



## Teacher Education in Finland for general education

Education has always been an important part in Finnish culture and society. Since 1921 there has been a law for compulsory education and the school reform in the 1970's created a free and equal nine year compulsory education for all children. Finland is said to be one of the most literate societies.

The teacher training in Finland takes place at eight Finnish universities around country. Teachers in general education are required a Master's degree. The applicant numbers are many times higher than the intake to teacher education programs. Only less than 10 percent of applicants are accepted into class teacher education programs and secondary teacher students are selected from students enrolled already at the university. The faculties get highly motivated and knowledgeable students who become excellent teachers. The teacher education is a combination of a three-year Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS) and a two year Master's degree (120 ECTS). Universities are quite independent in designing their curricula but there are some general outlines. The main elements of teacher education curricula consist of studies in academic disciplines which are taught in schools. Subject teachers have major in academic disciplines (at least 120 ECTS) and class teachers in educational sciences (minimum 60 ECTS in pedagogical studies and 60 ECTS in the science of education). An appropriate combination qualifies teachers to teach subjects in primary and secondary schools. Research, pedagogical, communication, language and ICT studies are obligatory for all teacher students. The pedagogical studies include teaching practice which mainly takes place at the university practice schools.

The aim of the teacher education is to educate the students to become part of a research-based professional culture. The Finnish education system does not have external standardized student system or inspection system. Trust, autonomy and expertise describe the teacher's profession.

Teachers' in-service training is financed by their employers which usually are municipalities. They may organize training or send teachers and principals to participate courses. Also further education centres organize education and state money is used for implementing education policy.

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