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1 INTRODUCTION
1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Competence-based Qualification Guide is to describe the Finnish competence-based qualification system in concrete terms, while explaining how competence-based qualifications are implemented in practice. This Guide is intended for those involved in competence-based qualifications in adult education, including organisers of qualifications, candidates and teachers, and working life representatives who plan and assess competence tests. Another target group comprises international bodies involved in comparing different educational systems and seeking new ideas for the further development of vocational adult education and training.

This Guide describes the general principles underlying the competence-based qualification system and provides instructions on organising these qualifications. Key terminology related to the competence-based qualification system is listed at the end. In particular, please note that the Vocational Adult Education Act and Decree, available in English for the very first time, are appended to this Guide.
2 COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATION SYSTEM
2 COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

The competence-based qualification system provides adults with a flexible way of demonstrating, renewing and maintaining their vocational skills, or of qualifying for a new profession when their work tasks change. It is a specific benefit of this system that it enables national and qualitative recognition of an individual’s vocational competencies, regardless of whether they were acquired through work experience, studies or other activities. The competence-based qualification system recognises competencies acquired in a variety of ways. Vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications can be completed as competence-based qualifications. A vocational upper secondary qualification can also be completed through vocational upper secondary education and training. A competence-based qualification is completed by demonstrating vocational skills, as defined in the requirements for a competence-based qualification, at workplaces in actual work tasks.

Key principles of the competence-based qualification system include

1. tripartite cooperation: close cooperation between employers, employees and teachers in deciding on the structure of the qualification and when preparing the Qualification Requirements, on National Education and Training Committees, Qualification Committees and when planning, arranging and assessing competence-based qualifications.
2. independence of qualifications from the manner in which the vocational skills were acquired
3. completion of the qualification or qualification module by demonstrating vocational skills at competence tests
4. personalisation.

The competence-based qualification system was established through the Act on Further Vocational Qualifications (306/1994), passed in 1994, and the complementary Decree (308/1994). During the overall reform of legislation on education, the Act on Further Vocational Qualifications was repealed and provisions on the competence-based qualification system were slightly amended and moved into the Vocational Adult Education Act and Decree (Act 631/1998)
and Decree 812/1998), that entered into force on 1 January 1999. Provisions controlling the competence-based qualification system were amended in 2005, while the amended Vocational Adult Education Act and Decree entered into force on 1 January 2006. The aim of the amendments was to develop the control system of vocational adult education and training, with the objective of enabling better planning, steering and control of vocational adult education and training as a whole, while maintaining the flexibility required from the system. The reformed Act and Decree on the Financing of the Provision of Education and Culture (Act 1705/2009 and Decree 1766/2009) entered into force on 1 January 2010. Competence-based funding of vocational further education and training was introduced as part of the legal reform. This affects the financing of preparatory training for competence-based qualifications and apprenticeship training provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Competence-based qualifications have become an established part of the educational system: there has been a continuous increase in the numbers of candidates seeking such qualifications and in those who have completed them. In 2012 Qualification Comities gave 34144 certificates of completion of competence-based qualifications. Corresponding number year 2010 was 33123 and year 2008 competence-based qualification was done by 32 344 candidates.

2.1 Qualification structure

The Ministry of Education and Culture decides on the qualification structure. The qualification titles of competence-based qualifications are protected as provided in the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998, section 45) and Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998, section 12). Qualification titles must comply with the related legislation and no other titles for these qualifications may be used in certificates or marketing.

In 2013, the qualification structure included a total of 374 vocational qualifications, of which 52 are vocational upper secondary qualifications, 190 further vocational qualifications and 132 specialist vocational qualifications.

The Qualification Requirements in force for competence-based qualifications are available at

🔗 http://www.oph.fi/english/services/recognition/europass/certificate_supplement
🔗 http://www.oph.fi/english/services/recognition/europass/certificate_supplement/fufurth_qualifications
The enclosed illustration shows the position of competence-based qualifications within the education and qualification system (illustration 1).

Illustration 1. Finland’s education and qualification system.
2.2 Competence-based qualifications

The vocational upper secondary qualification demonstrates the knowledge and skills required for achieving vocational skills. Vocational upper secondary qualifications completed as competence-based qualifications have a nominal scope of 120 credits. Vocational upper secondary qualifications can also be attained during vocational upper secondary education and training.

A further vocational qualification constitutes a demonstration of the vocational skills required from a professional employee in the field in question. The Qualification Requirements for further vocational qualifications define the standard of vocational skills needed in order to ensure that a person who has completed basic training in the field, or who has the corresponding knowledge and skills, has also completed supplementary and specialist studies and has approximately three years’ work experience, is likely to attain the further vocational qualification in question.

The specialist vocational qualification bears testimony to the holder’s ability to complete the most demanding work tasks in the field. The Qualification Requirements for specialist vocational qualifications define the standard of vocational skills requirements needed to ensure that a person who has basic training in the field, or the corresponding knowledge and skills, and has also completed supplementary and specialist studies and has approximately five years’ work experience, is likely to attain the specialist vocational qualification in question.

The aforementioned descriptions of competence-based qualification standards do not entail that an applicant for a further vocational qualification or the related preparatory training requires three years’ (or, in the case of a specialist vocational qualification, five years’) work experience and/or a completed vocational upper secondary qualification.

The scope of further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications is not defined in terms of credits.
2.3 **Eligibility for further studies based on competence-based qualifications**

**Higher education**

Vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications completed as competence-based qualifications, confer eligibility for further study towards a higher education degree.

**Studies at universities of applied sciences**

Depending on the subjects covered, a vocational upper secondary qualification attained in the form of a competence-based qualification (nominal extent 120 credits) or a corresponding earlier qualification confer general eligibility for further studies at universities of applied sciences.

A vocational upper secondary qualification, whose nominal scope falls below 120 credits, provides eligibility for further studies at universities of applied sciences in the corresponding field. A student may extend this to general eligibility for further studies at universities of applied sciences by also completing general or vocational additional studies which lead to the accumulation of three years of study following compulsory education, or, after attaining the qualification, by acquiring a minimum of three years’ work experience in a corresponding field. On the basis of the field of the competence-based qualification, the aforementioned field-specific eligibility for further study applies to one of the following eight fields of education: humanities and education, culture, social sciences, business and administration, natural sciences, technology, communications and transport, natural resources and the environment, social services, health and sports and tourism, catering and domestic services.

A further vocational qualification and specialist vocational qualification confer general eligibility for further studies at universities of applied sciences.

2.4 **Financing of the competence-based qualification system**

**Financing for arranging qualifications**

If the organiser of a competence-based qualification has been granted permission to provide education (education provider) by the Ministry of Education and Culture under the Vocational Adult Education Act, the organiser will receive
a government transfer accordingly. When a competence-based qualification is arranged in connection with preparatory training, government transfer funding is applicable to the costs incurred from providing the education and training in question as well as arranging the qualification.

A moderate tuition fee may be collected from students for preparatory training for a further vocational qualification and specialist vocational qualification. This fee covers some of the costs incurred in providing preparatory training for a competence-based qualification and in arranging the qualification itself.

If an organiser of a competence-based qualification granted permission to provide education and training under the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998, section 4), arranges vocational upper secondary qualifications, or further or specialist vocational qualifications without the related preparatory training, it will receive government transfer funding for this purpose in accordance with section 30 of the Decree on the Financing of the Provision of Education and Culture. Completion of a module of a competence-based qualification without the related preparatory training corresponds to 8% of a full year of study.

Organisers of competence-based qualifications who do not receive government transfer for arranging competence-based qualifications can apply for the related subsidy in arrears from the Finnish National Board of Education (Act 1705/2009, Section 46).

An organiser of a qualification may charge a moderate fee for arranging a qualification, from students attending a further or specialist vocational qualification without the related preparatory training. A moderate fee for the above purposes is agreed by the organiser of a competence-based qualification and the Qualification Committee in the contract on arranging competence-based qualifications. If a person engages in attaining a vocational upper secondary qualification as a competence-based qualification without participating in the related preparatory training, only the qualification fee may be charged. In such a case, funding in accordance with section 30 of the Decree on the Financing of the Provision of Education and Culture will cover all costs involved in arranging the competence-based qualifications in question.

Vocational upper secondary education and training and vocational further education and training may be provided as apprenticeship training. The aforementioned vocational further education and training may involve either preparatory training for a further or specialist vocational qualification, or other forms of vocational further education and training. Less funding will be provided for
other vocational further education and training provided as apprenticeship training. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture guidelines, even apprenticeship training aimed solely at completing one or more modules of a qualification are eligible as ‘other vocational further education’ and ‘training provided as apprenticeship training’.

In 2010, performance-based funding was introduced to vocational further education and to training provided at an educational institution and as apprenticeship training. Such funding is based on the further and specialist vocational qualifications actually attained. The share of performance-based funding accounts for a maximum of 3 per cent of the calculated government transfers for vocational further education and training.

In the case of vocational upper secondary qualifications, performance forms part of the criteria for determining the unit price of vocational upper secondary education and training. The unit price will be graduated on the basis of performance. A result index calculated for the education provider will be used as the basis for calculating performance. The performance-based share can represent a maximum of three per cent of the national overall costs of vocational upper secondary education and training.

In addition to the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and employers and candidates completing the qualification, finance preparatory training for competence-based qualifications and the arrangement of qualifications.

**Financing of Qualification Committees – qualification fees**

Costs incurred due to the activities of Qualification Committees are covered in the form of qualification fees collected from students studying for competence-based qualifications. The Ministry of Education and Culture determines the sum of the qualification fee. In 2012, the fee was 58 euros. The qualification fee is specific to each qualification. If a candidate completes a module of another competence-based qualification as an optional module forming part of a vocational upper secondary qualification, further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification, he or she need not pay another qualification fee. If a candidate completes a qualification module promoting individual vocational competence (qualification module expanding the vocational upper secondary qualification) within the same vocational upper secondary qualification, the qualification fee paid earlier will also cover this module.
The organiser of a qualification must collect the qualification fee when admitting students for a competence-based qualification and must render an account of the fees to the Finnish National Board of Education. The Finnish National Board of Education has issued instructions for rendering accounts of qualification fees for competence-based qualifications (FNBE 6/011/2011).

2.5 Actors in the competence-based qualification system and their tasks

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
- grants permission to provide education and training and assigns the working life development and service task
- provides financing for preparatory training for competence-based qualifications, and for arranging competence-based qualifications
- prepares and issues provisions on activities related to competence-based qualifications, determines the qualification structure
- sets the qualification fee.

MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND THE ECONOMY
- provides financing for preparatory training for competence-based qualifications, and for arranging competence-based qualifications
- manages regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres) that grant government transfers to education providers, for the implementation of the working life development and service task.

FINNISH NATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION
- steers the preparation of qualification structure proposals, collects and processes proposals and prepares presentations on the qualification structure for the Ministry of Education and Culture
- bears responsibility for preparing Qualification Requirements and decides on them, and decides on the division of Qualification Committees' fields and regions
- appoints Qualification Committees
- manages the payment transactions, bookkeeping and archives of Qualification Committees, assists Qualification Committees in examining the preconditions for arranging competence-based qualifications
- steers and trains Qualification Committees and organisers of competence-based qualifications, sets requirements for certificates for competence-based qualifications and preparatory training for competence-based qualifications and for the information the certificates contain
when necessary, issues instructions on rendering accounts of qualification fees
may issue instructions to Qualification Committees on the further definition of practical arrangements for competence-based qualifications
may issue more-detailed provisions on personalisation, maintains and develops the AIPAL feedback system
grants government subsidies for the further development of vocational further education and training.

REPRESENTATIVES OF WORKING LIFE AND LABOUR ORGANISATIONS
prepare proposals for developing the competence-based qualification system, participate in preparing the Qualification Requirements related to competence-based qualifications
participate in planning the organisation of competence-based qualifications and their implementation
assess competence test performances in cooperation with the organisers of competence-based qualifications
serve as members of Qualification Committees, permanent experts and external secretaries
serve as members of National Education and Training Committees.

QUALIFICATION COMMITTEES
responsible for organising competence-based qualifications, responsible for supervising competence-based qualifications, agree on organising competence-based qualifications
if necessary, request an analysis of the preconditions for arranging competence-based qualifications from the Finnish National Board of Education
for their part, issue and sign qualification certificates and certificates of completion of one or more qualification modules
decide on rectifying an assessment
provide educational administration authorities with the information they require on contracts for arranging qualifications, candidates for qualifications and qualification certificates issued
monitor the functionality of the competence-based qualification system within their discipline and, if necessary, prepare proposals for the further development of the system
sign diplomas for their part
file the Qualification Committee’s documents during its term of office.
ORGANisers OF COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATIONS

- prepare applications for contracts for arranging qualifications for the Qualification Committee, appending the related plan to the application in each case
- plan the competence tests together with representatives of working life and are responsible for communications, guidance and steering related to the attainment of competence-based qualifications
- attend to personalisation together with education providers
- are responsible for the recruitment, training and induction of assessors in compliance with the selection criteria agreed in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications
- organise competence tests and assess candidates’ performances in cooperation with working life representatives
- issue and sign qualification certificates for their part, as well as certificates of completion for one or more qualification modules
- acquire and sign certificates of vocational skills if necessary; order and sign diplomas for their part if necessary
- are responsible for the documentation and archiving of material related to assessment, are responsible for statistics.

NATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEES

- monitor, assess, and predict the development of education and training and competence required in working life
- prepare proposals for the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish National Board of Education and other parties playing a key role in developing the contents of vocational education and training and, on the basis of this, in the development of qualifications.

STATISTICS FINLAND

- compiles national statistical data submitted by providers of preparatory training for competence-based qualifications on competence-based qualification candidates, candidates completing a module leading to qualification, and participants in preparatory training for competence-based qualifications.

THE EDUCATION FUND

- supports vocational studies and the development of the vocational qualification system, by granting an adult education allowance to employees and entrepreneurs, and scholarships to employees who have completed a competence-based qualification.

VOCATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION COLLEGES PROVIDING TRAINING FOR SPECIALISTS IN COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATIONS

- train specialists in competence-based qualifications.
The tasks of the various actors within the competence-based qualification system are explained in more detail at various points in this guide. A number of projects are underway to develop the competence-based qualification system, including projects on the working life development and service task (assigned to training providers by the Ministry of Education and Culture), and on developing the quality of vocational adult education and training.

National competence-based qualification materials have been prepared for certain disciplines. These are produced by education providers, Qualification Committees and under the quality assurance project for vocational qualification material.

### 2.6 Qualification Committees

Qualification Committees are responsible for the organisation and supervision of competence-based qualifications. They are statutory bodies of elected officials, appointed by the Finnish National Board of Education to manage a public duty. Qualification Committee members handle this task temporarily, in addition to their regular duties, but subject to liability for acts in office.

**Appointment of a Qualification Committee and term of office**

The Finnish National Board of Education determines the scope of activities and the regions presided over by Qualification Committees. In 2013, the Finnish National Board of Education appointed 147 Qualification Committees.

Each Qualification Committee is responsible for either one or more competence-based qualifications. All Qualification Committees operate nationwide. 129 of them are bilingual (Finnish and Swedish), 13 Finnish only and 5 Swedish only. The provisions of the Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986) require that the proportion of representatives of either gender on the Committee must be at least 40 per cent. Account is taken of these provisions when appointing Qualification Committees, unless otherwise required for special reasons.

**Composition and organisation**

A maximum of nine members may be appointed to each Qualification Committee, who must represent employers, employees, teachers and, if self-employment is
common within the sector in question, independent self-employed professionals. If necessary, external permanent experts may be appointed to Qualification Committees. There must be an equal number of employers’ and employees’ representatives. The Finnish National Board of Education determines the number of members on each Committee and the key parties (representatives of employers, employees, teachers and independent self-employed professionals) who will be asked to propose members for Qualification Committees. In this context, consideration must also be taken of the aforementioned parties’ viewpoints on the composition of the Committees. Qualification Committees are appointed on the basis of the proposals received.

The Finnish National Board of Education usually appoints Qualification Committees for a period of three years at a time, such that the term of office begins in the same year in each case, and ends on 31 July three years later. If a new Qualification Committee is appointed mid-way through the aforementioned term of office, the term of office will end at the same time as that of other Committees.

Qualification Committee members agree on the division of duties between themselves, electing a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and a secretary for the duration of the Committee’s term of office. Upon a proposal by the Committee, the Finnish National Board of Education may appoint an external secretary to a Qualification Committee.

Each meeting of the Qualification Committee is called by the Chairperson, or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairperson. The Qualification Committee is considered quorate when the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson and at least half the other members are present. The Qualification Committee is a body with several members, which takes decisions at Committee meetings, where authority is exercised by ordinary Committee members. Permanent experts, if any, an external secretary appointed to the Committee, and experts separately invited by the Committee, only have the right to speak at meetings, but not to vote.

The provisions laid down in sections 27–29 of the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) apply to any conflicts of interest among those participating in Qualification Committee meetings. In order not to jeopardise the impartiality of the process, teacher members do not typically participate in the handling of candidate assessments or contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications, where the matter concerns the educational institution in which they work.
Qualification Committees’ tasks and decision-making

Qualification Committees

- are responsible for organising competence-based qualifications
- are responsible for the supervision of competence-based qualifications
- agree with education providers on the organisation of competence-based qualifications
- if necessary, agree on arranging qualifications with other organisations and foundations that have sufficient expertise in arranging competence-based qualifications
- issue qualification certificates and certificates for the completion of one or more qualification modules
- decide on rectifications of assessment
- provide educational administration authorities with the information they require on contracts for arranging qualifications, candidates for qualifications and qualification certificates issued
- monitor the functionality of the competence-based qualification system within their field and, if necessary, make proposals for the further development of the system
- sign diplomas for their part
- file the Qualification Committee’s documents during its term of office.

Account must be taken of the following in decision-making by the Qualification Committee:

- Qualification Committee members perform their duties subject to liability for acts in office.
- Everyone has the right to have their matter considered without undue delay.
- The parties concerned have the right to be heard, to be issued with a decision accompanied by the related grounds, and to appeal.
- Decisions are public.
- The parties concerned must be provided with advice and guidance, and enquiries must be responded to.
- The Committee is obliged to communicate in factual, clear and understandable language.
- All parties concerned must receive equal treatment.
- Activities must be impartial and appropriate in relation to the objectives concerned.

A record will be drawn up of Committee meetings. A clear indication must be given of what was considered, what was decided and how the decisions will
be implemented. Any dissenting opinions on the decision must be entered in the record. Decisions made by Qualification Committees must be based on legislation governing vocational adult education, regulations and instructions issued by the Finnish National Board of Education, and the instructions of the Qualification Committee.

Account must be taken of the fact that the record is a public document when preparing it. In accordance with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999), documents in the possession of the authorities are considered public in the first instance. In most cases, non-disclosure can only be based on private or public interests, not those of the authorities. For instance, information concerning the verbal assessment of the personal characteristics of candidates must be kept secret. The plan for arranging competence-based qualifications may also include information on business or professional secrets to be kept confidential in accordance with the aforementioned provision. Those serving on the Qualification Committee must ensure that confidential material is not disclosed to outsiders. Consideration of and meetings on matters to be decided by the Qualification Committee are not public.

**Contract for arranging competence-based qualifications**

Competence-based qualifications may not be arranged without the related valid contract. Parties to the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications include the Qualification Committee and the organiser of a competence-based qualification. A contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, with appendices, is legally binding on both parties, and includes agreement on the following (Decree 812/1998, section §):

- qualifications to which the contract applies
- qualification languages
- arrangements of competence tests
- assessors of competence test performances
- the possibility to complete a competence-based qualification without the related preparatory training
- fees to be collected from candidates participating in competence tests and without the related preparatory training
- provision of information and advice on the completion of qualifications and costs incurred by candidates due to the competence tests
- procedure for resolving disputes concerning the contract
- the validity of the contract, its cancellation and termination.
Quality control in arranging competence-based qualifications

Qualification Committees are obliged to supervise compliance with the contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications and, if necessary, to monitor the arrangement of competence tests and the assessment of competence test performances. At the beginning of its term of office, each Qualification Committee must plan how it will manage supervision and monitoring in practice.

Quality can be controlled in a variety of ways, including on the basis of documents, through visits to the organiser of qualifications or by inviting the organiser’s representatives to a Committee meeting. The Finnish National Board of Education has issued a letter of instructions on quality control (2/440/2011).

If arrangements for a qualification fail to meet the set requirements, the Qualification Committee may, on the basis of its duty to monitor, oblige the organiser of competence-based qualifications to remedy the situation within the agreed timeframe. Any action contrary to this agreement will entitle the Qualification Committee to cancel or terminate the contract.

Certificates

An organiser of competence-based qualifications is responsible for arranging the assessment of a competence test performance and submitting the related assessment proposal to the Qualification Committee in the manner agreed in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. Similar information must be submitted on all performances in competence tests.

Such an assessment proposal must contain the following information: the candidate’s name, date of birth, qualification, qualification modules with grades, the end date of the competence test and the time of the assessment meeting, a description of the competence test performance and an account of where the competence tests were arranged, and assessors. If it is proposed that any performances be failed, the grounds for this must be provided. Provision of such information is particularly significant, due to the possibility of an assessment rectification procedure. In the case of failed performances, the related assessment criteria under the Qualification Requirements for competence-based qualifications must be mentioned.

The Qualification Committee’s duties include deciding on whether to recognise previously acquired and reliably documented skills and knowledge, by qualification module, based on a proposal by a tripartite group of assessors. Recognition of prior learning must account for the fact that no general time limit can be
set for previously acquired and demonstrated skills and knowledge, but their status can be verified by, say, requesting an account of the candidate’s work history, prior to making a final decision. If necessary, the candidate must prove that his or her competencies correspond to the vocational skills requirements for the qualification in question.

The organiser of the competence-based qualification draws up the qualification certificates and certificates for completing one or more modules of a qualification, and is responsible for ensuring their compliance with the Qualification Requirements for competence-based qualifications and the regulations issued by the Finnish National Board of Education. Such certificates are signed by a representative of the Qualification Committee, and a representative of the organiser of the competence-based qualification. A certificate for completing one or more qualification modules will be issued upon request.

Once the Qualification Committee representative has signed the certificates, they, complete with information on passed and failed qualification modules, will be sent to the organiser of the competence-based qualification, who will submit the certificates and information on failed qualification modules to the candidates in question.

**Diploma**

An organiser of a competence-based qualification may order a diploma, subject to a charge, from the Finnish National Board of Education, for candidates who have completed a competence-based qualification. This diploma must be signed by a representative of the Qualification Committee and the organiser of the competence-based qualification.

**Rectification of the assessment of a module of competence-based qualification**

Within 14 days of being informed of the results of the assessment of a qualification or a qualification module, the candidate may request a rectification of assessment from the Qualification Committee. The candidate has the right to copies of documents related to his or her competence test performance, assessments of competence test performances and other documents used when resolving the matter.

The candidate must submit a rectification request in writing to the Qualification Committee. If a decision made by the Qualification Committee is clearly incorrect, having heard the assessors the Qualification Committee may oblige them to perform a new assessment. Decisions issued by the Qualification Committee on rectification requests are not subject to appeal. If a clear mistake has been
made during an assessment, the assessors may perform a reassessment without a request for rectification (self-rectification).

**Development of the competence-based qualification system**

In cooperation with the organisers of competence-based qualifications, employers and employee representatives, the Qualification Committee must collect information and experiences within its specific field on the organisation of competence-based qualifications, the functioning of the competence-based qualification system and needs for amending the Qualification Requirements. On the basis of these, Qualification Committees may prepare proposals to the Finnish National Board of Education for the system's development or on the structure and contents of qualifications. Assessment forms and the documentation of competence test performance assessments are developed as part of the development of competence-based qualification assessment. Qualification Committees may, for instance, prepare assessment forms for common use by assessors or provide instructions on the arrangement of competence-based qualifications in other ways.

The Finnish National Board of Education grants user rights for the electronic student feedback system AIPAL to Qualification Committee Chairpersons and secretaries. Reports on feedback provided by candidates on competence-based qualifications can be printed out from the AIPAL system. These enable Qualification Committees to view qualification-specific feedback from their contract partners, based on questions submitted nationwide. Reports include nationwide comparative data.

**Document management and archiving**

The Committee Chairperson is responsible for arranging archiving for Qualification Committees, and the Committee’s secretary is in charge of the related practical duties. The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the instructions provided are complied with during archiving for the Committee, and that the archive material is submitted, in the correct order and within the deadline, to the archive of the Finnish National Board of Education. The secretary compiles and organises the Committee’s documents and attends to the archival of documents for permanent archival, the destruction of documents kept for a fixed period, preparation of a list of submitted documents, and the actual submission of documents to the archive of the Finnish National Board of Education. The Finnish National Board of Education attends to the listing, description and final archiving of the Committees’ documents, and provides instructions on archiving.
The filing plan provides guidance on the consideration of Qualification Committee documents, and their archival and retention. The plan covers all categories of documents generated by the Qualification Committee’s activities. Documents are categorised in six main categories. The Qualification Committee is responsible for the archival of documents in three of these categories.

0. Documents concerning preparations for appointing a committee (FNBE will archive)
1. Documents concerning composition and tasks (FNBE will archive)
2. Meeting documents
3. Correspondence
4. Working material
5. Account documents and documents on remuneration (FNBE will archive)

Documents to be kept confidential will be stored in a manner that prevents the disclosure of confidential information to outsiders. After the end of their term of office, individual Qualification Committee members will also ensure that no confidential information remains in their possession and must destroy such material so as to prevent its disclosure to outsiders. With regard to Qualification Committee documents, secrecy mainly applies to test or qualification performances that include verbal assessments of the personal characteristics of students, patient information related to assessments, or any business or professional secrets belonging to companies etc.
3 INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORGANISERS OF COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATIONS
3 INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORGANISERS OF COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATIONS

The organisation of competence-based qualifications is subject to a contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, concluded by the education provider and the Qualification Committee. If necessary, the Qualification Committee can agree on arranging qualifications with other organisations and foundations that have sufficient expertise in arranging competence-based qualifications.

Such a contract is binding on both the organiser of the qualifications and the Qualification Committee. Both parties must be able to trust in the completion of activities as provided in the contract. By signing the contract, organisers of competence-based qualifications also agree to arrange competence-based qualifications for candidates who do not participate in related preparatory training, if necessary.

Successful organisation of competence-based qualifications requires regional cooperation between various actors, including providers of apprenticeship training, ELY Centres, Employment and Economic Development Offices, Regional State Administrative Agencies and education providers. Between employers and employees, such cooperation entails the appropriate involvement of both parties at all stages of planning, implementing and developing the arrangement of competence-based qualifications. Use is made of the expertise and strengths of various parties in such cooperation. Organisers of competence-based qualifications benefit from the regular assessment of their activities and their development on the basis of feedback.

3.1 Qualification Requirements for competence-based qualifications

The Qualification Requirements determine the modules included in the qualification, any possible specialisations that the modules form, the composition of the qualification, the vocational skills required for each qualification module, the assessment criteria (targets and criteria of assessment) and methods of demonstrating vocational skills. Qualification Requirements are prepared under the leadership of the Finnish National Board of Education based on (tripartite) cooperation between employers, employees and the education sector. If self-
employment is common within a certain sector, independent self-employed professionals are also represented. Determination of which work processes related to each vocation will enable the demonstration and assessment of vocational skills for the qualification in question is based on a shared, tripartite concept of vocational skills within the Qualification Requirements. The education provider, the organiser of the qualification and the Qualification Committee must fully comply with the Qualification Requirements.

The Finnish National Board of Education is responsible for preparing and determining Qualification Requirements. Starting points for the preparation process may include the need to reform current Qualification Requirements, or for a change in the qualification structures of upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications or specialist vocational qualifications. Preparation of Qualification Requirements usually takes 1–2 years. When Qualification Requirements in compliance with a new qualification structure are about to be attained, the Finnish National Board of Education determines which existing Qualification Committee will preside over the qualification in question, or establishes a new Qualification Committee. Qualification Requirements approved by the Finnish National Board of Education are published on the Finnish National Board of Education’s website and in print.

A module leading to a qualification must form part of the vocational area, which can be separated from the natural work process into an independent and assessable component. The vocational skills requirements defined in qualification modules focus on the vocation’s key functions, management of the operating process, and the professional practices in the field in question. They also include knowledge generally required in working life, such as social skills and key skills in life-long learning.

Targets of assessment refer to the key competencies to which particular attention is paid during assessment. Assessment criteria are derived from the vocational skills requirements. These criteria define the grade awarded in vocational upper secondary qualifications and the standards applicable to approved competence test performances for further and specialist vocational qualifications. The section ‘methods of demonstrating vocational skills’ describes how the candidate must demonstrate vocational skills during competence tests.

Qualification Requirements are revised at 5–10 year intervals. Changes in the qualification structure and legislation, changes in the profession, and other needs for change originating in working life affect the period of validity of the various requirements. Revised Qualification Requirements for competence-based qualifications supercede earlier versions. Qualification Requirements can
also be modified while still valid, without being repealed. A new module or specialisation may be added to the Qualification Requirements. Qualification Requirements may also be modified while still valid, under separate legislation. For instance, the 2009 EU Directive on driving licenses and solutions in cases where a student is unsuitable for a certain field of study (so-called SORA unsuitability legislation) resulted in modifications to the contents of several Qualification Requirements in 2012.

A candidate may complete the qualification in accordance with the Qualification Requirements for competence-based qualifications, according to which he or she began the completion of the qualification. Education and training and competence tests initiated before the entry into force of revised Qualification Requirements may be completed within a period of ten years (vocational upper secondary qualifications) or two years (further and specialist vocational qualifications), unless otherwise provided by other provisions and regulations.

### 3.2 Personalisation

The competence-based qualification system is intended to offer adults flexible arrangements and the best possible preconditions for demonstrating skills in attaining competence-based qualifications and for developing and updating vocational skills required in working life.

Personalisation refers to customer-oriented planning and implementation of guidance, advisory and support measures for a student engaged in preparatory training for a competence-based qualification and a candidate attaining a competence-based qualification. Personalisation is divided into three phases:

1. application for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training
2. completion of the qualification
3. acquiring the required vocational skills.

Personalisation is a process in which the three phases are clearly connected. Personalisation must be documented in a related document. Documentation of personalisation is described in chapter 3.2.4.

The education provider’s task is to attend to personalisation and to provide the required expert guidance to the candidate. The education provider must cooperate with the organiser of competence-based qualifications, the purchaser of training or of the qualification, working life representatives and, if necessary, other experts in the field. Cooperation on personalisation is also important in
apprenticeship training and training commissioned by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and in situations where an organisation other than the organiser of the competence-based qualification is responsible for the related preparatory training. In cases of personalisation, the Qualification Requirements must always be applied.

To ensure equality and equal opportunities in education, education providers must attend to the needs of candidates requiring special support, and to those of immigrants. Titled *Immigrants as candidates in competence-based qualification* and *Candidates in competence-based qualification requiring special support*, the appendices to the Competence-based Qualification Guide include further information on how to plan and implement the personalisation for these target groups.

### 3.2.1 Application for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training

When an individual applies for a competence-based qualification, the organiser of the qualification must arrange the examination of the applicant’s previously acquired skills and other starting points, determine the most suitable qualification and assess the need for guidance and support measures, if any. In this context, a decision will be made on which parties will cooperate in providing advice and guidance to the individual in question. If, during the application process, the level of qualification is jointly determined to be unsuitable, the applicant must be guided towards a suitable qualification or another field of study.

Competencies are assessed through various methods suited to the field in question. On the basis of the competence identified, the following shall be assessed:

- which parts of the competence already demonstrated by the individual on the basis of the documents presented can be proposed for recognition
- whether, on the basis of skills already achieved, the individual can be guided towards the direct completion of a qualification suitable for him or her, or a module or modules of such a qualification, or
- whether the individual should be advised to acquire the vocational skills required.

### 3.2.2 Completing a competence-based qualification

When individualising the completion of a qualification, the vocational skills requirements, targets of assessment and criteria and methods of demonstrating
vocational skills defined in the Qualification Requirements, must be complied with in every case.

A representative of the organiser of the qualification and the candidate completing the qualification or module must jointly prepare a plan in writing for the candidate, describing how, when and where the candidate will demonstrate the competence required under the Qualification Requirements. In addition, this plan should also list the names of assessors of competence test performances. The plan will be completed by qualification module and updated when necessary. This plan forms part of the document on personalisation. The plan, and any modifications to it, must be approved, with dates and signatures, by the candidate and the organiser of the qualification and, if necessary, jointly by representatives of the qualification purchaser and of working life.

If the candidate has reliable accounts of previously demonstrated competencies, the assessors must determine how well these conform to the vocational skills requirements in the Qualification Requirements. The assessors must submit this document to the Qualification Committee for recognition, as part of the competence-based qualification. If a candidate has already demonstrated vocational skills under one of the qualification modules, a previously completed qualification or qualification module must be submitted for recognition as part of a qualification completed as a competence-based qualification. No general deadline can be set for previously acquired and demonstrated competencies, but steps can be taken to confirm that they are up to date. The Qualification Committee will decide on the recognition of any prior learning. Certificates listed in the Qualification Requirements on completing special qualifications can also be submitted for recognition, provided that the certificate demonstrating the special qualification in question is valid. Individual vocational skills requirements, or the final work result alone, cannot be submitted for recognition unless the qualification module includes only a single vocational skill requirement. An organiser of competence-based qualifications must provide the Qualification Committee with any proposal for the recognition of a previously demonstrated competence immediately after the application phase and before competence tests begin.

Account must be taken of any personal difficulties experienced by the candidate, such as difficulties in reading and writing skills or other needs for special support that impede the demonstration of vocational skills, during personalisation measures. In addition, account must be taken of the need to arrange the workplaces and operating methods best suited to the individual in question. Any special arrangements required must be agreed upon. With regard to securing equal opportunities for candidates in need of special support, the
availability of necessary aids and the accessibility of the workplace must be ensured. Possible special arrangements must not influence the assessment of competence tests. Such assessment cannot be individualised: vocational skills requirements and the criteria and targets of assessment are the same for all candidates.

3.2.3 Acquisition of the required vocational skills

In the personalisation of the required vocational skills and the planning and implementation of learning, account must be taken of the individual’s situation in life, competencies, identified learning needs and possibilities for on-the-job learning. In addition, the personalisation process involves the examination of and joint agreement on the most suitable forms of education provision and learning environment which the education provider can offer, and of the most appropriate teaching and assessment methods and steering measures. The personalisation process

- familiarises the student with him/herself as learner
- provides guidance in the planning of flexible and suitable individual learning paths, and study choices
- steers studies and, if necessary, provides advice and guidance towards support services provided by other experts.

The training provider must decide on the contents and provision of preparatory training for a competence-based qualification, in accordance with the Qualification Requirements. Regional cooperation with working life is the key to the planning of education and training. Preparatory training for competence-based qualifications is financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, employers and, in the case of preparatory training for a further and specialist vocational qualification, the students themselves.

With regard to candidates in need of special support, in the recognition of learning difficulties and of the need for other special support, and when taking account of any support required, guidance and special arrangements during preparatory training are essential to the sufficient preparation of the candidate for demonstrating his or her vocational skills when attaining a competence-based qualification.

Certain competence-based qualifications (e.g. Further Qualification for Security Guards, Vocational Qualification in Logistics and Further Qualification for Vehicle Crane Operators) include qualification modules whose preparatory training is regulated by special legislation in addition to the Qualification Requirements.
In the case of health care and social services, a requirement in professions subject to registration is that the candidate participates in preparatory training for a qualification or apprenticeship training and on-the-job learning, in accordance with the personalisation arrangements and related documentation. The scope of preparatory training for the Vocational Qualification in Social and Health Care (120 credits) is determined on the basis of the candidate’s previous studies, work experience and competencies, so as to facilitate attainment of the vocational skills requirements defined in the Qualification Requirements.

**Solutions in cases where a student is unsuitable for a certain field of study (SORA unsuitability legislation)**

In the beginning of 2012, the Vocational Adult Education Act and Decree were amended with regard to students’ rights and obligations. Key amendments apply to student admission criteria and prerequisites, access to information, provisions on a safe study environment, cancellation and restoration of the right to study, drug testing, presentation of an extract from the criminal record, disciplinary measures concerning the student and hearing the student’s testimony. Certain aspects of these amendments, such as the provisions on drug testing and disciplinary measures, apply to qualifications in all fields of study.

In the personalisation of an application for a competence-based qualification, for the related preparatory training and for acquisition of the required vocational skills and in the documentation associated with personalisation, account must be taken of qualification-specific health requirements. SORA legislation does not apply to cases of personalisation.

**Rectification of assessment in preparatory training for a competence-based qualification**

Section 16 of the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) includes provisions on the assessment of preparatory training and the rectification of an assessment.

Students dissatisfied with their assessment may request an oral or written rectification from the headmaster or teacher who performed the assessment, or from another assessing party. Such a request must be submitted within 14 days from the time at which the results of the assessment and the application of the assessment criteria were made available to the student.

In apprenticeship training, any request for the assessment of on-the-job training must be submitted to the employer. Regarding the assessment of theoretical studies, and any combination of such assessments, the student should address...
any request for rectification to the headmaster or to the teacher who performed the assessment, or to the party that performed the assessment if it was none of the foregoing.

Rectification of the assessment of a module forming part of a competence-based qualification is described in chapter 3.4 of the guide.

**Certificates for preparatory training towards a competence-based qualification**

On the basis of the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998 section 16), the Finnish National Board of Education has issued a regulation (FNBE 56/011/2009) on certificate templates and the information which must be included in certificates. This regulation applies as well to certificates for preparatory training for a competence-based qualification and apprenticeship training preparatory for a competence-based qualification. Certificates of participation in preparatory training for a qualification module and apprenticeship training in preparation for a qualification module can be used as transcripts during studies.

### 3.2.4 Documentation of personalisation

Application for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training, completion of the qualification and the acquisition of the required vocational skills must be documented in line with the Finnish National Board of Education’s regulation on personalisation documentation. The regulation contains no provisions on naming the document, which is decided by the education provider itself. The candidate, the education provider and, if necessary, the purchaser of the qualification must sign and date this document and any amendments to it. It must also be signed if prepared using electronic student administration programmes, since Finland has not yet adopted an official electronic signature. In addition, an individual study programme will be drawn up and appended to the apprenticeship contract.

If the person concerned is a student with special needs in terms of preparatory training for a competence-based qualification, these needs will be examined during the application phase for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training (Finnish National Board of Education FNBE 43/011/2006, Section 2) and entered in the personalisation documentation. In apprenticeship training preparatory to a competence-based qualification, an individual education plan is prepared for students with special needs. This is based on the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998, section 17(3)), which are also applicable to vocational adult education in accordance with the reference provisions (631/1998, section 10).
3.2.5 Development of personalisation

The operational and working methods of personalisation, adult student guidance counselling, distance learning, quality management in vocational education and training and integration training for immigrants, will be developed in collaboration with working life and stakeholders. The Finnish National Board of Education supports development efforts by providing training, guidance and advisory services.

The AIPAL feedback system

Feedback from candidates is a key source of information in the quality monitoring of the competence-based qualification system and system development. For the purpose of collecting feedback, the Finnish National Board of Education has developed the AIPAL feedback system for use by all organisers of qualifications with a valid contract for arranging competence-based qualifications.

Feedback is provided by responding to nationwide questions common to all qualifications, related to applications for a qualification, the completion of a qualification and the acquisition of the required vocational skills. Organisers of qualifications may complement these nationwide questions with their own further questions, the results of which will be reported only to themselves. Nationwide feedback is collected in two stages: during both the application and attainment of the qualification. Feedback is only collected on the competence-based qualifications mentioned in the contract for arranging qualifications (vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications, specialist vocational qualifications).

The identity of feedback providers is not revealed. Information collected through nationwide questionnaires will only be reported as statistical data. The organiser of qualifications may add verbal responses to any further questions. Reporting must include summaries specific to qualifications and fields of study, and results by qualification specific to each organiser of qualifications. Organisers of competence-based qualifications will only see their own results in cases where feedback is provided by a minimum of 5 respondents per qualification. Reports include nationwide comparative data.

Reports of nationwide questions in the AIPAL system are utilised not only by organisers of qualifications but also by Qualification Committees, the Finnish National Board of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture.
3.3 Methods of demonstrating vocational skills during competence tests

Candidates demonstrate their vocational skills through competence tests arranged in accordance with their personalisation plans for the completion of the qualification. Vocational skills are primarily demonstrated in actual work tasks forming part of working life. In addition to practical work tasks, the competence test performance may be supplemented if a comprehensive and reliable demonstration of vocational skills is necessary. Supplementary methods include written descriptions, video recordings and interviews. Special qualifications included in the Qualification Requirements (such as a Food Hygiene Proficiency Certificate, i.e. Hygiene Passport and hot work permit) must be completed as instructed. Methods of demonstrating vocational skills are defined in the Qualification Requirements. Organisers of competence-based qualifications must comply in full with the Qualification Requirements.

Certain competence-based qualifications (e.g. Further Qualification for Security Guards, Vocational Qualification in Logistics and Further Qualification for Vehicle Crane Operators) include qualification modules whose completion is regulated by special legislation in addition to the Qualification Requirements. Completion of these qualification modules is not independent of the method by which vocational skills are acquired. In the case of these qualification modules, special legislation defines how the candidate must demonstrate his or her vocational skills.

Qualification Requirements permitting, the candidate may be provided with the opportunity to supplement his or her competence test performance, in an oral discussion with one or more assessors present in addition to the candidate. The assessor must record the observations made during the discussion, on an assessment form. This procedure ensures the comprehensive nature of competence test performances and reliability of assessment. Such an opportunity can be arranged in connection with the completion of a qualification module or following the completion of all qualification modules.

3.4 Assessment of vocational skills as part of competence-based qualifications

Assessment methods

The assessment of vocational skills must involve careful and thorough examination of the extent to which candidates have demonstrated their command of the vocational skills requirements specified in the Qualification Require-
ments associated with the module in question. Assessment of competence tests is based on the vocational skills requirements, targets of assessment and assessment criteria determined by the Qualification Requirements. During assessment, diverse use must be made of various, primarily qualitative assessment methods. Exclusive use of one method may not provide a reliable result. During assessment, account must be taken of the special characteristics of each field and qualification, in accordance with the Qualification Requirements.

Assessment of competence test performances

Assessors who have been inducted in the assessment task assess the candidate’s vocational skills in competence tests, based on the personalisation plan prepared for the candidate. The division of tasks between assessors is agreed in advance during the personalisation process for completing the qualification. Assessment must be systematic and should cover all assessment targets defined in the Qualification Requirements. The principle of continuous assessment does not apply to the competence-based qualification system. Before a competence test begins, the candidate must be clearly informed of how assessment criteria will be applied in his or her case. The candidate must be provided with the opportunity for self-assessment of his or her performance.

Preparation of assessment proposals

The organiser of competence-based qualifications selects the assessors and provides them with induction in the assessment task in accordance with the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. After conducting a comprehensive, reliable assessment of competence test performances in accordance with the Qualification Requirements, the tripartite team of assessors prepares an assessment proposal on the qualification module for consideration by the Qualification Committee. Team members represent employers, employees, teachers, and if self-employment is common within a certain sector, independent self-employed professionals.

An assessment proposal is prepared on the basis of the evaluation data on the candidate. Comprehensive assessments of competence test performances and the candidate’s self-assessment by qualification module constitute sufficient evaluation data. In addition, the following must be appended to the evaluation data, if necessary: 1) copies of certificates for the completion special qualifications, 2) documents on previously demonstrated competencies recognised by the Qualification Committee and 3) documentary evidence of competence test performances in cases where practical tasks performed in the workplace do
not cover all of the vocational skills requirements defined in the Qualification Requirements.

The organiser of the competence-based qualification prepares an assessment record of completion with respect to the qualification or individual modules, for signature by the assessors. The candidate may sign the assessment proposal as testimony that he or she has been informed of it. In such a case, the candidate can be informed of the grounds for the assessment proposal. Feedback given to the candidate on the assessment forms part of a good assessment process. Such feedback may be given to the candidate for example after the assessment proposal has been prepared.

Assessment proposals for qualification modules are primarily sent in the form of a summary table to the Qualification Committee. Submitting the assessment proposal to the Qualification Committee is one of the tasks performed by organisers of competence-based qualifications, as agreed in the qualification contract. Most Qualification Committees have prepared a document template for the submission of assessment proposals to the Qualification Committee. Moreover, the Finnish National Board of Education has prepared a form on which assessment proposals can be submitted to the Qualification Committee. The Qualification Committee decides on whether to use this form.

**Rectification of the assessment of a competence-based qualification module**

A candidate may demand that an assessment be rectified in light of the Qualification Committee’s decision on whether to issue a qualification certificate or certificate for completing a qualification module. Within 14 days of receiving information from the Qualification Committee on the aforementioned decision, the candidate may request that the Qualification Committee in question rectify the assessment. An organiser of a competence-based qualification must explain the rectification procedure to the candidate prior to the competence test. The candidate has the right to receive copies of written documents related to his or her qualification and of other documents used when performing the assessment or resolving the matter (e.g. a separate report prepared by the organiser of a competence-based qualification for consideration by the Qualification Committee).

The candidate must submit such a rectification request in writing to the Qualification Committee. If the decision made by the Qualification Committee is clearly incorrect, having heard the assessors the Qualification Committee may
oblige them to perform a new assessment. Decisions issued by the Qualification Committee on rectification requests are not subject to appeal.

If a clear mistake has been made during the assessment, the assessors may re-assess without a request for rectification (self-rectification).

3.5 Assessors

Individuals who assess the vocational skills of a candidate represent the following: employees, employers, the teaching sector and independent self-employed professionals, if self-employment is typical within the sector. Qualification Requirements may include regulations deviating from this provision (e.g. Further Qualification for Entrepreneurs, Specialist Qualification for Business Advisors and Specialist Qualification in Business Management). An individual assessor may only represent one party, in line with his or her primary duties.

Assessors are agreed on in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. They must possess good vocational skills in the field of the competence-based qualification in question, or within a related module. In addition, they must be familiar with the Qualification Requirements of the competence-based qualification in question and the key principles of assessing competence test performances. Section 4 of the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications includes provisions on the criteria for selecting assessors. Moreover, the organiser of competence-based qualifications may provide the Qualification Committee with a list of assessors as an appendix to the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, or maintain a list of assessors in a web-based conference environment. The organiser of competence-based qualifications is responsible for submitting information on assessors to the Qualification Committee, in the manner agreed in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. Furthermore, the organiser must be prepared to arrange an assessment, even if one of the intended assessors is unable to participate.

Account must also be taken of possible conflicts of interest when selecting assessors. This may be a risk, for example when a teacher who has played a key role in teaching during preparatory training for a competence-based qualification, or a workplace instructor, also acts as an assessor of competence tests. The Administrative Procedure Act includes further information on conflicts of interest and the related criteria.
**Induction of assessors**

In the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, the organiser of competence-based qualifications agrees to provide induction for assessors. Assessors should also be provided with advance induction in each individual competence test. Such induction should be based on qualification-specific assessment issues, in particular the individual plan for completing the qualification, and assessment forms. The aims of induction of individuals serving as assessors and the maintenance and development of assessment skills are as follows:

- to ensure a fair and professional assessment
- to improve the assessment skills of those involved in competence tests
- to enhance the possibilities for cooperation between the organisers of competence-based qualifications and representatives of working life
- to enhance the quality of the competence-based qualification system.

The organiser of competence-based qualifications must ensure that induction is provided to a sufficient number of assessors in relation to the number of candidates. Provision of induction must be regular and systematic. Assessors must be informed in sufficient detail of any changes in the competence-based qualification system and the Qualification Requirements of the competence-based qualification in question.

**Specialists in competence-based qualifications as assessors and developers of competence-based qualification activities**

Specialists in competence-based qualifications are experts in the competence-based qualification system, on the qualifications in their respective fields, and on assessment. Organisers of competence-based qualifications should ensure that at least one of the individuals participating in preparing an assessment proposal for a qualification module has completed his or her training as a specialist in competence-based qualifications. The person responsible for the competence-based qualification should also be trained as a specialist in competence-based qualifications.

The training programme for specialists in competence-based qualifications is intended to promote the development of the competence-based qualification system into a flexible and reliable form of cooperation that takes account of the requirements of the world of work. By attending such training, actors in the competence-based qualification system can improve their skills in organising competence-based qualifications and assessing vocational skills.
The training programme for specialists in competence-based qualifications is equivalent to 25 credit units and is implemented in line with the Qualification Requirements of specialists in competence-based qualifications, approved by the Finnish National Board of Education. The personalisation principles apply to the implementation of the training programme.

Most specialists in competence-based qualifications represent the teaching sector. Organisers of competence-based qualifications should encourage representatives of working life to participate in the training programme for specialists in competence-based qualifications. They can choose to complete the entire training programme, or a module of it.

An individual who has demonstrated his or her skills in an approved manner and in line with the requirements of the training programme will be awarded a certificate and diploma as a specialist in competence-based qualifications.

The training programme for specialists in competence-based qualifications is organised by

- HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences Professional Teacher Education Unit, Helsinki
- HAMK University of Applied Sciences Professional Teacher Education Unit, Hämeenlinna
- JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Professional Teacher Education Unit, Jyväskylä
- Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Professional Teacher Education Unit, Oulu
- Yrkesakademin i Österbotten, Vasa.

### 3.6 Contract for arranging competence-based qualifications

The contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, with appendices, is legally binding on the contracting parties, i.e. the organiser of the qualification and the Qualification Committee.

Arrangements for a competence-based qualification must not be initiated before the Qualification Committee has signed the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications.

As such, it constitutes another document legally binding on both parties. Once the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications has been concluded, the Qualification Committee both requires and trusts the organiser of a compe-
tence-based qualification to act in the manner described in the contract and appendices thereto. The Qualification Committee also thereby agrees to allow the organiser of a competence-based qualification to act in the manner agreed in the contract. Any actions contrary to the agreement will entitle the other part to cancel the contract. The contract may also be terminated within the period of notice specified in the contract.

The contract for arranging competence-based qualifications must include agreement on the following at a minimum (Decree 812/1998, section 5):

- qualifications to which the contract applies, languages of qualification, arrangements for competence tests, assessors of competence test performances
- the possibility to complete a competence-based qualification without the related preparatory training
- the fees to be collected from candidates participating in competence tests arranged without the related preparatory training
- arrangements for providing information and guidance concerning the completion of qualifications and costs incurred by candidates from the competence tests, and related to the procedure for resolving disputes concerning the contract, to its validity and to its cancellation and termination.

The Finnish National Board of Education has issued regulations concerning the contract between the Qualification Committee and the organiser of a competence-based qualification for arranging competence-based qualifications (FNBE 1/440/2012).

In accordance with the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998), the education provider is obliged, in the manner agreed with the Qualification Committee, to arrange opportunities for completing competence-based qualifications, even without the related preparatory training. Preparatory training for a competence-based qualification may be provided by the training provider or another organisation. In all cases, candidates must be provided with the opportunity to complete a competence-based qualification. In most cases, preparatory training for a competence-based qualification is provided by the organisation arranging the competence tests. If the training provider arranging preparatory training for a competence-based qualification does not have a valid contract for doing so and does not intend to conclude one, well in advance of the preparatory training it must agree on the arrangement of a competence-based qualification and cooperation on personalisation with an organisation that has such a contract.
3.6.1 Agreeing on the arrangement of competence-based qualifications

In most cases, the party planning to arrange competence-based qualifications takes the initiative in concluding a contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. The Qualification Committee (secretary, chairperson or Qualification Committee website) must be contacted in order to obtain its instructions on applying for a contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, and the applicant must act in accordance with the instructions.

The organisation planning to arrange competence-based qualifications must prepare the following documents for consideration by the Qualification Committee:

- a contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, complying with the instructions issued by the Qualification Committee
- contact persons for the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications and persons responsible for each qualification
- plan for arranging competence-based qualifications
- document templates to be used in the assessment of competence tests, and preparing and submitting assessment proposals, unless otherwise instructed by the Qualification Committee
- Information on assessors as required by the Qualification Committee.

One or more competence-based qualifications may be included in a contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. In every case, the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications must be a document specific to the qualification in question.

The Qualification Committee will issue instructions on the deadlines for submitting applications for contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications: this is often two weeks prior to the date of a Qualification Committee meeting.

Quality control in arranging competence-based qualifications

Qualification Committees supervise compliance with contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications, as well as monitoring the arrangement of competence tests and the assessment of competence test performances. At the beginning of its term of office, each Qualification Committee plans how it will manage its supervisory duties in order to monitor the practical implementation of contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications concluded with organisers of competence-based qualifications. This enables the Qualification Committee to ensure that competence-based qualifications are organised in the
manner agreed in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications and under the related plan for arranging competence-based qualifications.

Quality can be controlled in a variety of ways, including on the basis of documents, through visits to the organiser of qualifications or by inviting the organiser’s representatives to a Committee meeting. The Finnish National Board of Education has issued a letter of instructions on quality control (2/440/2011).

Feedback received from candidates is one of the key sources of information in quality monitoring of the competence-based qualification system and its development. The AIPAL feedback system is described in chapter 3.2.5 of this guide.

**Reports on the preconditions for arranging competence-based qualifications**

In accordance with the Vocational Education and Training Decree (812/1998, section §), the Finnish National Board of Education must assist Qualification Committees in examining the preconditions of educational institutions for organising qualifications. The preconditions for organising vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications completed as competence-based qualifications are examined for the purpose of assisting the Qualification Committee and supporting the activities of the organisers of competence-based qualifications.

Such an examination is conducted by the Finnish National Board of Education on the basis of the documents submitted by the educational institution in applying for a contract for arranging competence-based qualifications from the Qualification Committee. These documents include a contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, a plan for arranging competence-based qualifications and document templates used in the assessment of competence-based qualifications, if the common document templates recommended by the Qualification Committee are not used. In addition to examining documents, an oral hearing of the educational institution filing the contract application, or a visit to the educational institution in question, can be performed when compiling the report. Qualification Committees may also request that the Finnish National Board of Education conduct an examination during the period of validity of the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications.

Such an examination does not require separate measures from the organiser of competence-based qualifications, unless it involves a visit or an oral hearing. The organiser of competence-based qualifications or the organisation filing
an application for a contract will receive a copy of the examination report. Conducting these examinations is one of the Finnish National Board of Education’s official duties performed free of charge. The Qualification Committee uses the examination report on the preconditions for arranging competence-based qualifications in its decision-making.

Responsibility for providing information and guidance

In accordance with the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, the organiser of the qualifications ensures that information and guidance are provided on the completion of the qualification in question, taking account of local and nationwide competence requirements in working life and the potential number of candidates completing a competence-based qualification. Individuals interested in completing a competence-based qualification and those applying to become candidates for doing so must also be provided with expert guidance when applying for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training.

3.6.2 Contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, and change situations

Information recorded in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications must be revised from time to time. In most cases, changes will apply to contact details, reorganisation of the education provider, qualification-specific contact persons or units responsible for organising competence tests.

The contract for arranging competence-based qualifications must be revised if

- the names of the contracting parties or qualification change
- a change in the contract’s period of validity is required.

All other modifications are made either in the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications or in the appendix ‘contact persons for the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications and persons responsible for a specific qualification’.

The plan for arranging competence-based qualifications and document templates, in which the assessments of tripartite representatives, completion of a qualification module and the entire qualification are recorded, must be revised as Qualification Requirements change, whenever the former Qualification Requirements are repealed.
If the education provider, organisation or foundation joins another organisation or a new organisation is established, the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications and the appendix ‘contact persons for the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications and persons responsible for a specific qualification’ must be revised accordingly. In this context, within the contract there is usually no need to examine the preconditions of the new organisation for arranging competence-based qualifications, because this is only a question of updating the information on one contracting party in line with the new organisation. However, should any operational changes related to organising competence-based qualifications occur in this context, the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications must also be revised. In cases of change, contracting parties may consider transforming any fixed-term contracts to render them valid until further notice.

The aforementioned reorganisation principles may also be applied in cases where the Qualification Committee’s name or field of activity changes.

Changes in Qualification Requirements will not result in revisions to the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, unless the name of the qualification, or criteria for assessors, also change. Changes in Qualification Requirements affect the appendices to the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications in force at any given time (plan for arranging competence-based qualifications, assessment forms and possibly, the list of assessors). These must all be revised.

Contracts must be amended through cooperation between the contracting parties, without terminating the contract. The Qualification Committee must send copies of any new contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications to the Finnish National Board of Education. The latter will attend to updating this information in the register of contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications.

### 3.7 Plan for arranging competence-based qualifications

The plan for arranging competence-based qualifications is a concrete plan, specific to each qualification, on arranging the qualification. In this plan, the organiser of competence-based qualifications describes its arrangements for competence tests (contract for arranging competence-based qualifications, section 3). The organiser of competence-based qualifications must be thoroughly familiar with legislation on vocational adult education, the regulations
and instructions of the Finnish National Board of Education and the instructions of the Qualification Committee, before preparing the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications.

The plan includes descriptions of all qualification modules included in the qualification overall. All qualification modules or specialisations for which a contract for arranging competence-based qualifications is applied for, must be listed in point 1 of the plan. If the regulation on the formation of a qualification enables the inclusion of a module belonging to another vocational qualification, or a further or specialist vocational qualification as an optional module within a qualification, this option should always be described in points 2, 12 and 13b of the plan. The plan approved by the Qualification Committee for arranging competence-based qualifications serves as a set of instructions and model for arranging other qualification modules. It can also be used for inducting new employees. The plan must also be submitted to the Qualification Committee, as an appendix to the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. It provides the Qualification Committee with a key tool for assessing the preconditions of an organiser of competence-based qualifications for arranging such qualifications.

The relevant languages are agreed in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. The language mentioned in the contract is not the same as the language skills requirement possibly included in Qualification Requirements.

It is a requirement of the Vocational Adult Education Act that competence-based qualifications be planned and organised in collaboration with working life. The model given in Chapter 3.7.1 should be complied with when preparing the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications. This model also provides the basis for the Finnish National Board of Education’s form (2012).

The plan includes a comprehensive examination of
- background information on the organiser of the competence-based qualification,
- personalisation of application for competence-based qualification and preparatory training and attainment of a competence-based qualification
- arrangements for competence tests
- the related performance assessments.

In the plan, the organiser of competence-based qualifications provides a consistent and clear description of the preparation and implementation of prac-
tical arrangements for a competence-based qualification, in accordance with the categories listed below. The plan must be detailed enough to enable its use by the Qualification Committee as the basis for examining the preconditions for arranging competence-based qualifications and supervising their arrangement.

The candidate must have the possibility to choose optional modules and various flexible methods of attaining the entire qualification. Taking account of the needs of working life in the region, it is recommended that the organiser of competence-based qualifications offers more optional qualification modules or specialisations than those required for completing the entire qualification.

Personalisation documents should not be submitted to the Qualification Committee. However, in order to supervise personalisation, the Qualification Committee should occasionally request to see the personalisation document of a candidate completing a competence-based qualification.

The organiser of competence-based qualifications must monitor, assess and develop activities in accordance with the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications. Results from the AIPAL feedback system provide an excellent basis for the assessment and further development of plans for arranging competence-based qualifications. Any substantial operational modifications to the plans for arranging competence-based qualifications must be sent to the Qualification Committee for approval. This also applies when the organiser of competence-based qualifications wishes to expand the range of optional modules or specialisations available for an individual competence-based qualification.

3.7.1 **Model plan for arranging competence-based qualifications**

In every case, the information in a plan for arranging competence-based qualifications is described from the viewpoint of the competence-based qualification in question.

**Background information**

1. Organiser of competence-based qualification and contact details

2. The competence-based qualification, specialisations and qualification modules for which the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications is prepared
3. Language of qualification

4. Person responsible for the competence-based qualification, person’s deputy, and contact information

5. Expertise of the organiser of competence-based qualification
   - Any previous experience in organising competence-based qualifications?
   - Any expertise in the field in question?

6. Assessment of annual numbers of candidates
   - Please provide an estimate of the number of candidates taking the competence-based qualification in question within the next three years? Please provide grounds for this estimate.

7. Information, marketing and provision of competence tests
   - How do you intend to inform working life in this field and potential new candidates of the possibility to attain this particular competence-based qualification?
   - How will you ensure that individuals attempting to attain the competence-based qualification without the related preparatory training are so informed?

8. Cooperation with working life
   - What kind of cooperation do you engage in with working life representatives when planning and implementing competence tests, and in the assessment of performances in competence tests?
   - How do you intend to develop the organisation of competence-based qualifications in cooperation with working life?
   - How do you maintain and develop the working life expertise of your personnel?

9. Resources for guidance activities
   - How will you provide guidance and advice to candidates in applying for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training, and in completing a competence-based qualification?
Which forms of guidance (e.g. group guidance, individual guidance and on-line guidance) do you use?

How much time have you allocated to providing guidance and advice?

What kind of expertise do the persons guiding candidates have, and how do you maintain their qualifications?

10. Fees charged

How will you inform candidates about the fees charged from them?

Fees charged from candidates participating in competence tests without the related preparatory training (€/qualification module)

11. Personalisation of application for competence-based qualification and preparatory training.

How will you examine the initial status of candidates applying for a competence-based qualification?

How will you ensure that the competence-based qualification or module in question is suitable for each applicant and that the applicant is sufficiently familiar with the contents of the qualification?

How will you act in a case where the qualification in question is not suitable for a particular individual?

How do you identify candidates’ previous skills?

How will you examine the candidate’s need for guidance and support measures?

How will you take account of candidates’ special needs related to language and cultural background, if any?

How will you take account of any other special needs candidates may have?

What conclusions will you draw at the end of the application stage?

How will you document the personalisation of the application?

12. Personalisation of attainment of a competence-based qualification

Describe the assessment and decision-making process for the recognition of previously demonstrated competence.

How will a candidate in a competence-based qualification be able to influence the contents and timing of competence tests?
What arrangements will the organiser of competence-based qualifications provide for candidates in relation to any special needs due to their language and cultural background?

What kinds of arrangements will the organiser of competence-based qualifications provide for the candidate’s other special needs, if any?

How will personalisation of the attainment of a competence-based qualification be documented?

How will the personalisation document be kept up-to-date?

**Arrangement of competence tests**

13 a. Where will competence tests be arranged?

- How will you assess the suitability of a workplace or on-the-job learning place as a venue for competence tests?
- What criteria are used for selecting a workplace or on-the-job learning location?
- How will you ensure that competence tests are primarily conducted in genuine service and production situations in working life?
- Will you arrange competence tests at locations other than workplaces in the field? If you do, where and on what grounds?

13 b. Contents of competence tests

- Please provide a comprehensive and accurate description, by qualification module, of what kinds of practical duties the candidate will demonstrate the vocational skills required under the Qualification Requirements for a competence-based qualification. Provide a description of enough qualification modules to form an entire qualification.
- How will you link the competence tests to duties involved in the production and service process in the workplace?
- How and at what stage will the special qualifications possibly included in Qualification Requirements be completed?
- Which supplementary methods of demonstrating vocational skills will you use in order to ensure comprehensiveness and reliability?
- Which qualification modules (or vocational skills requirements in qualification modules)
  - will be demonstrated elsewhere than in duties performed in the workplace?
Assessment of competence tests

14. Selection of assessors and maintenance of assessment skills

- Describe the criteria for selecting tripartite assessors for the competence tests?
- How will you examine and solve any issues related to lack of impartiality, if any?
- How will you attend to providing general induction in the assessment tasks of individual assessors?
- How will you provide induction for assessors in the assessment of an individual competence test performance?
- How will you attend to maintaining and developing the assessment skills of assessors?

15. Assessment and documentation of performances in competence tests

- Which assessment methods will you use for assessing performances in competence tests and how will you apply them?
- How and at what stages do tripartite representatives participate in the assessment process and document their assessments?
- How will the candidate engage in self-assessment as part of the competence-based qualifications?

16. Preparing and documenting an assessment proposal

- How will assessors draw up their tripartite assessment proposal?
- How will you proceed if the assessors disagree?
- How will you document assessments of module completions and of the entire competence-based qualification?

17. Informing about the assessment, rectification procedure, retake of competence tests and assessment decision

- How will you inform individual candidates about the grounds of assessment in their cases?
- How and when will you inform candidates about the assessment rectification procedure?
- How will you inform candidates about the possibility of retaking a failed competence test?
- How will you inform candidates about the assessment decision taken by the Qualification Committee?
3.8 Qualification certificates

3.8.1 Submission of assessment proposals to the Qualification Committee

The organiser of competence-based qualifications is responsible for arranging the assessment of performances in competence tests and submitting an assessment proposal to the Qualification Committee in the manner agreed in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. Information must be submitted on all performances at competence tests. The Qualification Committees have prepared document templates for submitting assessment proposals and require that these templates be used.

In the main, summary data (candidates, qualification and its modules, grades applied for the vocational upper secondary qualification and approved qualification modules for further and specialist vocational qualifications) will be submitted with respect to competence test performances submitted for approval. If it is proposed that any performances be failed, the grounds for this must be provided. Provision of such information is particularly significant due to the possible assessment rectification procedure. In the case of failed performances, the related assessment criteria under the Qualification Requirements for competence-based qualifications must be mentioned. Certain Qualification Committees require that grounds be provided in the case of both passed and failed qualification modules, either to ensure the quality of competence test performances or because a candidate is entitled to demand the rectification of any assessment of a grade associated with the passing of a module of a vocational upper secondary qualification.

The Finnish National Board of Education has prepared a form that organisers of competence-based qualifications can use to send assessment proposals to Qualification Committees. The Qualification Committee will decide on whether to adopt this form. In accordance with the instructions on contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications (1/440/2012, section 9), the following must be recorded on the form: name of the candidate, date of birth, qualification, qualification modules with grades, the end date of the competence test and the time of the assessment meeting, a description of the competence test performance and an account of where the competence tests were arranged, as well as the assessors. In the case of failed performances, the organiser of competence-based qualifications must include the related grounds as an appendix.
The Finnish National Board of Education recommends that any assessment proposal and qualification certificates and certificates of completion of one or more qualification modules be submitted to the Qualification Committee at the same time. Certain Qualification Committees with large numbers of candidates require that assessment proposals be sent by qualification module, followed by a summary of the assessment proposals for each qualification module along with the certificates.

**Recognition of prior learning**

Assembled by the organiser of the competence-based qualification, the tripartite group of assessors submits any proposal for the recognition of prior learning to the Qualification Committee. Such a proposal should be made immediately after an application for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training have been submitted, since recognition of previously demonstrated skills influences the completion of a qualification. In addition to the proposal by the tripartite group of assessors, copies of the following optional documents are required for recognition of prior learning: 1) qualification certificate signed by the Qualification Committee or certificate for completing one or more modules of a qualification, 2) qualification certificate for vocational upper secondary education or certificate of resignation or 3) valid certificates for special qualifications included in the qualification to be completed (for instance, standard proficiency testing for welders, a hygiene proficiency certificate, hot work permit and drivers’ examinations). Recognition of prior learning must account of the fact that no general time limit can be set for previously acquired and demonstrated skills and knowledge, but their status can be verified by, say, requesting an account of the candidate’s work history prior to making a final decision. If necessary, the candidate must prove the correspondence of his or her competencies to the vocational skills requirements for the qualification in question. The Qualification Committee will recognise previously acquired and reliably demonstrated competencies by qualification module, as proposed by the tripartite group of assessors.

**3.8.2 Certificates of competence-based qualifications**

On the basis of the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998), the Finnish National Board of Education has issued a regulation (56/011/2009) on competence-based qualifications, preparatory training for competence-based qualifications and the information to be recorded in certificates issued on studies completed and in certificates of resignation. This regulation specifies the information to be included in these certificates.
The organiser of a competence-based qualification must ensure that the certificate has a suitably distinguished layout, is suitable for archival and can endure long periods of retention. In certificates issued for passing a competence-based qualification or module, the name of the Qualification Committee awarding the certificate must be mentioned before other contents. The name of the Qualification Committee and organiser of the qualification must also be recorded in the signature area. Furthermore, the organisation arranging the qualification may place its stamp under the signatures. In addition to the aforementioned identifiers, no other identifiers of the Qualification Committee or organiser of the qualification (e.g. logos within the paper on which the certificate is issued) may be visible.

The organiser of the competence-based qualification draw up the qualification certificates and certificates for completing one or more modules of a qualification, and is responsible for their compliance with the Qualification Requirements for competence-based qualifications and the regulations issued by the Finnish National Board of Education. The date entered in the certificates must be that of the Qualification Committee’s meeting. The signatory on behalf of the organiser of the competence-based qualification must be a person with official authorisation to sign for the organisation. The signature must be genuine and no printed signatures are accepted in certificates. The place of signature is not mentioned alongside a signature on a qualification certificate.

In a single postal consignment, the organiser of the competence-based qualification must send signed qualification certificates to the Qualification Committee, complete with the documents mentioned in the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications. The certificates and related documents must be delivered in the manner and within the schedule defined by the Qualification Committee. The Qualification Committee may also provide more detailed instructions for organisers of competence-based qualifications in their specific administrative branches. Once the Qualification Committee representative has signed the certificates, the secretary to the Qualification Committee sends them, complete with information on passed and failed test performances, to the organiser of the competence-based qualification. The organiser of the competence-based qualification is responsible for delivering the certificates and the related information to each candidate.

The Finnish National Board of Education recommends that candidates receive qualification certificates within two months of completing their last qualification module. These documents must be sent without delay. When sending documents, account must be taken of the summer holiday season and any change of term of Qualification Committees, since these may cause delays in receiving qualification certificates.
Certificates for completing one or more modules of a competence-based qualification are awarded upon request by candidates or if a candidate aims to complete only part of the qualification.

A certificate of completion of one or more modules of a competence-based qualification should also be awarded when an individual has not managed to pass all of qualification modules, regardless of several attempts, or when an individual has interrupted a qualification or if the completion of the entire qualification is prolonged.

**International certificate supplements**

A Certificate Supplement is a supplement for qualification certificates. It is intended for international use and is used in the same format in all EU/EEA countries. The Certificate Supplement provides basic information on the qualification completed, its level and the professional qualifications, skills and competence acquired.

The Finnish National Board of Education recommends that the organiser of the competence-based qualification issue a Certificate Supplement, printed in at least one foreign language, alongside the certificate of qualification to students who have completed a competence-based qualification.

The Certificate Supplement database of the Finnish National Europass Centre is available for browsing at www.europass.fi. All certificate supplements for upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications for international use can be printed out from this database. These supplements are available in Finnish, Swedish and English.

### 3.8.3 Diploma

An organiser of a competence-based qualification may order a diploma, subject to a charge, from the Finnish National Board of Education, for candidates who have completed a competence-based qualification. This diploma is signed by a representative of the Qualification Committee and the organiser of the competence-based qualification.

### 3.8.4 Certificate of vocational skills

An entry, approved by the Finnish National Board of Education, in a certificate of vocational skills constitutes certification of completion of a competence-based qualification and is comparable to a qualification certificate. A certificate of vocational skills is acquired and signed by the organiser of the competence-
based qualification. A certificate of vocational skills is subject to a charge for candidates who have completed a competence-based qualification.

### 3.9 Scholarship for qualified employees

A scholarship for qualified employees is awarded to any individual who, as a competence-based qualification, has completed an upper secondary vocational qualification, further vocational qualification or a specialist vocational qualification in accordance with the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998). The scholarship for qualified employees is a one-off compensation for completing a competence-based qualification. This scholarship cannot be granted for the completion of any other specialisation related to the same qualification. It is not granted on the basis of the updating or extension of a qualification module or for a previously completed qualification entitling the holder to a scholarship for qualified employees. The scholarship is granted and issued by the Education Fund. An organiser of a competence-based qualification should inform candidates about the scholarship for qualified employees, how to apply for and what the conditions are for receiving it.

In 2012, the amount of the scholarship was 366 euros. The scholarship is tax-free. The date on the qualification certificate is regarded as the date of completion of the qualification.

Adult students who are employees or self-employed may be eligible for an adult education allowance from the Education Fund for voluntary vocational studies.

### 3.10 Statistics

Statistics Finland and the Finnish National Board of Education compile statistical data on competence-based qualifications and the related preparatory training. Statistics Finland collects information for each calendar year, on new students in preparatory training for a competence-based qualification and candidates who have completed the qualification. Information is provided by all educational institutions and enterprises in the educational sector in which the student has attended preparatory training for a competence-based qualification or completed a competence-based qualification. At the beginning of each year, Statistics Finland sends a letter to organisations on the preceding statistical year. These statistics are completed in the autumn of the same year. Information is collected per capita. This enables the combination of information with other registers maintained by Statistics Finland. In this way, Statistics Finland produces statistics e.g. on individuals who have interrupted or passed their education, or who are in employment and further studies.
The Finnish National Board of Education collects information on the costs of education and performance for the purposes of allocating government transfers, and for the cost monitoring and assessment of education. Information on students and performance is collected on the statistical dates of 20 January and 20 September, and information on costs, income and performance is assembled in April. Education providers provide such information.

3.11 Good practices in information management and documents prepared when arranging competence-based qualifications and in the archiving of documents

Good practices in information management

The Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999) obliges authorities to comply with good practices in information management and to ensure that their employees have the knowledge they need on the publicity status of documents they handle and on practices to be followed when disclosing and processing information.

A high standard of procedure and high quality are integral to good practices in information management. Above all, the quality requirement applies to documents and information processed by the authorities. The required features include usability and availability, integrity and accuracy, and confidentiality. The quality of documents and information is ensured by establishing processes that support good practices in information management and taking the related requirements into account in any information systems used.

In addition to the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, organisers of competence-based qualifications must take account of other legislation applicable to information management, such as the Personal Data Act (523/1999) and the Archives Act (831/1994). For instance, the Personal Data Act includes provisions on matters such as the use of personal identity numbers and personal records, that apply to organisers of competence-based qualifications (e.g. a list of assessors used by the organiser of competence-based qualifications). The personal identity numbers of candidates may only be used for performing statutory duties. These include the creation of statistics on permission to provide education and training, the assessment of competence test performances and learning, apprenticeships, special needs education, qualification certificates,
certificates for completing one or more modules of a qualification, certificates of attendance for preparatory training for a competence-based qualification or apprenticeship training and information on study attainments.

**Documents prepared when arranging competence-based qualifications**

A large number of documents is prepared by organisers of competence-based qualifications in the course of arranging qualifications. These documents must be archived for future purposes, in case organisers of competence-based qualifications or candidates need to access them later. These documents include the following:

**Agreement**
- contract for arranging competence-based qualifications
- contact persons for the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications and persons responsible for each qualification
- plan for arranging competence-based qualifications, potential list of assessors
- examination by the Finnish National Board of Education of the preconditions for arranging competence-based qualifications, contract with the purchaser of training or qualification

**Personalisation**
- document on personalisation for documenting the personalisation process related to the application for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training, the completion of the qualification and the acquisition of the required vocational skills

**Documents prepared during competence tests**
- assessment forms
- assessment proposal for completing a qualification module, summary of completing the entire qualification, candidate’s self-assessment
- documents produced by the candidate, documents and vouchers related to rendering accounts for qualification fees

**Documents sent to the Qualification Committee, copies of which are retained in the archive of the organiser of competence-based qualifications**
- qualification certificate
- certificate for completing one or several modules of a qualification, assessment proposal for completing a module of a qualification
- summary sent to the Qualification Committee for completing the entire qualification
Documents related to preparatory training for a competence-based qualification

- permission to provide education and training granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture, agreement with the purchaser of training or qualification
- plan on acquiring required vocational skills, apprenticeship and individual study programme, individual education plan
- certificate of attendance of preparatory training for qualification and module of qualification
- certificate of attendance of apprenticeship training preparatory to a qualification and module of qualification
- information on study attainments.

Archiving and retaining of documents

The organiser of competence-based qualifications is responsible for archiving qualification certificates. The organiser of competence-based qualifications creates copies of signed qualification certificates and, if necessary, provides the candidate with a copy of these. The National Archive has issued a regulation (17.11.2003 KA 321/43/03) on the permanent archival of qualification certificates and certificates of completion of one or more modules of a qualification, unless the information is not stored in a study register.

The Finnish National Board of Education is not authorised to issue instructions or regulations on the document management or archival of individual organisers of competence-based qualifications. Documents prepared when arranging competence-based qualifications must be included as part of the organisation’s filing plan. By document category, the plan covers issues such as the retention times of documents, their places in the archive, and archiving responsibilities.

The organiser of competence-based qualifications is responsible for retaining documents prepared when arranging competence-based qualifications and during the personalisation process, for the required period of time. Documents concerning candidates are retained for as long as a qualification remains unattained. Once a qualification certificate or certificate of completion of one or more modules of a qualification is issued, and the period for applying for a rectification of an assessment is over or a request for rectification of assessment has been duly considered by the Qualification Committee, documents, with the exception of certificates, can be destroyed or returned to the candidate. Documents concerning the assessment of performance at competence tests must be retained to the extent that allows the performance of a new assessment,
if necessary. The Finnish National Board of Education recommends that the apprenticeship contract and the appended individual study plan and individual study plan be retained for a period of ten years, due to the provisions of the Act on the Financing of the Provision of Education and Culture.

Assessments of competence test performances and the personalisation document may be prepared in electronic format. Documents to be archived must be in paper format, including information on approval and updating, complete with signatures and dates.

**Confidential documents**

Organisers of competence-based qualifications must take account of the fact that some of the material generated when arranging competence-based qualifications must be kept secret. Such documentation includes documents on personalisation, the verbal assessment of candidates' personal characteristics, assessors' personal notes, assessment records, if any, and certain documents related to the execution of SORA unsuitability legislation. Section 24 of the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999) contains a list of the grounds for keeping documents secret: Of these, the following concern competence-based qualifications:

17: documents containing information on any business or professional secret of a public corporation

20: documents containing information on a private business or professional secret

22: documents containing information on an entrance examination or other examination or test

29: documents containing information on a psychological test or aptitude test, or the results thereof

30: documents on student welfare and exemptions from teaching, the test results of students and candidates and school diplomas and other documents containing a verbal assessment of the students personal characteristics

31: documents containing information on a secret telephone number given by a person.

In accordance with section 31 of the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, the period of secrecy for official documents is 25 years, unless otherwise provided. Should the required period of secrecy be longer or shorter, this must be indicated in the document alongside other markings concerning secrecy.
4 CONCEPTS OF THE COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATION SYSTEM
4 CONCEPTS OF THE COMPETENCE-BASED QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

Assessment criteria (assessment criterion in vocational upper secondary qualifications)
Assessment criteria define the grade given in vocational upper secondary qualifications and the standards of approved competence test performance applied in further and specialist vocational qualifications.

Assessment meeting
A meeting where assessors representing employers, employees and teachers and approved by the Qualification Committee prepare an assessment proposal for a qualification module, on the basis of comprehensive evaluation data, for the Qualification Committee.

Assessment proposal
A proposal, prepared by the tripartite group of assessors by qualification module, and submitted to the Qualification Committee for its consideration, based on comprehensive assessments of competence test performances.

Assessor
A person assessing a demonstration of vocational skills, i.e. a competence test performance.

Candidates in need of special support
A person who has an established need for special teaching and student welfare services on the basis of a disability, illness, impeded development, emotional disturbance or for some other reason.

Certificate of completion of one or more qualification modules
A certificate issued for the completion of one or more qualification modules of a vocational upper secondary qualification, further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification. Such a certificate is issued by the Qualification Committee upon the request of the candidate. The organiser of competence-based qualifications is responsible for the permanent retention of copies of signed certificates.
Certificate of vocational skills
A document approved by the Finnish National Board of Education, in which an entry regarding a competence-based qualification constitutes a certificate of completion of a competence-based qualification, comparable to a qualification certificate.

Competence-based qualification
A competence-based qualification is a vocational upper secondary qualification, further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification approved in working life and independent of the method of acquiring the required vocational skills, as referred to in the Vocational Education and Training Act. The vocational skills defined in the Qualification Requirements are demonstrated in competence tests. A competence-based qualification confers eligibility for further study for a higher education degree and general eligibility for further study at universities of applied sciences.

Competence-based qualification material
Material prepared by Qualification Committees, organisers of competence-based qualifications, education providers or ALVAR - Quality Assurance for competence-based tests, that may include instructions for candidates and assessors, assessment forms and instructions for demonstrating vocational skills. Qualification Committees decide on the use of competence-based qualification materials.

Competence test
An event or situation in which a candidate for a competence-based qualification demonstrates the vocational skills required in Qualification Requirements by module.

Competence test environment
A concept to be removed from competence-based Qualification Requirements, referring to a workplace or place of learning at work in which competence tests are arranged

Competence test performance
Demonstration, in a competence test by a candidate for a competence-based qualification, of the vocational skills required in Qualification Requirements
Contract for arranging competence-based qualifications
A contract concluded by the Qualification Committee, alongside an education provider or other organisation or foundation, on arranging competence-based qualifications.

Demonstration
This concept will be removed from the Qualification Requirements for a competence-based qualification and replaced with the competence test and competence test performance concepts.

Diploma
A diploma ordered by the organiser of a competence-based qualification from the Finnish National Board of Education, on behalf of candidates who have attained a competence-based qualification.

Document on personalisation
A document in accordance with the Finnish National Board of Education’s regulation on personalisation (43/011/2006), in which applying for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training, completion of the qualification and attainment of the required vocational skills are documented.

Education provider
A municipality, joint municipal authority, state enterprise and registered association or foundation holding permission granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture in providing vocational upper secondary education and training (L 630/1998, section 8) and/or preparatory training for a further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification and vocational further education and training (L 631/1998, section 4).

Evaluation data
Written and, if necessary, digital material compiled by qualification module, comprising comprehensive assessments of competence test performances and

External secretary
A person appointed by the Finnish National Board of Education under a proposal by the Qualification Committee, to manage secretarial duties on behalf of the Committee.
Form of educational provision
Education may be provided in the form of contact teaching, distance learning and multiform learning, apprenticeship training or otherwise at the workplace in connection with practical work duties (L 630/1998, section 15).

Identification of prior learning
A procedure for identifying the candidate’s previously acquired competencies through methods suitable for the field and based on personalisation of the process of applying for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training.

Individual study programme
A document, defined in the Vocational Education and Training Decree (811/1998, section 6) and prepared by the education provider, for candidates in preparatory training for a competence-based qualification. This document is provided as part of apprenticeship training for the purpose of individualising the process of attaining the required vocational skills.

National Education and Training Committee
An expert body in vocational education and training, appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture to monitor, assess and predict the development of education and training and skills and competencies required in working life.

Organiser of qualification
An education provider, in accordance with the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998, section 7(3)) or another corporation or foundation, which has concluded a contract with the Qualification Committee for arranging a certain qualification.

Permanent expert
A person appointed by the Finnish National Board of Education as a member of the Qualification Committee in order to strengthen the Committee’s expertise. A permanent expert has the right to be present and speak at Committee meetings, but has no voting rights.

Personalisation
An obligation set on the education provider to provide advice, guidance and other jointly agreed forms of support and services, planned and implemented for adults and with a customer focus, to help candidates apply for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory
training, and in completing the qualification and acquiring the required vocational skills.

Personal plan on arranging teaching
A document, specified in the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998, section 20) and prepared by the education provider on behalf of apprenticeship students in need of special support for the purpose of personalisation in acquiring the required vocational skills.

Plan for arranging competence-based qualifications
A plan prepared by the organiser of competence-based qualifications on arranging competence tests.

Preparatory training for a competence-based qualification
Training arranged as contact teaching, distance learning and multiform learning or apprenticeship training, during which the candidate acquires sufficient skills for passing competence tests related to a competence-based qualification or module thereof.

Qualification certificate
A certificate of completion of a vocational upper secondary qualification, further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification. The organiser of a competence-based qualification is responsible for the permanent retention of copies of signed qualification certificates.

Qualification Committee

Qualification fee
A qualification-specific fee charged to a candidate for a competence-based qualification in connection with registration for the qualification (in 2012, €58). The organiser of the qualification renders an account of the qualification fees to the Finnish National Board of Education.

Qualification module
A qualification module forms a section of the vocational qualification that can be separated from the natural work process into an independent and assessable component.
Qualification Requirements
A regulation issued by the Finnish National Board of Education, defining qualification modules, vocational skills requirements, assessment targets and criteria and methods of demonstrating vocational skills and specialisations, if any.

Qualification structure
A Decree issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture on further and specialist vocational qualifications that can be completed as competence-based qualifications. A separate decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture contains provisions on vocational upper secondary qualifications.

Recognition of prior learning
A decision made by the Qualification Committee on whether the candidate possesses the vocational skills required by the Qualification Requirements and on whether a qualification certificate or a certificate for completion of one or more qualification modules can be granted to the candidate.

Scholarship for qualified employee
A scholarship granted by the Education Fund to a candidate who has completed a vocational upper secondary qualification, further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification as a competence-based qualification.

Specialisation
Qualification requirements may be divided into two or more specialisations comprising one or more compulsory and voluntary qualification modules.

Specialist in competence-based qualifications
A specialist in competence-based qualifications is a person who has completed the training programme for specialists in competence-based qualifications, worth 25 credit units (previously, 15 credits) and approved by the Finnish National Board of Education.

Targets of assessment
Targets of assessment refer to the key competencies to which special attention is paid during assessment.
Tripartite
Tripartite representation under the competence-based qualification system refers to the representation of employers, employees and teachers in implementing the various stages of the competence-based qualification process and representation on the Qualification Committee.

Vocational adult education and training
Vocational adult education and training refers to vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications independent of the method of acquiring vocational skills and completed as competence-based qualifications, and the related preparatory training and vocational further education and training other than preparatory training for a competence-based qualification.

Vocational skills requirement
Qualification modules contain one or several vocational skills requirements formed on the basis of task and skill areas in working life.
Appendix 1


In accordance with a decision of Parliament the following is enacted:

Chapter 1
Scope of application and objectives

Section 1
Definition and ration to other provisions

For the purposes of this Act, vocational adult education means vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications or specialist vocational qualifications independent of the method of acquiring the required vocational skills and completed as competence-based qualifications, as well as the related preparatory training and vocational further education and training other than preparatory training for a competence-based qualification.


The provisions laid down in the Polytechnics Act (351/2003) and Universities Act (645/1997) shall apply to studies completed in universities of applied science and universities. (9.12.2005/1013)

Vocational adult education, referred to above in section 1(1) may be provided as self-motivated education, personnel training and labour market training.

In addition, the provisions of this Act shall apply to working life development and service activities implemented during the course of vocational adult education. This refers to competence development services provided for enterprises and public bodies, small enterprises in particular. (9.12.2005/1013)

The Universities Act 645/1997 was repealed by the Act on the entry into force of the Universities Act 559/2009.
Section 2
Objective

The objective of this Act is to maintain and enhance the vocational skills of the adult population, to provide students with the skills required for engaging in self-employment, to develop working life and promote employment, and to support life-long learning.

A further objective of this Act is to promote the completion of qualifications or modules thereof.

Section 3
Contacts with working life

Qualifications, education and training shall take particular account of the needs of working life. Competence-based qualifications must be planned and arranged in cooperation with trade, industry and other sectors of working life.

Chapter 2
Provision of education and arranging of qualifications

Section 4
Education providers

The Ministry of Education and Culture may grant a municipality, federation of municipalities, a registered association or foundation or a state enterprise permission to provide preparatory training for a further vocational qualification and specialist vocational qualification and vocational further education and training. Provisions on granting permission to provide preparatory training for a vocational upper secondary qualification completed as a competence-based qualification are laid down in section 9 of the Vocational Education and Training Act. (12.8.2011/952)

Insofar as decided by the Ministry, education and training referred to in this Act may also be provided in a state educational institution.

Education and training referred to in this Act is provided in vocational adult education centres, national specialised vocational education and training institutions, other educational institutions, and in the form of apprenticeship training. Education and training may also be provided by a vocational special education institution providing vocational further education and training mainly required for operational purposes by the education provider or a member organisation.
Section 5

Permission to provide education and training

A prerequisite for granting the permission referred to above in section 4 is that the education and training is necessary and that the applicant has the necessary vocational and economic preconditions for providing education and training in the appropriate manner. Education and training must not be provided in pursuit of economic gain.

The permission defines the educational task, including the necessary provisions on the language of tuition, the subjects taught, the numbers of student-workyears required for preparatory training leading to competence-based qualifications and for other vocational further education and training and apprenticeships, and special education and training tasks, as well as provisions on working life development and service tasks and other issues related to the provision of education and training and arranging qualifications. (9.12.2005/1013)

The Ministry of Education and Culture decides on amendments to any permission to provide education and training. The Ministry may, without an application to do so, alter any training task and other provisions if the scope of education on offer significantly deviates from perceived educational needs. The Ministry may, without an application to do so, alter the permission to provide education and training with respect to the related number of student-workyears or apprenticeships, if the education provider has provided substantially less education than defined in the permission. The Ministry of Education and Culture may cancel the permission to provide education and training if further education and training is no longer provided or the education and training does not meet the requirements otherwise set in subsection 1 for granting such a permission, or if the training and education is otherwise provided contrary to this Act or the provisions issued under it. Before cancelling the permission, the Ministry of Education and Culture shall, if necessary, provide the education provider with an opportunity to eliminate the fault in question. (12.8.2011/952)

The Ministry decides on the provision of education and termination of educational activities at state educational institutions, in accordance with the provisions laid down in subsections 1–3, as applicable.

Section 6 (9.12.2005/1013)

Section 7 (9.12.2005/1013)

Qualification Committees

Qualification Committees working under the Finnish National Board of Education are responsible for the organisation and supervision of competence-based qualifications.

The Finnish National Board of Education decides on the scope of activities and the regions of Qualification Committees and appoints these Committees for a maximum period of three years at a time. A maximum of nine members shall be appointed to each Qualification Committee. These members shall represent employers, employees, teachers, and if self-employment is common in the sector, independent self-employed professionals. Further provisions regarding the appointment of Qualification Committees, their composition and decision-making shall be issued by Government decree.

The Qualification Committee shall agree on arranging competence-based qualifications with the education providers referred to in section 4, and, if necessary, with other such organisations and foundations that have sufficient expertise for arranging competence-based qualifications. The Qualification Committee shall conclude contracts so as to ensure the availability of a sufficient number of competence tests for candidates. In addition, attention shall be paid to ensuring that fees remain moderate for both candidates and training providers. Further provisions regarding the content of contracts on arranging competence-based qualifications shall be issued by Government decree.

Further provisions regarding the tasks of Qualification Committees may be issued by Government decree. The Finnish National Board of Education may also issue provisions on further defining the practical arrangement of competence-based qualifications for Qualification Committees. Qualification Committee members perform their duties subject to liability for acts in public office. With regard to the disqualification of Qualification Committee members, the provisions laid down in sections 27–29 of the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) shall apply. The Finnish National Board of Education decides on the remuneration of Qualification Committee members and manages the Qualification Committee’s payment transfers, bookkeeping and archives.

Section 7 a (9.12.2005/1013)

Issuance of qualification certificates and submission of information

The Qualification Committee will issue a qualification certificate to any candidate who passes all of the qualification modules. Certificate for passing one qualification module will be issued on request. Further provisions regarding the contents of certificates and their signature shall be issued by Government decree.
The Qualification Committee shall provide the educational administration authorities with the information they require on contracts for arranging qualifications, candidates for qualifications and qualification certificates issued.

Chapter 3  
Teaching

Section 8 (9.12.2005/1013)  
Preparatory training for a competence-based qualification, personalisation and completion of qualification

The education provider will decide on the contents and provision of preparatory training for a competence-based qualification, in accordance with the Qualification Requirements referred to in section 13.

Those participating in preparatory training for a competence-based qualification must be provided with the opportunity to complete a competence test as part of the training.

The education provider shall attend to personalisation in applying for a competence-based qualifications and the related preparatory training, completing the qualification and acquisition of the required vocational skills. The Finnish National Board of Education may issue further provisions regarding personalisation.

The education provider referred to in section 7(3) of this Act and another organisation or foundation referred to in said provision are obliged, in the manner agreed with the Qualification Committee, to arrange opportunities for completing competence-based Qualifications, even without the related preparatory training. Possibilities for completing a competence-based qualification or a module thereof shall also be arranged for individuals to whom an authority responsible for the recognition of professional qualifications has issued a recognition decision in accordance with section 13(2) of the Act on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (1093/2007), in which the applicant has been required to undertake compensatory measures referred to in said Act. (30.11.2007/1097)

Section 9 (9.12.2005/1013)  
Vocational further education and training

The education provider shall decide on the contents, scope and provision of any vocational further education and training other than that referred to in section 8.
Section 10 (9.12.2005/1013)
Reference provision regarding teaching

In addition, the following provisions on teaching under the Vocational Education and Training Act shall apply to training and education referred to in this Act:
1) provisions in section 11 regarding the teaching language;
2) provisions in section 17 regarding apprenticeship training;
3) provisions in section 18 regarding the application of legislative provisions regarding employees to apprenticeship training;
4) provisions in section 19 regarding student’s occupational safety;
5) provisions in section 22 regarding publicity issues related to teaching; and
6) provisions in section 23 regarding trials.

Section 11 (12.8.2011/952)
Reference provision regarding the rights and obligations of students

In addition, the following provisions regarding the rights and obligations of students under the Vocational Education and Training Act shall apply to training and education referred to by the Act:
1) provisions in section 26(1) regarding the free right to apply for vocational education and training, excluding personnel training;
2) provisions in section 27(3) and (5) regarding the criteria for student admission;
3) provisions in section 27 a regarding accessibility and preconditions for student admission;
4) provisions in section 27 b regarding access to information related to student admission;
5) provisions in section 28 regarding a safe study environment;
6) provisions in section 29 regarding the right to receive teaching;
7) provisions in section 30 regarding the recognition of previous studies, as applicable;
8) provisions in the second sentence of section 31(2) regarding provisions on when a student can be regarded as having resigned;
9) provisions in section 32 regarding cancellation of study entitlement;
10) provisions in section 32 a regarding access to information related to cancellation of study entitlement;
11) provisions in section 32 b regarding the restoration of study entitlement;
12) provisions in section 33 regarding a student’s secrecy obligation;
13) provisions in section 34 regarding a student’s obligations;
14) provisions in section 34 a regarding drug testing;
15) provisions in section 35 regarding disciplinary measures taken against a student;
16) provisions in section 35 a regarding procedures in a matter related to the cancellation and restoration of study entitlement and in disciplinary matters;
17) provisions in section 35 b regarding the removal of a disruptive student who endangers safety;
18) provisions in section 35 c regarding the relationship of a disciplinary procedure to a charge pending and a decision of a court of law;
19) provisions in section 36 regarding hearing of students;
20) provisions in section 37 a regarding student welfare;
21) provisions in section 39 regarding student benefits in apprenticeship training.

Chapter 4
Qualifications independent of the method of acquiring vocational skills

Section 12
Competence-based qualifications

Vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications can be completed as competence-based qualifications, independent of the method of acquiring vocational skills.

Skills and knowledge required for achieving vocational skills are demonstrated in the achievement of a vocational upper secondary qualification. Vocational skills required from a professional employee in the field are demonstrated in the attainment of a further vocational qualification. Command of the most demanding work tasks in the field is demonstrated in the attainment of a specialist vocational qualification. A vocational upper secondary qualification and a further vocational qualification are categorised based on the qualification level referred to in section 6(1)(2) of the Act on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, and a specialist vocational qualification on the level referred to in paragraph 3. (30.11.2007/1097)

The titles of further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications may only be used with respect to qualifications completed in compliance with this Act. The titles of vocational upper secondary qualifications may also be used for further vocational qualifications completed as competence-based qualifications.
Section 13 (12.8.2011/952)
Deciding on qualifications and the related Qualification Requirements

Provisions regarding qualifications that can be completed as competence-based qualifications will be issued by decree by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Qualification Requirements define the vocational skills required for the qualification, qualification modules and any specialisations they form, the methods employed in demonstrating vocational skills and the general criteria for qualification assessment. The Finnish National Board of Education decides on Qualification Requirements. In connection with Qualification Requirements, the Finnish National Board of Education decides on requirements concerning the state of health related for qualifications, if necessary.

Chapter 5
Miscellaneous provisions

Section 13 a (12.8.2011/952)
Informing about education and training

The education provider shall ensure that information on education and training and applying for education and training is generally available. If necessary, further provisions on informing about education and training will be issued by Ministry of Education and Culture decree. The provisions laid down in this section shall not apply to personnel training.

Section 14
Service and development activities

As necessary, service and development activities in the field may be included in vocational further education and training.

Section 15 (24.1.2003/35)
Evaluation of education and training

Education and training are evaluated in order to support the development of education and training and to improve the preconditions for learning.

The education provider shall evaluate the education and training it provides and its efficiency, and participate in an external evaluation of its activities.

For the purposes of external evaluation, an Education Evaluation Council works as an independent expert body alongside the Ministry of Education

Further provisions on evaluation and its development will be issued by Government Decree.

Section 16
Application of certain provisions in the Vocational Education and Training Act

In addition, the following provisions of the Vocational Education and Training Act shall apply to education and training and qualifications referred to in this Act:
1) provisions in section 10 regarding cooperation and the acquisition of education and training;
2) provisions in section 25(1) and (3) regarding student evaluation; (15.7.2005/602)
3) provisions in section 40 regarding personnel;
4) provisions in section 42 regarding the processing of sensitive information; (12.8.2011/952)
5) provisions in section 43 regarding publicity and the right to access information; (12.8.2011/952)
6) provisions in section 44 regarding appeals;
6 a) provisions in section 25 c regarding rectification of assessments, however so that the rectification of an assessment for a competence-based qualification and a module thereof is decided on by the Qualification Committee referred to in section 7 of this Act; (7) provisions in section 47 regarding fees collected from students; and
8) provisions in section 48 regarding education provided as a service activity subject to a fee.

Section 17 (9.12.2005/1013)
Fees charged for studying and qualifications

The provisions laid down in section 37(1) of the Vocational Education and Training Act shall apply to tuition fees in preparatory training for a vocational upper secondary qualification completed as a competence-based qualification.
With respect to preparatory training for a further vocational qualification and a specialist vocational qualification, and other further education and training, a moderate tuition fee may be payable by students. This fee covers the costs of training and education, and in preparatory training for a qualification, the costs incurred from arranging the qualification.

Candidates for a competence-based qualification will be charged a qualification fee. The qualification fee shall be determined in such a way that the fees correspond to the costs incurred from activities related to qualifications.

A candidate may be charged a moderate fee for the arrangement of a further vocational qualification and a specialist vocational qualification, if the candidate completes the qualification without the related preparatory training.

Section 17 a (9.12.2005/1013)

*Payment of qualification fees and rendering of accounts*

The organiser of a qualification collects the qualification fee while accepting entries for a competence-based qualification and renders the related accounts to the Finnish National Board of Education. If necessary, the Finnish National Board of Education issues regulations concerning the rendering of accounts.

Section 18

*Financing*

The provisions laid down in the Act on the Financing of Education and Culture (635/1998) shall apply to financing of the operating costs of education and training referred to in this Act, and the costs of competence-based qualifications completed without the related preparatory training. (9.12.2005/1013)

*Subsection 2 is repealed by Act 22.12.2005/1073.*

Project and development subsidies may be granted to the provider of vocational further education and training for managing the working life development and service task mentioned in the permission to provide education and training, and other development subsidies within the framework of appropriations included in the State budget. (9.12.2005/1013)


Section 19

*Further provisions*

Further provisions on the implementation of the present Act will be given by decree, if necessary.
Chapter 6
Transitional provisions and entry into force

Section 20
Entry into force

This Act enters into force on 1 January 1999.

This Act repeals:
1) the Act on vocational adult education centres and national specialised vocational education and training institutions (laki ammatillisista aikuiskoulutuskeskuksista ja valtakunnallisista erikoisopillaitoksista 760/1990), issued on 31 August 1990, with amendments; and
2) the Further vocational qualification act (ammattitutkintolaki 306/1994), issued on 29 April 1994. Measures necessary to the implementation of this Act may be undertaken before the Act’s entry into force.

Section 21
Application of provisions and decisions issued under the repealed acts

Provisions and contracts regarding qualifications, issued under the Acts referred to above in section 20(2), shall remain valid until decisions and agreements on them have been made in accordance with this Act.

Bodies appointed under the Acts referred to above in section 20(2) shall continue until the end of their term of office, unless otherwise decided by the education provider.

Section 22
Transitional provision concerning permission to provide education and training

When this Act enters into force, the bodies maintaining the educational institutions operating under the Acts referred to above in section 20(2) shall continue as education providers referred to in this Act. An education provider who, when this Act entered into force, maintained a vocational institution, an adult education centre or study centre, will retain the right to provide vocational further education and training. Maintenance permissions granted under the Acts referred to above in section 20(2) will be transformed into permissions to provide education and training upon the entry into force of this Act. If necessary, the Ministry of Education and Culture will decide on modifying the provisions included in the permissions to comply with this Act. (12.8.2011/952)
Section 23  
*Transitional provision concerning personnel*

Public servants, employees and untenured teachers of educational institutions operating under the Acts referred to above in section 20(2), and persons working in administrational duties of apprenticeship training, will continue in their positions upon the entry into force of this Act.

Section 24  
*Transitional provision concerning apprenticeship training*

Apprenticeship training that commenced before the entry into force of this Act will be completed in accordance with provisions regarding apprenticeship training in force upon the entry into force of this Act.  
15.7.2005/602)
Appendix 2


As presented by the Minister of Education, the following is enacted under the Vocational Education and Training Act issued on 21 August 1998 (631/1998):

Section 1 (29.12.2005/1202)

Section 1 was repealed by Decree 29.12.2005/1202.

Section 2 (29.12.2005/1202)
Appointment of Qualification Committees, their composition and decision-making

The majority of Qualification Committee members shall be representatives of employers, employees and independent self-employed professionals. The numbers of employers’ and employees’ representatives shall be equal. If a Qualification Committee member resigns before the end of the term of office, a new member shall be appointed to replace him or her for the remaining term of office.

The Qualification Committee shall select a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson among its members, and a secretary for the duration of the Qualification Committee’s term of office. Upon the Qualification Committee’s proposal, the Finnish National Board of Education may appoint an external secretary for the Qualification Committee. If necessary, permanent experts may be appointed to the Qualification Committee.

The Chairperson, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall convene the meeting of the Qualification Committee. The Qualification Committee shall be considered quorate when the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson and at least half of other members are present. Matters will be decided by a simple majority of votes. In the event of a tied vote, the vote cast by the Chairperson shall be decisive. In the event of a tie in an election of officials, lots will be drawn in order to arrive at a decision.
Section 3 (29.12.2005/1202)

Development of the qualification system

In addition to the tasks mentioned in the Vocational Education and Training Act (631/1998), the Qualification Committee's task is to monitor the functioning of the competence-based qualification system within its field and, if necessary, prepare proposals for the system's development.

Section 4 (29.12.2005/1202)

Section 4 was repealed by Decree 29.12.2005/1202.

Section 5 (29.12.2005/1202)

Contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications

At least the following shall be agreed in contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications:

1) qualifications to which the contract applies;
2) qualification languages;
3) arrangements for competence tests;
4) assessors of competence test performances;
5) the possibility to complete a competence-based qualification without the related preparatory training;
6) the fees to be collected from candidates participating in competence tests without the related preparatory training
7) providing candidates with information and advice regarding the completion of qualifications and costs incurred due to competence tests;
8) the procedures for solving disputes concerning the contract; and
9) the validity of the contract, its cancellation and termination. The Finnish National Board of Education shall assist Qualification Committees in examining educational institutions' preconditions for arranging qualifications.

Section 6 (29.12.2005/1202)

Qualification certificates

The qualification certificate issued by the Qualification Committee shall include the following information:

1) the qualification and qualification title, if any, and specialisation;
2) detailed information on the Qualification Requirements decided on by the Finnish National Board of Education;
3) the name of the Qualification Committee that issued the certificate;
4) the candidate’s personal information;
5) qualification modules and their assessment;
6) the date of issue of the certificate;
7) assessment scale; and
8) eligibility for further studies based on the qualification.

A certificate issued for completing a module of the qualification must include the information listed in subsection 1(1–7).

The qualification certificate is signed by a representative of the Qualification Committee and the organiser of the qualification. An entry in a certificate of vocational skills, approved by the Finnish National Board of Education, constitutes a certificate of completion of a competence-based qualification, comparable to a qualification certificate.

Section 7
Assessment of competence test performances

The assessment of vocational upper secondary qualifications completed as competence-based qualifications must comply with the assessment scale of vocational upper secondary education and training. Further vocational and specialist vocational qualifications will be assessed on the scale pass/fail.

Subsection 2 is repealed by Act 18.6.2003/563.

Section 8 (15.9.2011/1033)
Cancellation of study entitlement

Section 11(9) of the Vocational Adult Education Act regarding the cancellation of study entitlement shall apply to the following preparatory training for further vocational or specialist vocational qualifications:
1) in humanities and education, Qualification in Special Needs Instruction for Children and Young People;
2) in technology and transport, Further Qualification for Vehicle Crane Operators, Further Qualification for Bus Drivers, Further Qualification in Timber Lorry Transport, Further Qualification for Drivers of Articulated Vehicles, Specialist Qualification for Driving Instructors and Further Qualification in Infrastructure Construction;
3) in natural resources and the environment, Further Qualification for Forest Machine Operators and Specialist Qualification for Forest Machine Operators;
4) in social and health care and physical education, Further Qualification and Specialist Vocational Qualification in morning and afternoon activity instruction for schoolchildren,
Further Qualification for Child Minders, Further Qualification for Chiropodists, Further Qualification in Orthopaedic Casting, Further Qualification for Obduction Preparators, Specialist Qualification in Orthopaedic Casting, Specialist Qualification in Psychiatric Care, Further and Specialist Qualification in Care for the Disabled, Further Qualification in Substance Abuse Welfare Work, Specialist Qualification in Skills Instruction for the Visually Impaired, Specialist Qualification in Interpreting Services for People with Speech Defects, Specialist Qualification in Employment Training,

Specialist Qualification in Care for the Elderly, Further Qualification for Masseurs/Masseuses

and Specialist Qualification for Masseurs/Masseuses, Further Qualification in Physical Education and Further and Specialist Qualification in Coaching.

Section 9

Apprenticeship training

The provisions laid down in the Vocational Education and Training Decree apply to apprenticeship training.

Section 10

Entry into force

This Decree enters into force on 1 January 1999. Measures necessary for the implementation of this Decree may be undertaken before the Decree’s entry into force.
## APPENDIX 3

### FILING PLAN

#### QUALIFICATION COMMITTEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of document</th>
<th>Registration</th>
<th>Filling order</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 DOCUMENTS CONCERNING PREPARATIONS FOR APPOINTING A COMMITTEE</td>
<td>FNBE register</td>
<td>chronological order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents concerning preparations for appointing a committee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 DOCUMENTS CONCERNING COMPOSITION AND TASK</td>
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<tr>
<td>The decision to appoint a committee, changes in membership, decisions on extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 MEETING DOCUMENTS</td>
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<td>Summons to meetings with appendices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Records of the committee with appendices</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 CORRESPONDENCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requests for statements, statements and other important correspondence</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 WORKING MATERIAL</td>
<td>chronological order by organiser of qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summaries of assessment proposals</td>
<td>chronological order by organiser of qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications</td>
<td>in alphabetical order, by name of the organiser of the qualification and in chronological order</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Plans for arranging competence-based qualifications (appendix)</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Contact persons for contracts for arranging competence-based qualifications and persons responsible for each qualification (appendix)</td>
<td>in alphabetical order, by name of the organiser of the qualification and in chronological order</td>
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<td>5 ACCOUNT DOCUMENTS AND DOCUMENTS ON REMUNERATIONS</td>
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<td>Vouchers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remuneration vouchers (meeting attendance allowance bills)</td>
<td>Order of remuneration vouchers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility for archiving</td>
<td>Retention period</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>FNBE</td>
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<td>The Finnish National Board of Education enters documents related to preparations for the appointment of a committee in its records and archives such documents.</td>
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<td>The Finnish National Board of Education enters documents related to preparations for the appointment of a committee and its composition in its records and archives such documents. All matters concerning composition will be entered under the same record number.</td>
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<td>FNBE</td>
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APPENDIX 4

Individuals in need of special support as candidates for competence-based qualifications

At various stages of personalisation, equal opportunities shall be ensured for candidates in need of special support, in order to help them complete a qualification and acquire the required vocational skills, education and training. Various factors hampering or preventing the completion of qualifications and studying must be taken into account at the various stages of work towards attaining the qualification. The candidate must be provided with the special instruction, support services and special arrangements necessary to acquiring the required vocational skills and completing a competence-based qualification, regardless of any learning difficulties, illnesses or disabilities. With the help of personalisation, candidates can be provided with the best possible conditions for demonstrating skills in competence tests, without adjusting the vocational skills requirements.

Application for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training

When an individual in need of special support engages in attaining a competence-based qualification, the education provider will individualise the application for the qualification and the related preparatory training, the completion of the qualification and attainment of the required vocational skills.

When applying to complete a qualification, the individual in question and the education provider must jointly examine the individual's prior skills and the type of special support he or she needs, based on a range of examination methods. An individual may need support due to learning difficulties, or an illness or disability may hamper the acquisition of the required vocational skills or the demonstration of vocational skills in competence tests.

At the application stage, the following shall also be examined: the individual's strengths and special competence areas, concepts and experiences of learning and visions of oneself as a learner, alongside the competence-based qualification and form of educational provision suitable for the candidate in question. If the individual is advised to complete a vocational upper secondary qualification, a decision must also be taken as to whether the vocational upper secondary qualification should be completed during vocational upper secondary education and training, or as a competence-based qualification.
During the personalisation process related to applying for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training, the following must be ascertained:

- The competence-based qualification suitable for the candidate
- In cases where it has been established that the student needs special teaching and support from student welfare services due to a disability, illness, impeded development, emotional disturbance or for some other reason, teaching will be provided in the form of special needs education.

In addition to the above, on the basis of identifying prior learning, the following will be assessed:

- which parts of the competence already demonstrated on the basis of the documents presented can be submitted for recognition
- whether, on the basis of the skills already attained, the person can be directly guided towards completing a qualification suitable for him or her, a module or modules of it, or
- whether the person should be advised to attain the vocational skills still required.

If the person concerned is a student with special needs in preparatory training for a competence-based qualification, the need for special support measures will be examined in connection with the application for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training (Finnish National Board of Education FNBE 43/011/2006, section 2). This need will be recorded in the personalisation documentation. In apprenticeship training preparatory to a competence-based qualification, an individual educational plan will be prepared for students with special needs. This will be based on the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998, section 17(3)), which is even applicable to vocational adult education in accordance with the reference provision (631/1998, section 10).

For a candidate receiving special education, the individual education plan and the personalisation document constitute the overall individual plan and contract. These documents shall include the planned and implemented special support services, guidance and the required special personalisation arrangements.
Completing a competence-based qualification

In the case of competence-based qualifications, the same vocational skills requirements will be applied to candidates in need of special support as to other candidates. Vocational skills requirements, targets of assessment and criteria will not be adapted when completing a competence-based qualification and during the assessment of competence test performances. They will remain the same for all candidates. On the other hand, the provider of preparatory training for a competence-based qualification can provide the candidate with multiple types of support during preparation for the competence test. In many cases, where the student needs additional support, special arrangements facilitate the demonstration of the competencies and vocational skills stipulated under the Qualification Requirements in competence tests.

The special support required by the candidate is agreed in advance as part of the personalisation process. The need for special support must be recognised when planning competence tests and selecting the workplace or place of learning-at-work in which the competence tests are arranged. Special support measures required in competence tests are planned in cooperation with the organiser of the competence-based qualification, candidate and working life representative. If the competence test cannot be arranged in the workplace or place of learning-at-work, it must be separately agreed with the Qualification Committee in the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications, which is appended to the related contract.

Before commencing with the competence test, steps must be taken to ensure that the candidate understands the practices, instructions and provisions related to the test. Instructions related to competence tests must pay particular attention to making vocational skill demonstration methods, vocational skills requirements, and the targets and criteria of assessment as transparent and clear as possible. In addition, various support materials, such as plain language texts, pictures, drawings, models and aids can be used in competence tests. However, the organiser of the qualification must bear in mind that the candidate must demonstrate his or her skills independently, whether he or she is attaining further vocational qualifications or specialist vocational qualifications. Competence test performances in vocational upper secondary qualifications can be taken under instruction, but this may influence the grade awarded.

Within the framework of the Qualification Requirements, additional time may be provided in competence tests for the planning of tasks and any supplementary test performances. Practical tasks at work must be performed at the speed required for work assignments, as defined in the competence-based Qualifi-
cation Requirements. Possible written modules forming part of a competence test performance and included in the competence-based qualification can be partly or wholly replaced with oral performances, if so justified in light of the candidate’s ability to function. However, an oral performance cannot replace documents mentioned by name in the Qualification Requirements and which must be prepared during an approved competence test performance (e.g. a work plan, care plan and offer).

Assessors of competence tests must be inducted in how to take account of the special support and guidance mentioned in the personalisation document. Vocational skills must be assessed so that the support does not affect the candidate’s performance in a negative way.

**Acquiring the required vocational skills**

When planning and implementing preparatory training for a competence-based qualification, the education provider shall recognise and take account of any special need for support affecting the student’s studies or his or her completion of the qualification. The education provider determines the type of special teaching and student welfare services provided during preparatory training in addition to general teaching and student welfare services available for all.

The following must be entered in the individual education plan:
1) the qualification to be attained, the competence-based qualification requirements to be followed during teaching and the individual education plan prepared for the student
2) the grounds for providing teaching to the student in the form of special needs education
3) what special teaching and student welfare services, as required for the studies, are provided during teaching and related activities and
4) which other individual service and support measures are provided for the student.

During the personalisation process, attention must be paid to the development of various strategies and learning styles related to learning, and steps must be taken to ensure that sufficient special guidance and support are provided. In addition, the required special arrangements related to preparatory training can be agreed on if necessary. Adults in need of special support have often already discovered the methods most suitable for them of learning and solving problems that impede learning. Use should be made of this information when planning special support measures.
During personalisation, flexible account shall be taken of issues such as the following: ensuring that the most suitable forms of education, learning and learning environment are applied; use of diverse and varying learning and assessment methods; the clarity of teaching and study materials; making suitable allowance for the time required to attain skills; and ensuring the quality and quantity of the special support and guidance services required. In addition, personalisation must involve fostering the individual’s strengths in identifying the best ways of acquiring vocational skills.
APPENDIX 5

Immigrants as candidates for competence-based qualifications

At the various stages of personalisation, equal opportunities must be ensured for candidates in need of additional support in attaining a qualification and the required vocational skills, education and training. Account must be taken of various factors hampering or preventing attainment of the qualification and studies, such as inadequate language skills. In such cases, the candidate must be provided with the special instruction, support services and special arrangements required for the attainment of the required vocational skills and completion of a competence-based qualification, regardless of the individual’s language and cultural background. Through personalisation, candidates can be provided with the best possible conditions for demonstrating skills in competence tests, without adjusting the vocational skills requirements.

Application for competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training

At the application stage, like other candidates immigrants will select a suitable qualification or module together with, say, the education provider, employer or purchaser of the course or qualification. In doing so, the applicant must give due consideration to his or her current competencies and to those still required in order to complete the qualification. It must also be ensured that the candidate has understood the principles and practices involved in the competence-based qualification system. Outlook on learning and teaching are culture and value-related concepts. The concepts of life-long, continuous learning, teamwork skills, planning skills, an autonomous approach, active knowledge acquisition and flexible processing of information are key in vocational adult education and training.

The possibility of attaining a competence-based qualification should be introduced during the early stages of integration and as part of any initial mapping performed in integration training. Many countries do not have a system comparable to the competence-based qualification system. Immigrants must be informed of the possibility to gain a vocational qualification during adulthood as this will boost their motivation to study and assist in setting goals for language training.
When an individual applies for a competence-based qualification and the related preparatory training, he or she is tested in order to identify the most suitable competence-based qualification. Once the candidate’s skills have been identified, a proposal can be formed on the basis of the documents he or she has provided for the recognition of the demonstrated competencies. This proposal also outlines the extent to which the individual can be guided directly towards the attainment of a qualification or individual modules suitable for him or her, or the extent to which the individual needs to acquire the required vocational skills.

During admission and aptitude tests, it should be borne in mind that testing methods are usually intended for persons whose native language is that in which the testing is conducted. Account should be taken of this when admitting students with an immigrant background. In addition, it should be borne in mind that different areas of Finnish language skills can develop at different rates. If a person speaks the language fluently, this is no guarantee of him or her being able to produce a fluent written text. An admission and aptitude test should not be confused with a language test that merely assesses the individual’s general language proficiency rather than his or her vocational capabilities.

Special attention should be paid to the identification and recognition of competencies in the case of immigrant students, since their skills, education and work experience is are of foreign origin in many cases. Further information on recognising vocational qualifications and international comparison of qualifications is available at http://www.oph.fi/english/services/ recognition.

**Completing a competence-based qualification**

In the case of competence-based qualifications, the same vocational skills requirements apply to immigrants and representatives of different language and cultural groups as to other candidates. Vocational skills must be assessed in such a way that any deficiencies in language skills do not have a negative effect on the candidate’s performance. If the qualification language is not the student’s native language, he or she must be proficient enough in Finnish or Swedish to understand instructions and provisions related to the competence test when these are presented clearly. Various support materials can be used to assist in demonstrating vocational skills and assessing competence test performances if the candidate’s language skills are insufficient. Likewise, if necessary the candidate can provide an oral demonstration in place of the written sections of the test, if the Qualification Requirements so permit. If the Qualification Requirements so permit, during competence tests additional time can be allocated to the planning of tasks and any written modules. Otherwise, work-related practical tasks must be performed at the speed required by the work assignments, as defined in the competence-based Qualification Requirements.
Any need for support must be identified and support measures planned in advance and in collaboration with the organiser of the competence-based qualification, the working life representative and the candidate. If necessary, competence test assessors should be trained to take account of how language and cultural factors influence communication between individuals.

Before the competence test is begun, steps should be taken to ensure that the candidate understands the practices, instructions and provisions related to the competence test. Instructions for competence tests should pay particular attention to ensuring the greatest possible clarity in vocational skill demonstrations, vocational skill requirements, and assessment criteria and targets. In addition, various support materials, such as plain language texts, pictures, drawings, models and aids can be used in competence tests, in accordance with the Qualification Requirements. However, the organiser of the qualification must bear in mind that, in the case of further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications, the candidate must demonstrate his or her skills independently in accordance with the Qualification Requirements. Competence tests for vocational upper secondary qualifications can be taken under instruction insofar as provided by the Qualification Requirements.

Within the framework of the Qualification Requirements, additional time may be provided in competence tests for the planning of tasks and any supplementary test performances. Practical, work-based tasks must be performed within the time required by work assignments, as defined in the competence-based Qualification Requirements. Possible written modules complementing the competence test performance and contributing towards the competence-based qualification can be partly or wholly replaced with an oral performance, if so justified given the candidate’s personal characteristics. However, an oral performance cannot replace documents mentioned by name in the Qualification Requirements and which must be prepared during an approved competence test performance (e.g. a work plan, care plan and offer).

Assessors of competence tests must be inducted in how to take account of any special support and guidance mentioned in the personalisation document. Vocational skills should be assessed in such a way that the support measures or special arrangements do not negatively affect the candidate’s performance.

**Acquiring the required vocational skills**

When planning and implementing preparatory training for a competence-based qualification, the education provider must identify and take account of any need for additional support that might affect the student’s studies or attainment of the qualification.
During personalisation, attention must be paid to the development of various learning strategies and styles, and to ensuring that the student receives sufficient special guidance and support. Special arrangements for preparatory training can also be agreed, if necessary.

During personalisation, flexible account should be taken of issues such as arranging the most suitable education and learning and the related environment; applying diverse and varied learning and assessment methods; ensuring the clarity of teaching and study materials; taking account of the time required for acquiring skills; and upholding the quality and quantity of any special support and guidance services required. Use should also be made of the support-recipient’s strengths and the most suitable methods of acquiring vocational skills in each case.