
- with the help of research and surveys
- through the allocation of budgetary and lottery funds to youth work organisations.

The aim is

- to support young people's active citizenship
- to empower young people in society
- to improve young people's living and growth conditions.

The Ministry allocates government transfers to local authorities for youth work based on the number of inhabitants under 29 years of age. The local authorities decide independently on the use of the funds. The government transfer covers some four per cent of the local youth expenditure. The Ministry also grants subsidy to local authorities and other organisations for the renovation, furnishing and equipment of youth facilities.

In addition, local authorities and others doing youth work are granted state subsidy for youth workshop activities, national youth centres, youth information and advisory services, and national and regional development projects.

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<sup>11</sup> The Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme 2007–2011. Publications of the Ministry of Education 2008:21. Youth Act (72/2006). Government Decree on youth work and youth policy (103/2006). Act amending the Youth Act 693/2010. Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (688/2001)

## **Youth workshops**

The main purpose of youth workshops is to promote life skills, social empowerment, and individually paced growth, to provide early support and to enable young people to learn by doing. Workshops offer young people an opportunity for guided and supported work and a tailored path to a qualification in cooperation with a training provider or to the open labour market. The workshop activities involve several administrative sectors and lie in the middle ground between social services and the open education and labour markets.

There are youth workshops in 264 municipalities all over Finland. According to the Youth Act, they target young people under 29 years of age. The activities are financed through multiple channels:

- government subsidy
- the workshop owner's input (local authority, organisation, foundation),
- income from services purchased for a young clients (referred to the workshop by a Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, social authorities, the Social Insurance Institution, mental health services or an educational institution),
- possible income from the work done by young people at the workshop, which is used towards the current costs, such as the wages of workshop mentors.

In 2009 there were 11,304 young people in the youth workshops; 9,410 were 25 or younger. The participant number grew by 2,700 from 2008 to 2010. Youth workshops have been able to respond to the rapidly growing youth unemployment and proved their capacity to react swiftly to changes in the operating environment.

After their spell in the workshop, 75% of the participants found a place in education and training, in the labour market or in some other purposeful activity; 67% of the participants did not have a vocational qualification. The participants also included young immigrants and in 2010 there were native speakers of 68 languages in workshops.

## **Outreach youth work**

An amendment to the Youth Act (693/2010) providing for outreach youth work came into force on 1 January 2010.

Outreach youth work seeks to help young people under 29 years of age who are not in education or in the labour market, who need support in reaching public services or in using a service on offer or who are at risk of exclusion. There are 232 persons in 192 municipalities engaged in government-subsidised outreach youth work. Last year the number of these municipalities grew by 60.

In 2010 outreach youth work helped 3,363 young people, 70% of whom were guided to the services they need. It is estimate that another 30,000 young people are not in school or in the labour market (not as job seekers).

Outreach youth work is a continuous process. Around one in five of the young people who were reached said that they were unemployed even though they were not registered job seekers. The channels for reaching out to young people were diverse: in the case of nearly 1000 young people (27%) it was a parent, a friend or the young person who took contact, the others were registered clients in some public service but did not avail themselves of the opportunity. In the case of the latter group, the outreach youth workers were contacted by schools and social authorities.

The services given to young people within outreach youth work generally involve 3-4 different administrative sectors. Matters relating to income constitute one of the biggest problems that needs to be solved. In 2009 outreach youth work had over 32,500 contacts with authorities in matters relating to young people.

### **Young people's social guarantee**

According to the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the primary service for untrained young people is careers counselling and referral to education and training. The best solution in the long term is education and then placement in working life. In Finland, unemployed young people must actively apply for at least three forms of training for which they are qualified in each joint application round. A young person failing to do this forfeits the right to unemployment benefits.

The so-called young people's social guarantee underpins the work done by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy for young people. In services provided for young people under 25 years of age, the focus is on prompt action and close contacts between the young job seeker and the job centre.

The youth guarantee guidelines were revised in 2010 in accordance with amendments to the Act on the Public Employment Service. The job centre draws up an employment plan (or an integration or activation plan, as needed) together with an unemployed young job seeker within two weeks of his/her registration as a job seeker. The plan is reviewed after one month, and before the young person has been unemployed for three months he/she is offered help, such as a course in job seeking, preparatory or labour market training, a work trial, training for the labour market, a start-up grant or a job with government-subsidised wages. Careers counselling has been developed to match the needs of young people. A guide is being prepared for the use of apprenticeship-type labour market training in boosting the knowledge and skills of young people who have difficulties in finding work.

The indicator used in monitoring the implementation of the youth social guarantee is the drift of young people under 25 to unemployment of over three months. In 2010 the mean was 19.1%. Public measures have helped to activate 34% of them. An employment plan had been devised for 77%. The situation has improved from 2009 owing to the supportive measures taken and growing employment.

In the employment and economic development sector, resources are allocated to guidance and counselling services, young people's preparatory and qualifying training, employment in youth workshops, outreach services relating to apprenticeship training and on-the-job learning, the expansion of the "Uudet urat" (New careers/tracks) scheme, and immigrant training. The resources allocated in the 2010 supplementary budget have been targeted to the adoption of the "Sanssi" card scheme of subsidised wages<sup>12</sup>, support to youth entrepreneurship and the expansion of advisory and counselling services. To boost youth services, around 25 careers counselling psychologists and 40 employment planners were hired for a fixed term ending in 2011.

Young people who have vocational qualifications are an important group among the unemployed. With a view to specifically catering for this group, the statutes on subsidised wages were relaxed for a fixed term (2010–2011). This form of support is intended for employers who hire a newly qualified but unemployed young person under 25 years of age.

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<sup>12</sup> Sanssi-kortti ("Chance card").  
[http://www.sanssi.fi/tyonhakijat/sanssi\\_kortti/](http://www.sanssi.fi/tyonhakijat/sanssi_kortti/) (in Finnish)

In 2010 the Samsi card was granted to around 18,800 unemployed newly-qualified young people. Around 60% of those employed in this way were men and 40% women. The largest group of employers receiving Samsi subsidy were businesses in the private sector.

During the recent recession, the youth unemployment rate (under 25 years of age) was 33,000–35,000, of whom

- around 10,000, or one in three, had only basic (compulsory) education
- around 4,000 had a matriculation certificate
- about half had an upper secondary vocational qualification
- only 1,200 were higher education graduates (most graduates in Finland being in the over 25 bracket).

## 3 Tertiary education attainment

### **Measures to increase tertiary (or equivalent) education attainment**

The purpose of the new Universities Act, which came into force in 2010, is to enhance the capacity of universities to work in the international environment. The aim was to equip them to react to changes in the operating environment, compete for international research funding, diversify their funding base, target funding to world-class research and strategic focus areas, and cooperate with foreign universities and research institutes, as well as to enhance the quality and impact of their education and research and consolidate their status in the innovation system. The core mission of the universities – research and academic education – remains the same. The government guarantees index-linked core funding to universities.

With a view to responding to the changing operating environment, the Ministry of Education outlined structural development for 2008–2011 based on the Government's higher education policy. A decision on the new higher education structures will be taken by 2012. More efficient operations and smaller intakes will free resources for enhancing teaching, research and innovation. A key aim is to improve the student-teacher ratio. At its best, structural development may make available up to 150–200 million euro for quality enhancement. The aim is a smaller number of universities and polytechnics and more clearly defined institutional profiles. Units must be merged to form effective entities. Measures will be taken to further develop the education supply, degrees and degree programmes in order to meet the need for experts and for personal development. Overlaps in education supply will be trimmed and cooperation will be stepped up in the provision of support services.

The Ministry of Education and Culture reviewed the situation and problem points in transition from secondary to higher education and proposed ways to expedite the transition. The Ministry also evaluated the current normative and funding-based steering in higher education institutions in relation to the aim to expedite graduation and put forward a proposals for reducing dropout in higher education and speed up transition to the labour market at least by one year.

### **3.1 Measures to increase entry rates to higher education, including widening access to under-represented groups**

The 2011 state budget stipulates that the higher education institutions will reform their admission and develop the structure of studies in order to lower the age at entry, step up graduation and lower the age at entry to the labour market. The weighting of

the matriculation examination will be increased in selection and first-time applicants will be selected in a quota of their own. A temporary expansion programme will be carried out in guidance counsellor education from 2011 to 2013 to improve the situation in their formal qualification, prepare for the retirement owing to the age structure in the profession and ensure a lower client-counsellor ratio. This will improve access to guidance counselling at the secondary level. The joint electronic application system will be finalised and adopted by universities and polytechnics in 2013. In addition, universities will adopt a national student feedback system and the polytechnics will continue the contentual development of their system.

It must be possible to enter higher education at different stages in life and with different educational and work backgrounds. In Finland the free degree education makes it possible to study for two degrees at the same time or one after the other. For students, degree education is often a less expensive alternative than long-term continuing education, but for society, multiple education is neither expedient nor economical use of resources. With a view to reducing multiple degree studies or graduates' re-entry to universities, measures are being taken to develop flexible opportunities for adults to upgrade their competencies at the higher education level. This will free places in degree education to first-time applicants.

The internationalisation strategy devised in 2009<sup>13</sup> paid special attention to the contribution of higher education institutions to multicultural society. The aim of the proposed measures was to raise the proportion of students with immigrant backgrounds to their proportion of the population at large by 2015. An amendment to the Polytechnics Act in 2009 provided that polytechnics can arrange free education to equip immigrants with linguistic and other necessary skills needed for polytechnic studies. Led by Universities Finland and the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences, the higher education institutions have enhanced the transparency and practices in the recognition of prior learning. ESF funding has been used to develop support given to immigrant students and foreign degree students.

The two higher education sectors have cooperated in improving the physical, psychological and social accessibility of higher education in order to ensure equal opportunity for everyone to study. The project has led to proposals concerning admissions, among others.

The socio-economic background of students has been monitored within the Eurostudent IV survey and a larger national study relating to it. Despite the fairly comprehensive equality in Finnish higher education, it is obvious that the parents' status and standing still influence children's education.

### **3.2 Measures to improve completion rates of students in higher education**

Finland has been increasingly allocating ESF funding to development projects that have education policy relevance, especially concerning higher education studies. The national ESF projects involve large networks of several higher education institutions and largely focus on expediting studies and transition to the labour market. These themes are

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<sup>13</sup> Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015. Publications of the Ministry of Education, Finland 2009:23. Helsinki University Print 2009.

approached from different angles, such as study guidance and preparation for working life, future-oriented services, information services relating to studies and supervision, study skills and communality, traineeship, business partnerships, and alumni activities. The project networks include all the universities and most polytechnics. In addition, there is a national project looking into transition stages and educational choices.

The graduation rate five years from entry is 60% in polytechnics and 49% seven years from entry in universities. The measures proposed in 2010 for expediting graduation are being implemented. According to the proposals, higher education institutions must take action to step up study processes, improve study skills and develop teaching arrangements in order to reduce dropout and enable students to complete studies in the normative time. This means, for instance, using the academic year more efficiently, further developing the recognition of prior studies, and enhancing on-the-job learning and cooperation with business and industry, all the while taking care to preserve the high quality of education. By increasing study psychologist services and study guidance, higher education institutions can give more support to students in changing life situations.

Additionally, the monitoring of study progress has been evaluated. Efforts will be made to expand monitoring to achieve better coverage. In the future, monitoring will be more comprehensive in regard of students whose studies in the previous year have been modest in relation to the financial aid they have received.

## 4 Mobility<sup>14</sup>

### Measures to promote learning mobility

#### General and adult education

There are no national statistics on mobility in general and adult education. In 2009 Comenius financing was used to support nearly 3600 mobility periods. The growth from the previous year was around 6%. School projects financed from the Nordplus Junior programme cater for the mobility of around 500 Finnish pupils within the Nordic and Baltic regions. Pupils and students in general education are also offered mobility schemes by many private organisations and associations (e.g. The British Council, the Pohjola-Norden Association and Fulbright scholarship schemes).

In 2009 the Grundtvig programme financed a total of 624 mobility periods. The Nordplus Adult programme annually finance the mobility of 30 Finnish teachers and 50 students.

#### Vocational education and training

In 2009 altogether 6,094 Finnish students went abroad on exchange, 2,480 for long periods (over two weeks). Finland received 2,425 foreign students. On average, the share of outgoing vocational students has varied between 11% and 12%, whereas the percentage of incoming students represented 5% of students in Finnish vocational institutions in 2008.

In 2009 the most popular mobility scheme was EU Leonardo da Vinci, with 1,114 students. This is 45% of all those on a longer mobility spell. Nearly 37% of the mobility was financed by the vocational institutes. There is no exact data available on incoming students.

#### Teachers and other personnel

In 2009 in Finland the number of incoming teachers was 2,060 and outgoing teachers 1,767. Institutions financed 36% of the mobility, Leonardo da Vinci one third and the government 13% through the National Board of Education.

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<sup>14</sup> The development of mobility in higher education institutions and of professional mobility is presented in Appendices 1–5.

## Higher education institutions

In the higher education sector, student mobility has grown annually by 400–500 students. In 2009 nearly 9,400 university and polytechnic students went abroad on a study or training period of at least three months' duration. All in all, international mobility has grown by nearly 40% from 2000, even though there were some "recession years" in between. The number of outgoing students amounts to 21% and 22% of polytechnic and university degree students, respectively.

The most important forms of mobility in higher education are Erasmus, arrangements between higher education institutions, students' own arrangements, and the Nordplus programme. These represent about 90% of all higher education mobility. Erasmus is an especially important scheme in incoming mobility.

### Teacher and researcher mobility

There have been no major changes in university teachers' and researchers' mobility in recent years. The annual outgoing mobility has stayed at around 1,200. The annual number of incoming university teachers and researchers has been around 1700, whereas the mobility of polytechnic teachers and experts has been on the increase, the outbound rate being nearly 4,000 persons in 2009.

## **4.1 Measures to promote outgoing/incoming learning mobility of students in different education sectors and**

## **4.2 Measures to promote outgoing/incoming learning mobility of teachers and other education professionals in different education sectors**

### General education

#### **National core curricula**

Internationalisation is recorded in the primary and secondary core curricula. A committee looking into a reform of upper secondary education addressed internationalisation, and mobility as part of it, in the development measures it proposed.

#### **National financing**

National funds allocated to international activities are an important boost to mobility. For example, COMENIUS is supplemented by one million euro of national funding annually. Further, the Ministry of Education and Culture supports both Nordic cooperation and mobility and trans-Atlantic cooperation.

#### **Quality criteria**

In basic and upper secondary education, international activities and mobility will be governed by quality criteria devised by the National Board of Education and the Centre for International Mobility CIMO, which will form part of the national quality recommendations for schools. The criteria will be issued during 2011.

### **Vocational education and training**

The development plan for education and research 2007-2012 set clear targets for international activity in VET. One of the foremost aims was to increase mobility by 30%. This was achieved in 2009.

### **Competence requirements**

One of the aims in VET is to equip the students with knowledge and competencies needed in the internationalising labour market and in our increasingly multicultural society. The vocational qualifications include language skills and other international competencies. In the core curricula, language learning is included in both the core knowledge and skills (key skills for lifelong learning) and in vocational competence.

### **Mergers of VET providers**

Larger units ensure better resources for international activity and thereby enabling a more systematic approach to internationalisation. This trend is bolstered by means of information and consultation, one example of this being a review of internationalisation jointly conducted by the National Board of Education and the Centre for International Mobility CIMO in 2008 and an internationalisation guide for VET providers.

### **Networking**

Networking between VET institutions is a strong trend in international activity. It has been financially supported both within the Leonardo da Vinci programme and by the National Board of Education. According to a study carried out by CIMO in 2010, the existing networks are key promoters of internationalisation in the Finnish VET field.

### **International funding**

International mobility and cooperation are also supported by means of national funds allocated by the National Board of Education as additional funding for Leonardo da Vinci action (support to cooperation with third countries, among others).

### **EVENT**

The implementation of the credit transfer system EVENT is well underway in Finland. The Finnish VET system is already compatible with EVENT to a large extent: it is knowledge-based, the studies are divided into modules and the credit system is very similar to the one proposed in EVENT. Further, the VET providers have a large latitude in matters relating to credits.

### **Internationalisation as part of quality**

Internationalisation is a prominent element in the VET quality strategy<sup>15</sup>.

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15 Ammatillisen koulutuksen laatustrategia 2011–2020. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön työryhmämuistioita ja selvityksiä 2011:9. (VET quality strategy. Ministry of Education and Culture) <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2011/liitteet/tr09.pdf> (abstract in English)

## Higher education

In the performance agreements concluded by the Ministry of Education and Culture with higher education institutions for 2010–2012, internationalisation is a special focus of development. The agreements set quantitative targets for student mobility in each higher education institution. The aim is to increase the number of students coming to and leaving Finland for exchange periods of three months or longer. The attraction of Finnish higher education institutions is also measured by means of the target number of foreign degree students. The indicator agreed for the current agreement period gauges the international mobility of teachers and researchers – in the university sector stays abroad of two weeks or more and in the polytechnic sector one week or more – in relation to the overall number of full-time teachers and R&D personnel.

### **Bologna process**

Right from the outset in reforming the higher education degrees according to the Bologna principles, Finland included evaluation in the implementation plan. The evaluation was planned in 2009 and carried out in 2010. It assessed the attainment of the European and national aims set for the reform. The evaluation focused on the two-cycle degree structure and comprised all the Finnish higher education institutions.

Finland has enacted legislation conforming to the Bologna process. It provides for a two-cycle degree system which in turn makes for international comparability. In the opinion of the evaluation team, the degree reform is a significant, well organised and briskly executed project. Although the two-cycle structure is clear in legislative terms, it does not work quite in the desired way in practice, especially in the university sector. According to the evaluation report, the majority of universities want to adopt a "genuine" two-cycle system. The problem is seen to be that the candidate-level degree is not recognised in the labour market.

The evaluation found that the content of the Candidate degrees must be further elaborated to enable students to choose their line of specialisation at the Master's level. This would also promote mobility. Stepping up international outgoing mobility requires better planning of the exchange periods, sufficiently flexible curricula and cooperation with foreign higher education institutions.

### **Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions**

The most important instrument in promoting internationalisation and international mobility in Finland is the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions formulated under the Ministry of Education and Culture. It sets concrete targets for mobility up to 2015. The national target for study and trainee exchanges at the university level is 8,000 outgoing and 8,000 incoming students annually; polytechnics have the same targets (8%). These figures require nearly doubling the rates in both sectors from the present level. Corresponding aims have also been set for teacher and researcher mobility in universities and for teacher and expert mobility in polytechnics. The Strategy proposes additionally that an internationalisation module be included in all degrees, which would be given a concrete content in the students' personal study plans. The strategy further puts forward other measures designed to promote mobility, such as similar practices in the recognition of prior learning for Finnish and foreign students,

sufficient resources for study guidance services and advisory services for foreign students. Attention is also drawn to the need to enhance the quality of teaching and guidance given in foreign languages.

#### **Tuition fee pilot**

During a pilot period 2010–2014, higher education institutions can charge a tuition fee to non-EEA students who have been admitted to a university or polytechnic Master's programme taught in a foreign language. The size of the fee is up to the institution. The fee is conditional on the institution having a scholarship scheme for supporting needy students when necessary. The pilot has been launched in nine universities and ten polytechnics. It is not yet possible to assess the effect it has on the willingness of foreign students to come to Finland to study.

#### **Adult education**

##### **Grundtvig**

The Grundtvig programme and its mobility actions offer new possibilities for stepping up mobility in the adult education sector. Another major channel is the Nordplus Adult Learning Programme.

##### **Development programme for liberal adult education**

One key area in the Liberal adult education programme 2009–2012<sup>16</sup> published in 2009 is to address and manage changes due to globalisation.

#### **All levels of education**

##### **National qualifications framework**

Finland has been developing a National Qualifications Framework based on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

### **4.3 Steps to identify and reduce the obstacles to learning mobility**

#### **Obstacles to mobility**

Obstacles to international mobility were appraised for the preparation of the internationalisation strategy. Further, the Centre for International Mobility has compiled the studies conducted by higher education institutions. In the light of these studies, the foremost reasons why students do not go abroad to study or train are economic concerns, family and life situations, doubts about the usefulness of a stay abroad, the time-

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<sup>16</sup> Vapaan sivistystyön kehittämissuunnitelma 2009–2012. (Liberal adult education programme 2009–2012) Opetusministeriön työryhmämuistioita ja selvityksiä 2009:12. (Development programme for liberal adult education. Ministry of Education and Culture) <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2009/liitteet/tr12.pdf> (abstract in English)

consuming application procedure and lack of information, and insecurity. Internationally comparable information about the experience and satisfaction of students is also available through the International Student Barometer review, which Finland and Finnish higher education institutions joined in 2010.

Studies conducted by CIMO on upper secondary general and vocational education found that the Leonardo financing would allow doubling the present number of mobility periods. Despite complementary national funding, the Comenius programme reaches only 10% of comprehensive schools and 27% of upper secondary schools. As regards teachers and staff, international activities generally fall outside the official working hours especially in general education, but also in vocational education and training. Teachers also find it difficult to go abroad on exchange because in many municipalities it is difficult to get a substitute owing to stringent economic policy.

### **Financial aid for students**

In an effort to alleviate the economic burden of exchanges, students are also granted financial aid for studies abroad. Additionally, a great deal of national funding has been allocated to international mobility. In the higher education sector one in five exchange periods is financed by the student's university or polytechnic. In vocational education and training nearly 40% of mobility is financed by the educational establishment.

The Ministry of Education and Culture provides supplementary funding for the Comenius, Erasmus and Grundtvig actions of the Lifelong Learning Programme. The National Board of Education supports mobility in general and vocational education.

### **Young people's language skills**

One obstacle to international mobility is one-sided knowledge of languages. Young Finns' proficiency in English is growing, but at the cost of other languages. This restricts mobility outside the Anglo-American cultural sphere.

# 5 New Skills and Jobs

## **Measures to improve the assessment of future skills requirements matching since 2009**

### **5.1 Recent measure to improve skills forecasting**

The Finnish Government Programme sets an aim to develop labour and educational foresight with a view to better accuracy and better models for quality projection. During this government term, the responsibility for medium-term and long-term financial and labour foresights was assigned to the Government Institute for Economic Research (VATT)<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, measures were taken to intensify cooperation among different administrative sectors, notably between education, employment and economy. The ministries commission foresights from VATT in cooperation, and during this government term there has been a foresight cooperation group representing different sectors and regional administration. The purpose of enhanced cooperation and better structural foresight models is both to enhance quality and to formulate a common view in the central government. The National Board of Education uses the structural economic and labour foresights to prepare education foresights.

Qualitative skills foresight has been developed with ESF funding in particular. ESF projects have created models which make for more concrete anticipation of changes in working life and in the content of work and for more precise impact analysis in regard of the qualification and degree structures and curricula.

At the regional level, the regional councils are responsible for coordinating the anticipation of medium-term and long-term educational needs. The Government Institute for Economic Research and the National Board of Education assist the regional councils in foresight. Educational needs are also forecast by the regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment<sup>18</sup>.

### **5.2 Measures to take the results on board in education and training planning processes, information and guidance**

The development plan for education and research sets a target for the provision of education for 2012, determining entrant targets for initial vocational education and

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<sup>17</sup> Government Institute for Economic Research. <http://www.vatt.fi/en/>

<sup>18</sup> Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. <http://www.ely-keskus.fi/en/frontpage/Sivut/default.aspx>

training, polytechnics and universities. The target for adult education and training is set separately.

The target supply of education and training for the next development plan was prepared by the education administration, the employment and economic administration and the Government Institute for Economic Research in collaboration. The regional councils will submit their opinion regarding regional targets.

# 6 Education budgets

## **How has the economic and financial crisis affected education and training budgets**

Efforts are made to manage the recent recession in a planned manner.

In the 2010s, measures are needed to balance the public economy in response to the change in the care ratio and recent economic developments. Steps need to be taken to raise the employment rate, lengthen work careers and develop the world of work. Further, measures are needed to strengthen the economy and the vitality of society and to enhance welfare. Resources for boosting competencies, creativity and innovativeness must be increased and their use must be targeted according to changing needs.

For decades, Finland has invested in a high level of education and competencies among the population. The extensive education and training supply in Finland has promoted equality and social mobility. Even in economic straits, Finland has invested in education, research and innovations.

The measures taken to boost the production and utilisation of knowledge include the following:

- Increases in public research funding;
- An increase in university funding (under the Universities Act) according to a "university index" based on the annual rise in costs from 2011 onwards;
- Input into the commercialisation of research findings and the development of business know-how and internationalisation;
- Measures to explore possibilities to make R&D costs tax-deductible with a view to promoting innovation in SME businesses;
- A project to step up the exportation of Finnish education and competencies and to create a business cluster in the area (for more details, see chapter 8);
- Development of RDI activities in accordance with the national innovation strategy and recommendations.

# 7 Lifelong Learning Strategies

## **Progress in the development and implementation of a coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategy**

The principles and objectives regarding lifelong learning are set in the development plan for education and research 2007–2012 and in the strategic policy set out in the Government Programme.

The futures study published in 2010 by the Ministry of Education and Culture continues the analysis of challenges and the development of solution paradigms.<sup>19</sup>

### **7.1 Lifelong Learning Strategy**

The whole education system in Finland, including vocational education and training and self-motivated adult education, comes under the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for labour market training. The Government programme addresses the development of all education and training within its competence and adopts a development plan for the whole education system every four years. Since 2007 special priorities in the development plan have been equal access to education and training, a high quality of education and training and the availability of competent work force, the development of higher education institutions and investment in teachers' competencies.

### **7.2 Main measures addressing the principles of shared responsibility, effective financial mechanisms, flexible pathways and quality initial and targeted continuing training**

The reform of vocational and professional adult education recorded in the Government programme was carried out as follows:

- The further and specialist vocational qualifications now give general eligibility for higher education.

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<sup>19</sup> Osaava ja luova Suomi. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön tulevaisuuskatsaus. (Competent and creative Finland. A foresight. Ministry of Education and Culture) Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön julkaisu 2010:15. <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2010/liitteet/okm15.pdf> (in Finnish)

- The financial aid intended for mature students was raised substantially. This has meant a considerable increase in the number of applicants. Eligible for the adult education allowance is an employed person who has worked for eight years; the grant is intended for self-financed vocational/professional education for a maximum period of 18 months.<sup>20</sup>
- From the beginning of 2010 it has also been possible for persons receiving unemployment benefit to study.<sup>21</sup> During the first year over 12,700 people used this possibility.

An amendment to the Liberal Adult Education Act<sup>22</sup> revised the definition of the purpose and aims of the activities and institutions to fit the current operating environment. The aim is to arrange education that promotes coherence, equality and active citizenship in society in accordance with the lifelong learning principle.

A Council for Lifelong Learning was established in 2009 as an expert body attached to the Ministry of Education and Culture. The membership includes representatives of the labour market partners, organisations of education providers and higher education institutions. The Council deals with questions relating to conditions for lifelong learning and adult education development and promotes cooperation between education and the world of work. The Council issues expert views to initiate debate on education and labour policy and proposes innovatory measures for enhancing lifelong learning.

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<sup>20</sup> Act amending the Act on adult education allowance (127/2010).  
[www.koulutusrahasto.fi/?3;2;9400;9400.html](http://www.koulutusrahasto.fi/?3;2;9400;9400.html)

<sup>21</sup> Act amending the Act on the public employment service (1198/2009),  
 Act amending the Unemployment Security Act (1199/2009)

<sup>22</sup> Act amending the Liberal Adult Education Act (1765/2009)

## 8 Other significant reforms in the priority areas

### **Progress made in other priority areas**

In 2009 the Government undertook a project to promote the exportation of Finnish education and know-how and to create a business cluster in the area with a view to making Finland one of the world leaders in knowledge and quality education and substantially increasing the proportion of education in overall exports by 2015. The project is jointly carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other operators.<sup>23</sup>

From 2008 to 2011 the Government increased the number of student places by nearly 12,000 in vocational education and training in response to labour needs, with special focus on growth centres. The purpose is to secure access to education and to alleviate youth unemployment and thereby prevent exclusion.

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<sup>23</sup> Finnish education export strategy: summary of the strategic lines and measures. Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture 2010:12

## 9 Proposals for the priority areas of the subsequent period

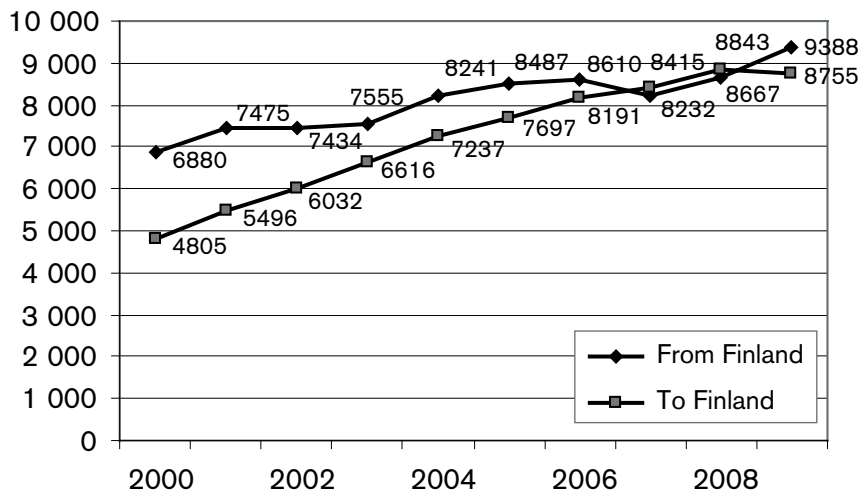
Finland has actively worked within the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training. The aims regarding lifelong learning and mobility in the framework – to enhance the quality and efficiency of education and training, to improve social coherence and active citizenship and to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity – are general by nature and can be endorsed by Finland.

The numerous priorities proposed for the period 2009–2011 include cooperation areas which Finland considers important, such as mobility (student, teacher and staff mobility), the European Qualifications Framework, the modernisation of higher education institutions and teacher education, the prevention of early school leaving and development of key competencies.

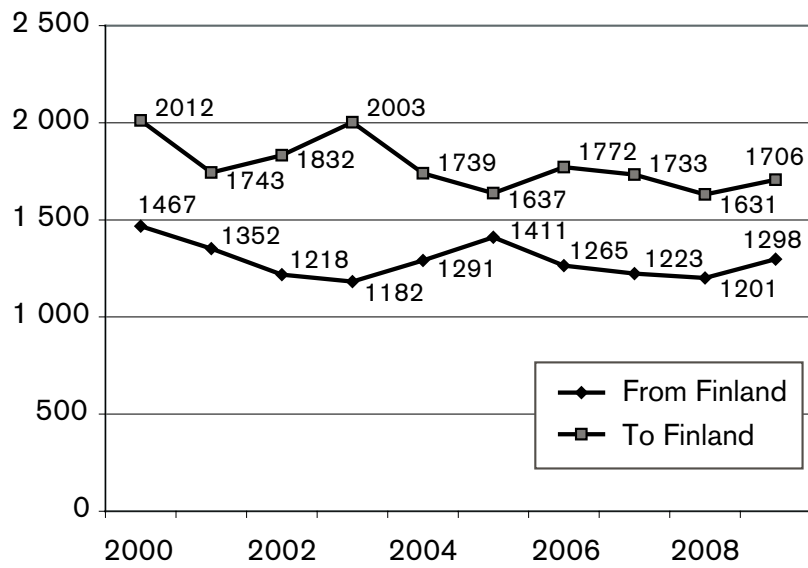
## Additional information

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- Finnish education export strategy: summary of the strategic lines and measures. Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture 2010:12. <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2010/liitteet/okm12.pdf>
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- The Finnish Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme 2007–2011. Publications of the Ministry of Education 2008:21. <http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2008/liitteet/opm21.pdf>

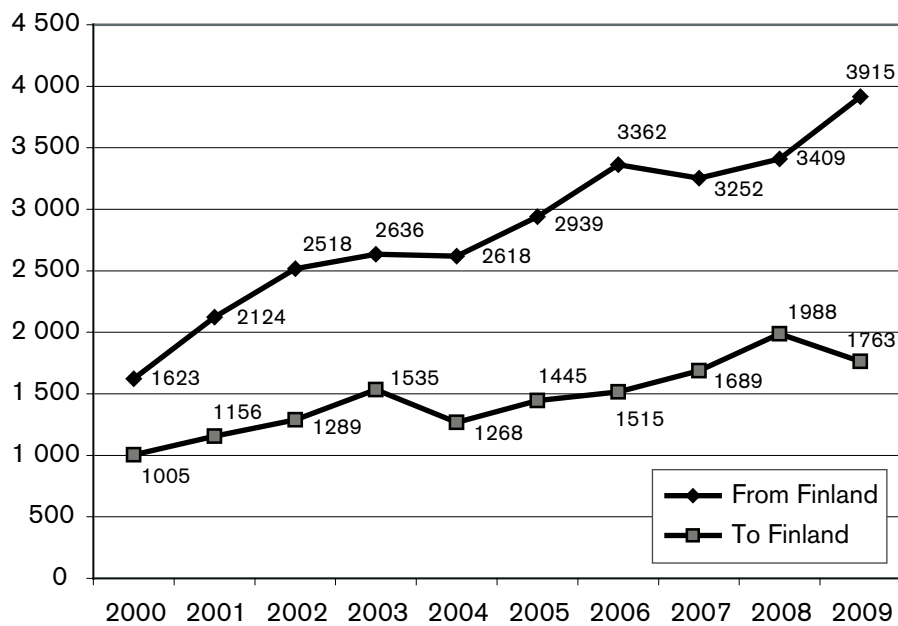
**Mobility of higher education students  
(periods of three months or longer) 2000–2009**



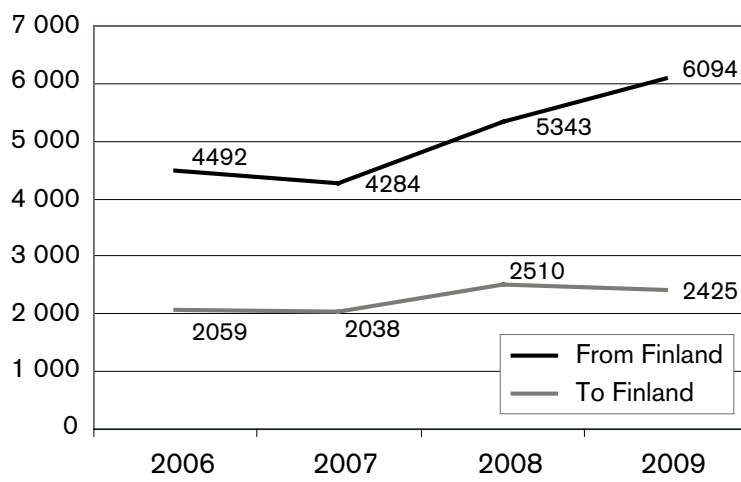
**International mobility of university teachers and researchers  
(periods of two weeks or longer) 2000–2009**



**International mobility of polytechnic teachers and experts  
(periods of one week or longer) 2000–2009**



**Development of student mobility in vocational education and training 2006–2009**



**Development of teacher and staff mobility  
in vocational education and training 2006–2009**

