

# Education System in Finland

The Finnish education system is composed of nine-year basic education (comprehensive school), preceded by one year of voluntary pre-primary education; upper secondary education, comprising vocational and general education; and higher education, provided by universities and polytechnics. Adult education is available at all levels.

In Finland, pre-primary education, basic education and upper secondary education and training, complemented by early childhood education and before- and after-school activities, form a coherent learning pathway that supports children's growth, development and well-being.

Students' opportunities to progress from one level of education to the next is safeguarded by legislation. Both general and vocational upper secondary certificates provide eligibility for further studies in universities and polytechnics. A student completing one level is always eligible for the next level studies. The qualifications of each level are governed by a separate Act of Parliament. This assures harmonised qualifications and their quality and guarantees students' rights.

Basic education is free general education provided for the whole age group. Upper secondary education consists of general education and vocational education and training (vocational qualifications and further and specialist qualifications).

The higher education system comprises universities and polytechnics, in which the admission requirement is a secondary general or vocational diploma.

Universities, which are academic or artistic institutions, focus on research and education based on research. They confer Bachelor's, Master's, licentiate and doctoral degrees.

Polytechnics offer work-related education in response to labour market needs. A polytechnic degree requires 3.5 - 4.5 years of full-time study. The requirement for polytechnic Master's programmes is a polytechnic degree or equivalent, plus a minimum of three years of work experience in the field concerned.

Adult education is provided at all levels of education. Adults can study for a general education certificate or for a vocational qualification, or modules included in them, take other courses developing citizenship and work skills, or pursue recreational studies.

The welfare of Finnish society is built on education, culture and knowledge. All children are guaranteed opportunities for study and self-development according to their abilities, irrespective of their place of residence, language or financial status. All pupils are entitled to competent and high-quality education and guidance and to a safe learning environment and well-being. The flexible education system and basic educational security make for equity and consistency in results.