

COMPLETION OF EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Increasing completion rates and improving the education level of the population is a key target in Finland. The aim is to accelerate the transition from studies to working life and reduce the number of students who discontinue their studies. This report deals with transitions and completion in basic and upper secondary education, with an emphasis on the latter.

It is rare for a pupil to be retained in basic education. The number of pupils who are retained has also decreased throughout the 2010s. Pupils are most likely to be retained in the first and second grades, while it is very uncommon in grades 3–6, and begins to increase again from the eighth grade onwards.

The completion rates for general upper secondary education and vocational education and training vary quite a lot in Finland. There are also a lot of variation in the completion rates between different fields of vocational education and training and type of vocational qualifications. In general upper secondary education, the completion rate in education according to the curriculum for young people was approximately 72 per cent three years after commencing the studies and approximately 88 per cent five years after commencing studies. In vocational education and training, the highest completion rate was in school-based vocational upper secondary education and training. Here the completion rate was approximately 62 per cent during a three-year observation period and approximately 76 per cent during a five-year observation period. Vocational upper secondary education and training is the most common way for young people to complete a vocational qualification.

The completion rates for vocational qualifications completed in apprentice-

ship training are often higher than those for school-based competence-based qualifications. The completion rate for vocational upper secondary qualifications completed in apprenticeship train-

The completion rate after three and five years of education (year of commencement 2007, percentages)

Target education	Time since education commenced	
	3 years	5 years
General upper secondary education		
Curriculum for young people	71,5	88,8
Curriculum for adults	21,2	34,9
School-based education and training		
Vocational upper secondary education and training	61,8	75,8
<i>Competence-based qualifications</i>		
Vocational upper secondary qualifications	47,9	53,4
Further vocational qualifications	43,2	47,5
Specialist vocational qualifications	39,0	44,9
Apprenticeship training		
Vocational upper secondary qualifications	41,1	54,3
Further vocational qualifications	57,9	62,0
Specialist vocational qualifications	53,6	57,5

Source: Statistics Finland –Vipunen - a statistic service of the education administration

ing was approximately 41 per cent over a three-year observation period and approximately 54 per cent over a five-year observation period.

The average completion rates differ quite remarkably between regions and between fields of vocational education and training. Regional differences in the completion rates for general upper secondary education were a maximum of 20 percentage points over the three-year observation period, but clearly decreased as the observation period was extended. The lowest completion rates for general upper secondary education among young people were in the regions of Lapland, Kainuu and Uusimaa. The completion rates for other regions were over 70 per cent and the completion rate in Ostrobothnia was nearly 84 per cent.

The lowest three-year completion rates in institutional vocational education and training were in Uusimaa and Lapland, while Ostrobothnia had the highest rate. The completion rates ranged between 53 and 73. Over a five-year observation period, the regional differences decreased and the completion rate in Lapland also increased to nearly the national average. Only Uusimaa remained clearly below the average over a five-year observation period.

When comparing fields of vocational education and training, the best completion rates in school-based vocational education and training were obtained in Social Care, Health and Sport, Humanities and Education, and Technology, Communication and Transport over three-year and five-year observation periods. In contrast, the lowest completion rate was in Natural Sciences.

The mother tongue also had an impact on completion rates. This is particularly evident in general upper secondary education for young people, in which the share of matriculation examinations completed in the target time by students with foreign mother tongue was 25 per

cent lower than the figure for students whose mother tongue was Finnish. The difference was even greater in relation to students whose mother tongue was Swedish. Mother tongue did not have such a strong impact on the completion rate in school-based vocational education and training as it did in general upper secondary education. However, the

In terms of international comparison, the share of those retained in basic education and those who do not earn a basic education certificate is very small.

completion rate for students with foreign mother tongue is lower than the completion rate for students whose mother tongue is Finnish or Swedish over three-year and five-year observation periods.

In terms of international comparison, the share of those retained in basic education and those who do not earn a basic education certificate is very small. The completion rates for upper secondary education are equivalent to the average. As in other Nordic countries, the age for completing vocational education and training in Finland is higher than average, nearly 29. When completion of general education and vocational upper secondary education and training are compared, the difference in Finland is equivalent to the average OECD level. With the exception of Sweden, the differences in completion of upper secondary education are clearly larger in other Nordic countries, so that the completion rates in vocational education and training are considerably lower than in general upper secondary education.