



## HOW TO IMPROVE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

High-quality vocational education and training (VET) gives nations and their economies a skilled work force that plays a key role in promoting competitiveness and prosperity. The graduates of modern VET programs are professionals in the full sense of the term; despite this, vocational education and vocational degrees are often underappreciated and suffer from a low status they do not deserve. In the 2000s Finland has managed to improve the perception of VET among employers and the general public as well as its popularity among prospective students. FinnWayLearning stands ready to share the lessons learned during this process.





## The Improving Image of the Finnish VET Sector

The public image of vocational education has improved markedly in Finland during the last two decades, as has its student popularity. Curriculum expansion, in which the duration of all VET programs was standardized to 3 years to allow for more in-depth learning and an on-the-job training period, is often credited as one of the factors in this development. Some others are listed below.

### On-the-Job Learning and Skills Competitions

All Finnish VET programs include at least half a year of on-the-job learning, during which the student/trainees work with skilled workplace instructors to gain optimal benefits for their work life readiness. The period culminates in a skills demonstration, a work assignment that is performed in an authentic setting and



assessed by vocational teachers in cooperation with workplace representatives.

National and international skills competitions are a stage for taking it all to the next level in a tournament setting; they have proven to be a great way of displaying the expertise of vocational students and garnering publicity for the VET sector.

### Dual Studies, Dual Qualifications

The line between VET and general upper secondary education (gymnasium), once strict, has been intentionally blurred since the 1990s. This has paved way for various combinations of general upper secondary and vocational education, including full dual qualifications in which the student completes both a VET degree and the national matriculation examination that is traditionally associated with completing the general upper secondary level

### Eligibility for Further Studies

Today, completing vocational education grants eligibility for a variety of further studies, giving testament to the way the Finnish VET sector embraces life-long learning. Eligibility for tertiary studies at a university or polytechnic has been an important factor in improving the status of vocational degrees. Additionally, those who wish to develop their vocational competence further can apply for a qualification at specialist or expert level. These are competence-based degrees, completed by an appropriate skills demonstration, and as such do not require additional formal studies; however, many applicants do choose to hone their skills in preparatory education at a vocational institute of their choice.

## What FinnWayLearning can offer

- study visits covering the Finnish VET system and the variety of measures with which its attractiveness and status have been improved (prices start at €1000/day for a group of 10 or less)
- specialist training for professionals aiming to improve their VET sector
- training for workplace instructors
- expert consultation

Please contact us to find out more!



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