Costs of vocational education and training (VET) vary based on VET fields

The average costs per student for vocational upper secondary education and training were EUR 11,503.

There was considerable variation in the costs based on the field of vocational education and training. The costs per student were the highest at EUR 15,160 in the field of natural resources and the environment. The education in this field requires expensive machines and equipment. The costs per student were lowest at EUR 7,920 in social sciences, business and administration, where there are no similar equipment costs.

Majority of the funding, or 57 per cent, was spent on teaching. There was a 1.5-per-cent decrease in the costs per student for vocational education and training from 2014.

Significant cost differences between levels of education

In 2015:

- When comparing the different levels of education, the average cost per pupil or student varied from the EUR 5,848 of pre-primary education to the EUR 11,679 of vocational education and training.
- The highest costs of basic education compared with general upper secondary education can be primarily attributed to the costs of learning material and school transport.
- The total costs of general upper secondary education are lower than those of basic education due to larger group sizes and a sparser school network.
- The higher costs of vocational education and training compared with other forms of education can be explained, for example by the expensive equipment procurements in certain VET fields.
- Teaching was the largest expenditure in all levels of education, amounting to 53–65 per cent of the costs.

Compared to 2014, on average, the costs per pupil or student

- increased by 1.0 % in basic education
- 0.2 % in general upper secondary education
- decreased by 1.0 % in pre-primary education
- 1.5 % in VET

Costs of education and training in Finland near international averages

In an international comparison, the average costs per pupil or student are below the average rates in the EU as well as OECD. However, grades 7–9 are an exception to this as their education puts Finland among the five “most expensive” OECD countries. In 2013, the average cost per pupil in grades 7–9 in Finland was USD 13,312 whereas the OECD average on the equivalent secondary education was USD 9,980 and the EU average was USD 10,210 per pupil.

The average cost per pupil for basic and secondary education 2013, OECD, EU21 and the Nordic countries

![Graph showing cost differences between levels of education](image)

Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2016. Currency conversion has been used to equalise the purchasing power of different countries. Data on upper secondary schools in Denmark and Norway is not available.

The higher costs of grades 7–9 in Finland compared with other countries can be mostly attributed to the smaller schools and group sizes as well as the denser school network.

The differences in the costs between the countries can be partly explained by the number of lesson hours. For example, there is a dramatic difference between Finland and Denmark: In Denmark, where basic education takes 10 years, pupils are provided with over 3,000 hours more instruction than Finnish pupils during their nine years of basic education.

Education and training is the fourth largest public expenditure

In Finland, the total costs of education and training were around EUR 12.2 billion in 2015. The share of education of the total public sector expenditure was 11 per cent and it accounted for 5.8 per cent of the gross domestic product (Statistics Finland).

Public sector expenditure by position 2015

![Pie chart showing public sector expenditure](image)

Source: Statistics Finland

Most of the total costs of education, just over EUR 4.6 million, or around 38 per cent, were spent on basic education.

Teaching was the largest expenditure in basic and secondary education, amounting to 53–65 per cent of the total costs of each level of education.

When comparing the real change in the costs of education from 2010 to 2015, i.e. taking into account the impact of price increases, costs have increased in pre-primary education, remained nearly at the same level in basic education, and decreased in upper secondary education as well as vocational education and training.
There was a 0.2 percent increase in the costs per pupil for basic education from 2014.

Distribution of costs for education for the school year 2015:

- Teachers: 65%
- Teaching and research: 20%
- Wages for pupils and maintenance: 9%
- Research: 5%
- Other costs: 1%

The costs for teachers and teaching and research account for most of the costs of basic education.

For upper secondary education, there was a 1 percent decrease in the costs per pupil from 2014.

Distribution of costs for education for the school year 2015:

- Teaching and research: 65%
- Teaching: 25%
- Wages for pupils and maintenance: 6%
- Research: 5%
- Other costs: 1%

The costs for teaching and research account for most of the costs of upper secondary education.

The costs of basic education are most affordable in urban municipalities, with the costs being 20% lower than in rural municipalities.

International comparison of pre-primary education is most affordable when education is free, as is the case in Finland. The costs per pupil for upper secondary education are higher than in most countries, but still lower than in many other European countries.