Recognition of foreign qualifications at the Finnish National Agency for Education

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Finnish National Agency for Education
Practical information

• Please keep your mic muted unless you wish to speak
• Questions are welcome throughout the presentation
  • Raise the hand or use the chat
• You may also ask questions at the end of the presentation
• Please fill in the feedback form sent to you in the chat
• These presentation slides will be added on our website
Finnish National Agency for Education in a nutshell

• Finnish National Agency for Education (in Finnish: Opetushallitus) is a national development agency working under the Ministry of Education and Culture and our tasks and organisation are set in the legislation

• Our core tasks are to develop education and training, early childhood education and lifelong learning and to promote internationalization in Finland

• Director General Mrs. Minna Kelhä
Tasks of the Unit for Recognition of Qualifications and Language Proficiency

**Recognition of foreign qualifications:**

- We issue recognition decisions on higher education completed abroad
  - Recognition of professional qualifications (e.g. for teaching professions)
  - Recognition of the level of a foreign degree (e.g. for public sector posts)
- Advisory statements on foreign vocational qualifications and Finnish qualifications
- Information centre on recognition procedures and on Finnish and foreign qualifications
- National assistance centre for the European Union’s Professional Qualifications Directive
- National Co-ordination Point (NCP) for the European Qualifications Framework

**Recognition of language proficiency:**

- Tasks related to
  - National language proficiency examination and certificate (YKI)
  - Civil service language proficiency examination and certificate (VKT)
  - Register of authorized translators
  - Register of legal interpreters
Recognition of qualifications in Finland
Recognition of qualifications in Finland

• Recognition of qualifications refers to a decision on the eligibility that foreign qualifications provide when applying for a job or a study place.

• Decisions on recognition are made by different parties depending on where the qualification is used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational institutions</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you want to complete a qualification in Finland</td>
<td>If you want to work in a profession that is not regulated</td>
<td>If you want to work in a regulated profession or a public sector post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regulated professions in Finland

• A profession is regulated when according to Finnish legislation, a specific training, qualification or the right to practice a profession is required

• Examples of regulated fields and their competent authorities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulated field</th>
<th>Competent authority to issue a recognition decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education and training (e.g. subject teacher, class teacher) Early childhood education and care (e.g. teacher in ECEC, childcarer) Degrees in law</td>
<td>Finnish National Agency for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and health care</td>
<td>National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health VALVIRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Finnish Transport and Communications Agency TRAFICOM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• A list of all regulated professions and their competent authorities can be found on our website

→ If a person has qualified abroad to a profession that is regulated in Finland, they will need a recognition decision from the determined competent authority
Decisions made by the Finnish National Agency for Education

- **Degree completed abroad**
  - **Decision on the level of the degree**
    - When the applicant wants to apply for a post whose statutory eligibility requirement is a higher education degree
  - **Decision on eligibility to a certain profession, degree or study module**
    - When the applicant wants to apply for a post that has specific statutory eligibility requirements. E.g. teaching and training, Master of Laws
  - **Statement on a vocational qualification**
    - When the applicant wants an advisory statement concerning their vocational qualification completed abroad
## Recognition of qualifications in Finland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A recognition decision is <strong>not</strong> needed</th>
<th>A recognition decision is needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Non-regulated professions</strong></td>
<td>• <strong>Regulated professions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ Employers decide independently on the recognition of foreign qualifications</td>
<td>→ A recognition decision from the competent authority is needed, e.g. regarding teaching professions, <a href="https://www.oph.fi/en">a recognition decision from the Finnish National Agency for Education</a> is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Completing a degree in Finland</strong></td>
<td>• <strong>Certain public sector positions that require a higher education degree of a certain level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ Educational institutions decide independently on the recognition of foreign qualifications</td>
<td>→ <a href="https://www.oph.fi/en">A recognition decision from the Finnish National Agency for Education</a> is needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ In many cases, a recognition decision is not needed
Guidance videos on the recognition of qualifications

Do I need a recognition decision? (with English subtitles)
Legislation and examples
Legislation applied in the decision-making

- Act on Eligibility for Public Posts Provided by Higher Education Studies Completed Abroad 1385/2015
  
  (in Finnish: Laki ulkomailla suoritettujen korkeakouluopintojen tuottamasta virkakelipoisuudesta)

- Professional Qualifications Act 1384/2015

  (in Finnish: Laki ammattipätevyyn tunnustamisesta)
Issues that affect the legislation applied in the decision-making

The country where the qualification was completed

The nationality of the applicant

The level and content of the applicant’s education

The level and content of the education required for the profession in Finland

The applicant’s professional competence in the country where the qualification was obtained
Examples: Decision on the level of the qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification, year of graduation, country</th>
<th>Recognition decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisans, 2013, Turkey</td>
<td>The qualification is recognized as comparable to a <strong>Bachelor’s degree completed in Finland</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Science, 2016, South Africa</td>
<td>The qualification is recognized as comparable to a <strong>Bachelor’s degree completed in Finland</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Architecture, 2021, Canada</td>
<td>The qualification is recognized as comparable to a <strong>Master’s degree completed in Finland</strong>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legislation applied:
Act on Eligibility for Public Posts Provided by Higher Education Studies Completed Abroad 1385/2015
Example: Eligibility to a regulated profession (Subject teacher) - Physics teacher from Ukraine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country and year in which the degree was completed</th>
<th>Ukraine, 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The applicant’s qualification</td>
<td>Physics teacher. The qualification is a five-year higher education degree. The degree included teacher education which prepared the applicant for teaching physics at different levels of education and in different educational forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Finnish National Agency for Education’s decision on recognition</td>
<td>The applicant’s higher education degree is recognised as comparable to a master’s degree completed in Finland. The studies in physics included in the applicant’s degree are recognised as comparable to 120 credits of studies in physics as a teaching subject. The applicant’s studies in education will be recognised as comparable to the 60 credits of teacher’s pedagogical studies completed in Finland if the applicant completes 25 to 30 credits of supplementing teacher education studies at a Finnish higher education institution, which must include didactic studies and supervised work practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legislation applied: Act on Eligibility for Public Posts Provided by Higher Education Studies Completed Abroad 1385/2015

28/03/2024 | Opetushallitus
**Example: Eligibility to a regulated profession (Class teacher) – Class teacher from Ireland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country and year in which the qualification was obtained</th>
<th>Ireland, 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The applicant’s professional qualification in the country where the qualification was obtained</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of formal qualifications</td>
<td>A document certifying that the applicant has been registered as a teacher in Ireland and that she or he has completed the required induction period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The applicant’s teacher education</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education. The qualification is obtained by following four years of higher education studies, specialising in teaching different subjects to pupils aged from 4 to 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Finnish degree level to which the education has been declared comparable⁵</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The applicant’s professional experience or knowledge, skills and competence acquired through lifelong learning</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A substantial difference to the national training requirement</td>
<td>A difference in the content of the training; the training does not contain studies providing capabilities to apply scientific knowledge and methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Finnish National Agency for Education's decision on the recognition of professional qualifications</td>
<td>The certificates will confer the eligibility referred to in section 4, subsection 1(1) of the Teaching Qualifications Decree (986/1998) to provide class instruction in basic education once the applicant has completed either an aptitude test or an adaptation period. The subject areas that would be covered by the aptitude test are ‘exploring teacherhood’ and ‘the Finnish school’, and a demonstration of skills in class instruction of mother tongue and literature (reading and writing). The aptitude test may be taken at a university that provides education conferring eligibility for the post of a class teacher. The adaptation period would be completed by working as a class teacher in Finland. The duration of the required adaptation period would be nine months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legislation applied: Professional Qualifications Act 1384/2015
Guidance videos on the recognition of qualifications

I am a teacher. What type of decision do I apply for? (with English subtitles)
Applying for a recognition decision
Application form

• **Online application form** and electronic payment are used

• The application form includes **instructions** on how to fill in the application form - please read them carefully

• If you fill in the application form correctly right from the start, it can speed up the recognition process

• It is important to choose the **decision type** correctly
  - If you choose the decision type wrong, the handler of the application will contact you and offer the possibility to modify your application
Application form

• In Qualification 1, provide information on the **highest degree** completed
  • Diploma and transcript of records are required
  • Please name the enclosures clearly, e.g. “Diploma_Bachelor”

• In Qualifications 2/3, provide information on other degrees

• Please provide information on all of your higher education degrees, including those that have been completed in Finland
Applying for a recognition decision

• The application can be submitted although the applicant does not yet live in Finland

• Average processing time is 2-3 months, each application is individually assessed

• Application is personal

• The applicant must include all the required documents to the application

• FNAE might be in contact with the applicant by email during the process (e.g. requests for supplementation)

• The decision is sent to the applicant by email
Guidance videos on the recognition of qualifications

Processing time for applications (with English subtitles)
Applying for a recognition decision

1. Familiarise yourself with the instructions on how to apply.
2. Fill in the form, add the attachments and send your application.
3. Pay the processing fee according to the instructions.
4. The Finnish National Agency for Education requests supplementary information if necessary.
5. Supplement or modify your application if necessary.
6. When the decision has been made, the Finnish National Agency for Education sends payment instructions.
7. Pay the decision fee.
8. The Finnish National Agency for Education sends the decision and further instructions.
Recognition decision

- Decisions are made upon application and each application is individually assessed.
- The recognition decision is made based on the documents provided by the applicant and the legislation in force at the time of the decision:
  - Decisions are formulated according to the qualification requirements.
  - Language of the decision is either in Finnish or in Swedish.
- The decision on eligibility to a profession may be conditional requiring the applicant to complete a compensation measure: studies in Finland, an aptitude test or an adaption period.
- The decision gives eligibility regarding the required education; e.g. when appointed to a position, there may also be other requirements (language skills).
Fees

• Online payments are used
• A processing fee of 100€ must be paid in order for the application to be processed
  • The processing fee will not be refunded even if a decision can not be made
• The decision fee is charged when the decision is ready:
  • The fee for recognition of the level of a higher education degree 237€
  • The fee for recognition of eligibility for a certain profession or certain studies ranges between 395€ and 671€, depending on how many eligibilities can be given. The decision on eligibility for a profession includes the decision on the level of the degree.
• Further details on fees and payment instructions can be found on the application form
Possible stumbling blocks

• Online payments:
  • If the processing fee is not paid by the due date, the application will expire

• Application enclosures:
  • Detailed instructions on the required documents is provided on the application form and on our website
    - Please name the documents clearly (e.g. Diploma_Bachelor, Transcript_Bachelor)
    - Make sure the copies of the documents are of good quality and all the corners are visible
  • A request for supplementation is sent by email from the Studyinfo portal, when necessary
    - Applications are supplemented in the Studyinfo portal using a link sent by the handler of the application
  • The processing of the application will be started only when all the required documents have been submitted and the processing fee has been paid

• Messages sent from Studyinfo portal might end up in junk mail
Further information
Our website

- All information can be found on our website in English, Finnish and Swedish: www.oph.fi/recognition
- Information for holders of foreign qualifications (e.g. Service guide and flow chart to find out whether a recognition decision is needed; Instructions for applying for a decision; Occupation-specific information)
- Information for those who have already received a recognition decision (e.g. how to complete the compensation measures)
- Regulated professions in Finland
- Guidance videos on the recognition of qualifications
Information for guidance purposes and employers

• **Information for guidance purposes**
  (e.g. basic information on recognition of qualifications, foreign educational systems, international sources of information)
  - Brochure on recognition of qualifications is available in 11 languages
  - Flowchart on whether a decision on recognition is needed is available in 5 languages
  - Flowcharts and guides for teachers and professionals in early childhood education care are available in 3 languages
  - Diagrams on educational systems of 16 different countries

• **Information for employers**
  (e.g. whether the employee needs a recognition decision, completion of adaption period, occupation-specific information)
## Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>1075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1083</td>
<td>1066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>1201</td>
<td>1206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>1020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>1311</td>
<td>1178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2023</th>
<th>Year 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Nationality 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU/EEA area</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside EU/EEA area</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next webinars (on Tuesdays)

- **9 April at 10am** Opetusalan tutkintojen tunnustaminen (in Finnish)
- **23 April at 10am** Varhaiskasvatuksen alan tutkintojen tunnustaminen (in Finnish)
- **7 May at 10am** Recognition of qualifications in the fields of teaching and early childhood education and care (in English)
- **28 May at 2pm** Yleistä tutkintojen tunnustamisesta (in Finnish)

Please also fill in our feedback form.
Thank you!

Recognition of qualifications:
recognition@oph.fi
www.oph.fi/recognition

Language proficiency and language tests:
kielitutkinnnot@oph.fi