

# Finland: Overview

In Finland, education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Finnish National Board of Education works with the Ministry to develop educational aims, content and methods for primary, upper secondary and adult education. The national education administration steers the provision and development of education and training mainly through funding and information.

Local autonomy in education is quite extensive in Finland. Local administration is the responsibility of municipalities. Municipalities provide most of pre-primary, primary and upper secondary education in Finland and commonly give individual schools a large autonomy in designing their own curricula and education. Finnish higher education institutions are funded by the state but enjoy extensive autonomy. All education in Finland, from pre-primary to tertiary level, is free of charge.

Compulsory education begins at the age of 7 and lasts for 9 years. It is provided in a single structure system called basic education. Pre-primary education is arranged for one year before basic education. Most children attend this voluntary education.

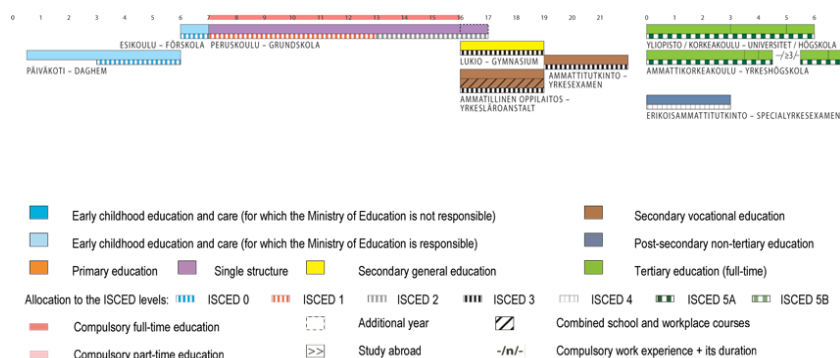
Upper secondary education is provided by general and vocational upper secondary schools. The general age to take upper secondary studies is from 16 to 19 years. However, many students are older, especially in vocational upper secondary education.

Tertiary education is provided by universities and polytechnics. The latter are vocationally-oriented higher education institutions.

Adult education is arranged at all levels of the education system. It may lead to qualifications or be related to general self-development. Liberal adult education, provided for example by adult education centres and folk high schools, is quite popular in Finland.

The table of content in your upper right corner will allow you to browse through information on specific aspects of education in Finland. This Eurypedia entry is the most extensive description of the Finnish education system to be found. Descriptions of the Finnish system, as well as other information on education in Finland, are also provided by different institutions. The most comprehensive reviews can be found on the sites of the [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) and [the Finnish National Board of Education](#). They also provide fact sheets and tables. A description of vocational education and training is also maintained by [Cedefop](#).

## Structure of the national education system 2012/13



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- [National Student Fee and Support Systems](#)
  - [Organisation of the Academic Year in Higher Education](#)
  - [Organisation of School Time in Europe](#) (Primary and general secondary education)
  - [Recommended Annual Taught Time](#) in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe (Presented by grades/stages for full time compulsory education as well as by subject and country.)
  - [Teachers and School Heads Salaries and Allowances in Europe](#) (Salaries and allowances of teachers and school heads at pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education levels.)
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