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# FINNISH TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN FIGURES



FINNISH NATIONAL  
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

Reports and surveys 2018:4





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Reports and surveys 2018:4

ISBN 978-952-13-6459-4 (printed)

ISBN 978-952-13-6460-0 (pdf)

ISSN-L 1798-8918

ISSN 1798-8918 (printed)

ISSN 1798-8926 (pdf)

Taitto: Grano Oy

Print: Juvenes Print - Suomen Yliopistopaino Oy, Helsinki 2018

[www.oph.fi](http://www.oph.fi)

# CONTENT

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 THE TEACHING PROFESSION</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Finnish teachers are trusted professionals	9
1.2 Finnish teachers are satisfied with their jobs	10
1.3 Teaching time is among the lowest in international comparison	11
1.4 Teachers' salaries are negotiated nationally	12
<b>2 TEACHER EDUCATION</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Admission rates vary according to teacher education programme	17
2.2 Vocational teacher education is consistently popular	18
<b>3 TEACHERS' QUALIFICATION RATES</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4 TEACHERS' AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 The youngest teachers are found in basic education	22
4.2 Gender distribution varies by level of education	23
<b>5 TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>25</b>
5.1 Teachers' participation in CPD has increased	26
5.2 Little mentoring is provided in Finland	27
<b>6 NEEDS FOR TEACHERS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE</b>	<b>29</b>



# FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

Finland is said to have the best teachers in the world. Many envy the professional esteem and autonomy that Finnish teachers enjoy. The attractiveness of the teaching profession is also widely noted.

Teachers and principals take centre stage in any discussion on the quality and development of education. Teachers, and principals who support their work, make an impact on the pupils' and students' learning outcomes. The teacher's competence and professionalism, on the other hand, are some of the key factors that ensure a high quality of teaching.

This report aims to provide the reader with a statistical overview of teachers in Finland and thus shed light on some of the central issues. In addition, contextual information is included to help readers understand and interpret the statistics.

The report looks at admissions to teacher education, teachers' and principals' qualifications, the structure of their tasks, their age and gender distribution and participation in continuing training.

The report also discusses future needs for teachers and brings up certain themes related to the teacher's identity in an international frame of reference. For its main parts, the report draws on the publication *Teachers and Principals in Finland 2016*, which is based on the results of a national data collection on teachers carried out in spring 2016. The survey includes only pre-primary teachers who work in schools. In addition to the national data collection on teachers, the TALIS 2013 survey (Teaching and Learning International Survey) and the *Education at a Glance 2017* publication, both produced by the OECD, were used as sources for this publication.

In this publication teachers in early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children younger than 6 years old are not included. Pre-primary education is organised in both ECEC centres (80%) and in conjunction with schools (20%). Only teachers working in schools were included in the data collection and consequently in this publication. In this publication pre-primary always refers to the education of 6-year-olds.

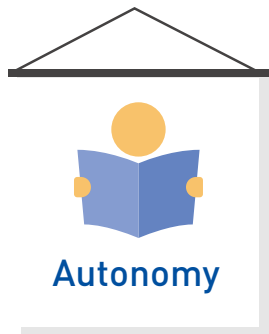
The publication was written by senior adviser Olga Lappi and adviser Paula Paronen from the Finnish National Agency for Education. The writers were supported in their work by many other colleagues from the Information and Analysis Unit at the Finnish National Agency for Education. All the experts involved in preparing the report deserve thanks for their efforts.

I hope that this report provides a good overview of and sheds light on Finnish teachers and their work from the international perspective.

Kristiina Volmari  
Head of Information and Analysis  
Finnish National Agency for Education

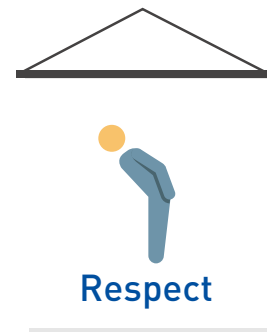


# 1 THE TEACHING PROFESSION



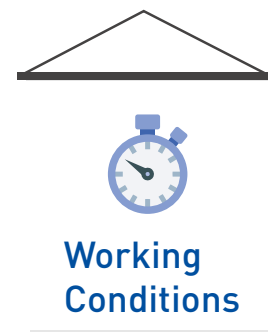
- Freedom to choose learning materials and pedagogy
- Freedom to decide on assessment
- Participation in defining local curriculum

- Teachers well respected
- Changing of profession rare
- Teacher education programmes popular



- No national examinations in compulsory education
- No school inspections at any level
- Focus on improving teacher professionalism

- Minimum teaching time one of the lowest in OECD countries
  - Continuing professional development supported
    - Little administration and extracurricular work



What makes teaching such a popular profession?

The teaching profession is attractive, which can be seen among other things in the continuing popularity of teacher training. The most important feature of the teacher's job is its autonomous nature. The profession is also highly challenging. A teacher operates in the crosscurrent of new regulations, pedagogical methods, new learning environments and with increasingly heterogeneous learners. Teachers must have an inquiring approach, engage in reflection and continuous self-renewal, and take the individuality of each learner into account.

Many countries face the problem of the teaching profession failing to attract young people, and as a result, there is a shortage of good applicants to teacher education. The shortage of qualified teachers concerns the entire education system in some countries, whereas in others it only affects certain levels. In the EU countries, reasons for the profession's declining popularity have been sought in the negative development of teacher's working conditions and pay and the less positive image of the profession. The teaching profession is also ageing in Finland, and gender segregation of the field is visible at all levels of education.

## Types of teachers in Finnish schools

In Finland, generalist teachers work in pre-primary and primary education, and subject teachers work in mainly lower and upper secondary education. The following table describes different types of teachers at Finnish educational institutions.

In addition to these teacher groups, guidance and student counsellors and principals can be involved in teaching both in general and vocational education. They are not listed in the following table because teaching is not their main task.

It is important to note that this report comprises only teachers working in pre-primary, basic and upper secondary education. Consequently, teachers in early childhood education and care who teach children younger than 6 years, teachers in liberal adult education and higher education are not included, but data on some of these teacher groups is available in Education Statistics Finland database Vipunen at [www.vipunen.fi](http://www.vipunen.fi).

**TABLE 1. DIFFERENT TYPES OF TEACHERS AT FINNISH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Early childhood education and care institutions ISCED 0	Kindergarten teachers and special needs kindergarten teachers provide ECEC and pre-primary education.  Most pre-primary education for 6-year-olds takes place in ECEC centres.
General educational institutions ISCED 0-3	Kindergarten teachers work as pre-primary teachers in separate pre-primary classes.  Class teachers are generalists and mainly teach all subjects in grades 1–6 in basic education and may also provide pre-primary education.  Subject teachers teach one or several subjects in basic education, primarily in grades 7–9  Subject teachers teach one or several subjects in general upper secondary education  Special needs teachers and special class teachers teach in grades 1–9 in basic education
Vocational institutions ISCED 3	Subject teachers work as teachers of common units such as languages, mathematics, science, physical education and arts  Vocational studies teachers work as teachers in field-specific studies. Some are involved in assessing students' competence demonstrations taking place in authentic work environments.  Special needs education teachers work in special needs teaching at vocational special education institutions, vocational institutions, adult education institutions and universities of applied sciences

## 1.1 Finnish teachers are trusted professionals

The Finnish education system is based on trust in teachers and teacher education. Teachers can influence their work and the development of their school community. Teacher representatives participate in preparing the national core curricula, and each teacher takes part in preparing the local or school-specific curriculum.

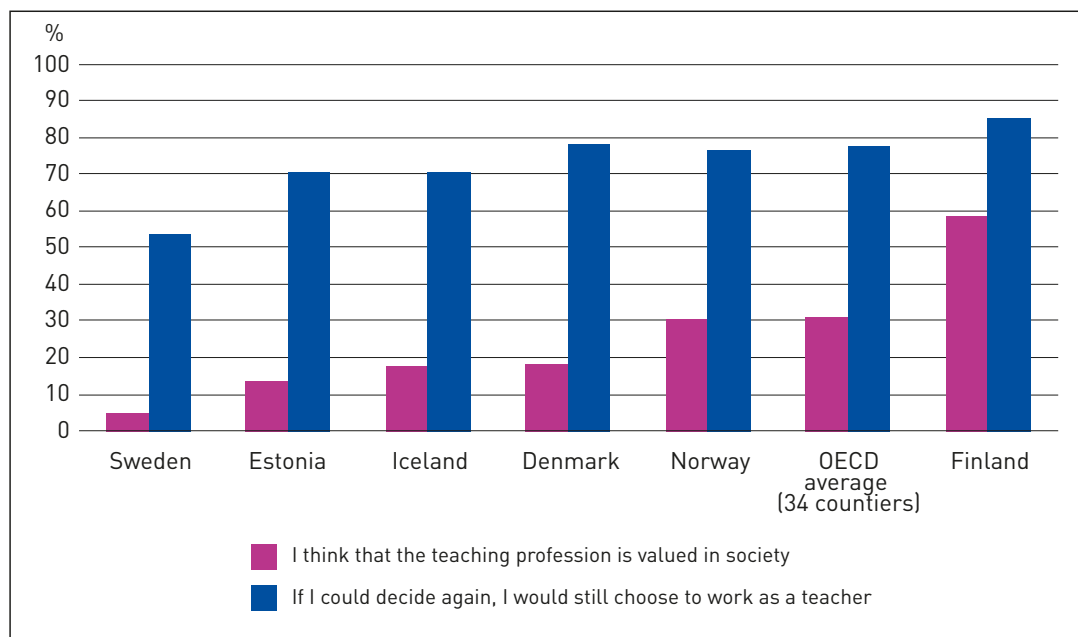
Teachers enjoy plenty of autonomy in their work. They plan their work according to the national core curriculum and are free to decide on such matters as the learning materials used and often also purchases to be made by the school. Teachers are also responsible for the assessment of pupils. They make decisions on the most suitable method as well as the frequency of these assessments.

In Finland, quality assurance differs greatly from most other countries. Teachers are accountable to themselves and the learners, not to external bodies. Teachers are not formally evaluated, and there are no inspections of schools or learning materials. The absence of national tests until the end of general upper secondary education also gives teachers the privilege to concentrate on learners and their learning instead of preparing them for external evaluation.

Most Finnish teachers have appraisals once a year with the school head. These appraisals, however, are generally forward looking, concentrating on strengths, possible challenges and professional development needs.

## 1.2 Finnish teachers are satisfied with their jobs

Finnish teachers change careers less often than professionals in other sectors. The majority of teachers are satisfied with their profession. The results of the OECD's TALIS 2013 survey (Teaching and Learning International Survey) indicate that globally, 91.2 per cent of teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) were satisfied with their work as a whole. In the Nordic countries, teachers reported the highest level of satisfaction in Norway (94.9) and the lowest in Sweden (85.4), whereas in Finland the proportion of satisfied teachers was 91 per cent.



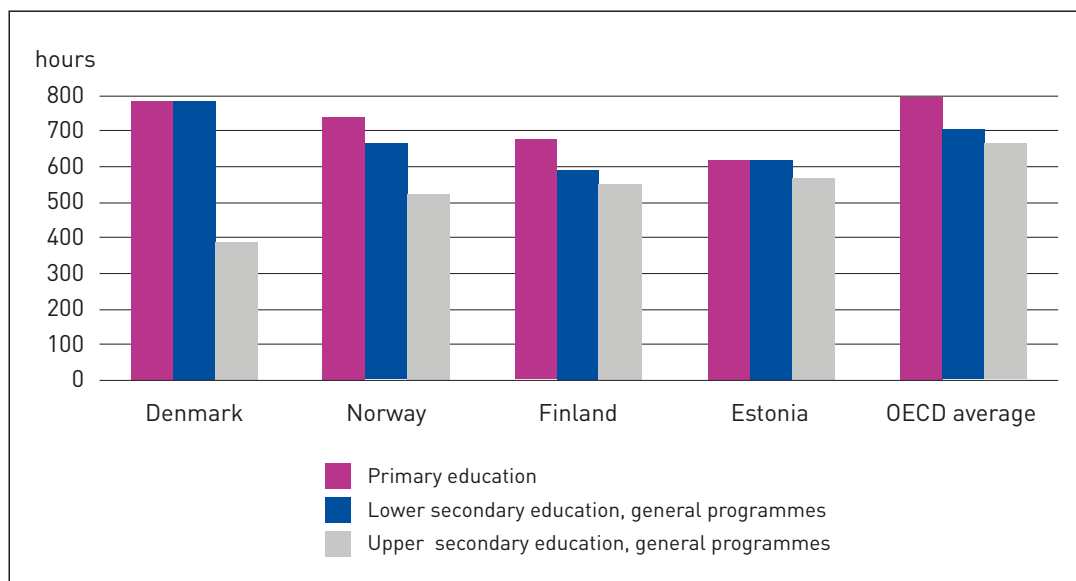
**FIGURE 1. TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFESSION**

Source: OECD: TALIS 2013 Results (Table 7.2)

There were major differences between the countries in the various areas of satisfaction, however. In Finland, teachers felt that their profession is appreciated by society more than in other countries. In the other Nordic countries, teachers felt appreciated less often than the survey participants on average; in Sweden, as few as five percent of teachers felt appreciated. Only slightly more than a half of Swedish teachers would choose their profession again, whereas this rate in Finland was over 80 per cent.

### 1.3 Teaching time is among the lowest in international comparison

Finnish teachers enjoy a lot of flexibility in organising their working time. The minimum number of teaching hours and required time at school in basic and general upper secondary education are among the lowest when compared to OECD countries.



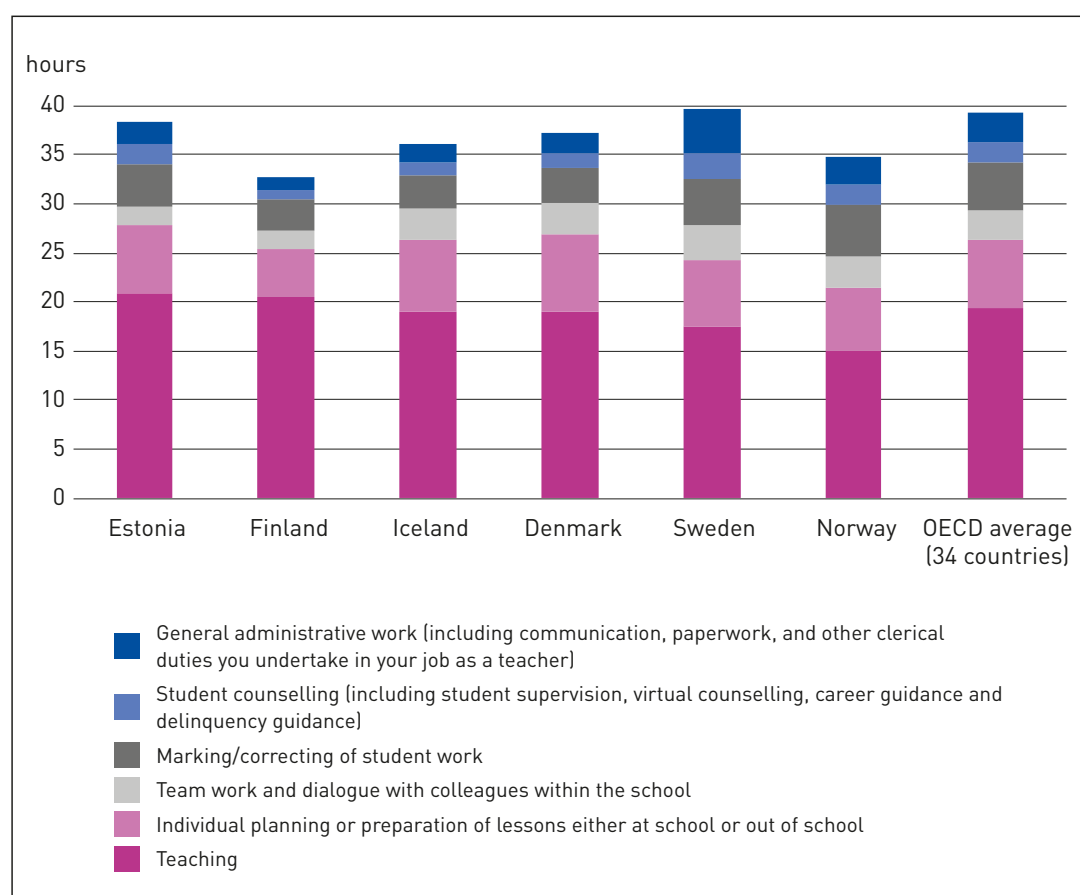
**FIGURE 2. NUMBER OF TEACHING HOURS\* IN ISCED 1-2 AND ISCED 3 GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

\*60-minute lessons Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2016, (Table D4.1)

The number of hours teachers have to spend at the school is determined by their teaching hours. In addition, teachers are required to be available for 2-3 hours per week for cooperation with parents and colleagues.

The weekly use of time by teachers was examined in the OECD TALIS 2013 survey. The actual weekly working time of Finnish teachers was among the lowest in the countries participating in the study. While the average for all countries was 38 hours per week, in Finland the average weekly working time for teachers was 32 hours.

The TALIS survey also examined working time by activity. Teachers in Finland spend the majority of their working time on teaching and preparing lessons.



**FIGURE 3. TEACHERS' WORKING HOURS. AVERAGE NUMBER OF 60-MINUTE HOURS LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION TEACHERS REPORT HAVING SPENT ON SELECTED ACTIVITIES.**

Source: TALIS 2013 Results, OECD, 2014 [Table 6.12]

In comparison to other countries, Finnish teachers spent less time on administrative tasks, cooperation with their colleagues and student counselling. In all Nordic countries, teachers reported spending a maximum of one hour per week on extracurricular activities (e.g., sports and cultural activities after school) while in Japan, this figure was almost eight hours.

## 1.4 Teachers' salaries are negotiated nationally

Teachers' salaries and employment conditions are agreed upon nationally as part of collective agreements negotiated between the representatives of the employers, most commonly municipalities, and the teachers' union. The conditions of service for teachers are negotiated with an interval of a few years.

The Trade Union of Education is the only teachers' union in Finland, and it has a remarkable mandate as ca 97 per cent of Finnish teachers are members.

Teachers' salaries depend on their position and its requirements regarding their level of professionalism and work experience. In addition, a bonus can be paid based on the performance of the institution or the teacher. This, however, is not very common.

Extra duties, such as being responsible for the school choir or language laboratory, are also compensated for. Years of service lead to increments. In case of schools located in major cities or in particularly remote areas, the location of the school also affects the salary.

While the teaching profession is popular and appreciated in Finland, a teacher's average pay is somewhat lower than the amount received by other groups with a similar level of education. The following figure shows a compilation of the average pay of other groups working in the municipal sector.



## Teacher salaries compared to other professions

Average actual monthly salary in the municipal sector

\* lower secondary education subject teacher

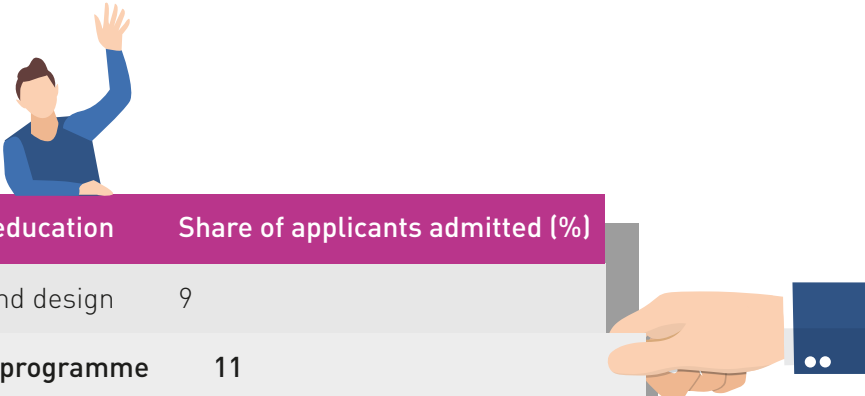
Source: Statistics Finland

By international standards, differences between the earnings of teachers working at different levels of education are relatively large in Finland. In 2014, the actual salaries of kindergarten teachers compared to other groups with a bachelor's degree were 28 per cent lower on average. A class teacher received 22 per cent less pay on average than others with a master's level degree, and a subject teacher in basic education received 15 per cent less. The actual salaries of general upper secondary teachers were only 6 per cent lower compared to other professionals with a master's degree.

The OECD is currently not collecting data on the salaries of vocational education and training teachers. Generally speaking, VET teachers' salaries in Finland are higher than those of teachers in basic education and on par with those of teachers in general upper secondary school.



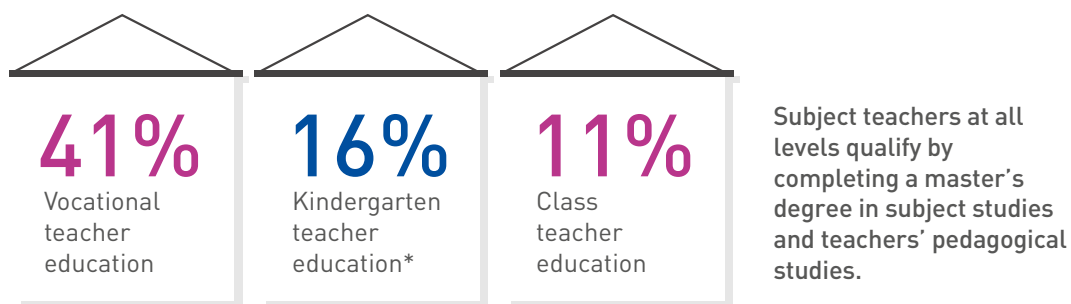
## 2 TEACHER EDUCATION



Field of education	Share of applicants admitted (%)
Art and design	9
<b>Class teacher education programme</b>	<b>11</b>
Medicine	11
Law	12
Engineering	41

Examples of admission rates to some popular fields of study

Admission rate to teacher education in 2016:



\* Kindergarten teacher education qualifies one to work in both ECEC and pre-primary education for 6-year-olds.

Less than a quarter of applicants admitted to teacher education

Source: Vipunen - Education Statistics Finland

A master's degree is required for most levels in Finland. Pre-primary teachers and teachers in ECEC, for whom the minimum qualification requirement is bachelor's level education, are an exception.

In EU countries, teacher education typically takes four years and corresponds to a bachelor's degree, whereas secondary level teachers are mainly required to have a master's degree. In the OECD TALIS 2013 survey, the majority of respondents had either a bachelor's or a master's degree. Most of them had also completed teacher training.

The following table illustrates the qualification requirements for each type of teacher in pre-primary, basic and upper secondary education. All qualifications must include a minimum of 60 ECTS pedagogical studies. Master's level is 300 ECTS (5 years) and bachelor's level 180 ECTS (3 years).

**TABLE 2. TEACHERS' MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS IN PRE-PRIMARY, BASIC AND UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

	Pre-primary education (6-year-olds) ISCED 0	Basic education grades 1-6 ISCED 1	Basic education grades 7-9 ISCED 2	General upper secondary education ISCED 3	Vocational upper secondary education ISCED 3
ECEC centre*	<b>Kindergarten teacher</b>  Bachelor's level in education science	<b>Class teacher</b>  Master's level in education science	<b>Subject teacher</b>  Master's level in subject taught	<b>Subject teacher</b>  Master's level in subject taught	<b>Teacher of vocational subjects</b>  Appropriate HE qualification
School	<b>Kindergarten teacher</b> or <b>Class teacher</b>	<div>+multidisciplinary studies subjects taught in basic education grades 1-6 = can work as class teacher</div> <div>+ 60 ECTS in the subject taught = can work as subject teacher</div>			<b>Teacher of common subjects</b>  Master's level in subject taught / technology
	<b>Special needs kindergarten teacher</b>  Bachelor's level in education science + separate special needs education	<b>Special needs teacher and special class teacher</b>  Master's level + special needs education			<b>Special needs teacher</b>  Teacher of vocational / common subjects qualification (special needs teacher in VET / appropriate studies)
<b>Principal</b> Teaching qualification + appropriate work experience + certificate in educational administration or the equivalent					

\* Most (approx. 80%) pre-primary education takes place in ECEC centres.

There are many paths to become a teacher in Finland. The most common is concurrent, with pedagogical training integrated into a master's programme. Pedagogical training may also be completed after obtaining an initial qualification.

Below is a brief description of how teacher students are selected to different teacher education programmes.

### **Kindergarten teachers and class teachers**

Kindergarten teacher education qualifies one to work also as a pre-primary teacher. Students to kindergarten teacher and class teacher education are selected by universities. The selection procedure includes, for example, a written examination, an aptitude test and interviews, sometimes a group situation and a skills demonstration as part of the entrance examination.

### **Subject teachers**

Subject teachers usually only apply once they are already students at a university. Admission to subject teacher education is based either on aptitude tests alone, or on aptitude tests and the applicant's study record. At some universities, one can apply directly to subject teacher education. It is also possible to take separate pedagogical studies after completing an academic degree.

### **Special needs teachers**

Separate special needs teacher studies are available to those with class teacher education or some other appropriate education. An admission test is organised for these applicants.

Teacher education for pre-primary level special needs education, and special needs education for children under school age, are available to kindergarten teachers. General university admission rules and faculties' own requirements are applied.

### **Vocational teachers**

Candidates to vocational teacher education should have 1) an appropriate master's degree; 2) an appropriate university of applied sciences (UAS) degree; or 3) the highest possible qualification in their occupational field, and at least three years of work experience in the field. Applicants are selected based on their previous studies and there is no specific entrance examination.

### **Vocational special needs teachers**

The admission requirements for vocational special needs teacher education include meeting the qualification requirements for vocational education teachers and at least one year of teaching experience at a vocational institution.

## **2.1 Admission rates vary according to teacher education programme**

By international standards, the admission criteria to teacher education in Finland are strict. In other European countries, the general admission criteria to higher education are mostly applied. Only about one country out of three organises an aptitude test or an interview for applicants to teacher education.

As teacher education is a popular field of study, higher education institutions in Finland are in a position to select the most best-suited and most motivated applicants for their programmes. The specific admission procedures to initial teacher education can improve the quality of future teachers by only admitting those applicants who demonstrate a sufficient level of aptitude, capabilities and attitudes.

There is data available on applicants to kindergarten teacher, class teacher and vocational subject teacher education. They are based on the Finnish National Agency for Education's application and admission register. Data on admissions to subject teacher education are not available because students apply directly to the universities who collect their own data.

Of all teacher education programmes, the one for class teachers is the most difficult to gain admission to. Since 2011, only 10 to 11 per cent of the applicants have been admitted. In 2016, the proportion of applicants admitted to class teacher education was smaller than the proportion admitted to medical or law faculties.

The rate of those admitted to kindergarten teacher education was slightly higher: in 2016, 16 per cent of the applicants were admitted.

The fact that the majority of teachers are women is reflected in the proportion of female applicants. The majority of applicants to all programmes educating teachers for pre-primary and basic education are women, and of those who are admitted, a higher relative share were women than men.

## **2.2 Vocational teacher education is consistently popular**

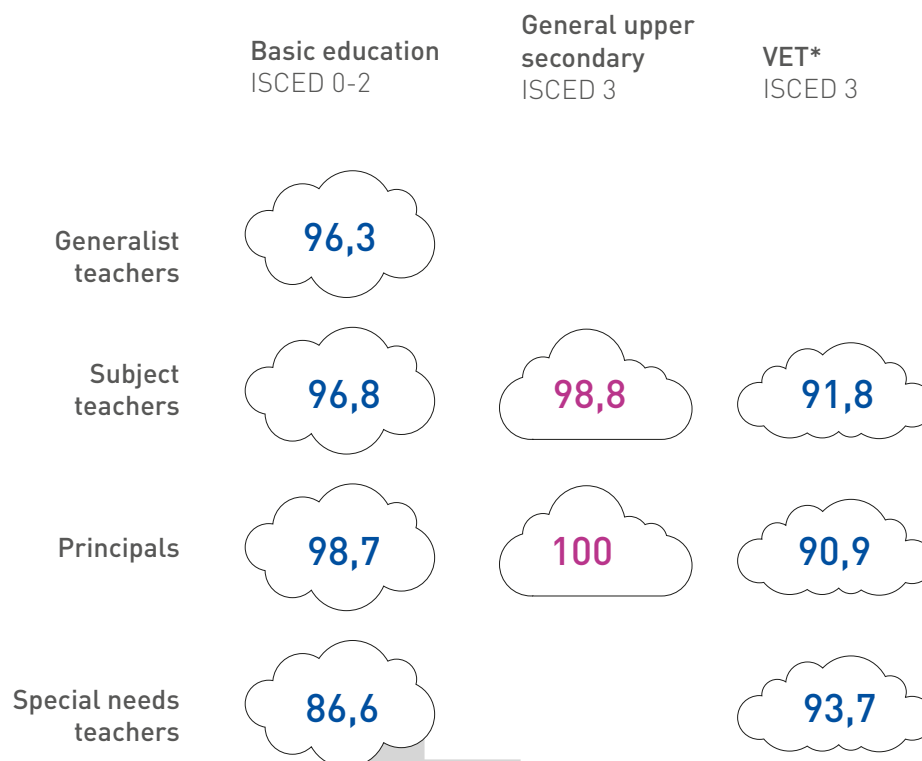
Vocational teacher education is also popular. Its popularity has been consistent over the years, because of the flexible arrangements for completing the studies among other reasons.

While approximately 40 per cent of the applicants are admitted annually, there are major variations between different fields.

Those who apply for a place in vocational teacher education are older on average than applicants to other forms of teacher education. This is because applicants are required to have prior work experience. The average age of applicants and those admitted as students is approximately 40 years.

The proportion of women in both applicants and admissions has increased clearly in recent years. Unlike in other teacher education programmes, it is more difficult for women than men to gain a place in vocational teacher education.

### 3 TEACHERS' QUALIFICATION RATES



#### Proportion of qualified teachers 2016 (%)

The figures include only full-time teachers as the number of part-time teachers at all levels is very low.

\* Vocational upper secondary education and training

Source: Vipunen - Education Statistics Finland

More than 90 per cent of Finnish teachers at all levels of education are formally qualified for their jobs. The formal qualifications of teachers are seen as one of the most significant guarantees for a good quality of teaching and equity across the country.

Teachers' qualification status was surveyed in 2016 in the data collection Teachers and Principals in Finland. Of pre-primary teachers, only those who work in conjunction with basic education schools are included. Pre-primary teachers may also work in ECEC centres.

Almost all principals of basic education and general upper secondary schools who participated in the 2016 survey, or over 99 per cent, were formally qualified for their jobs. In VET, 91 per cent of principals and directors were qualified.

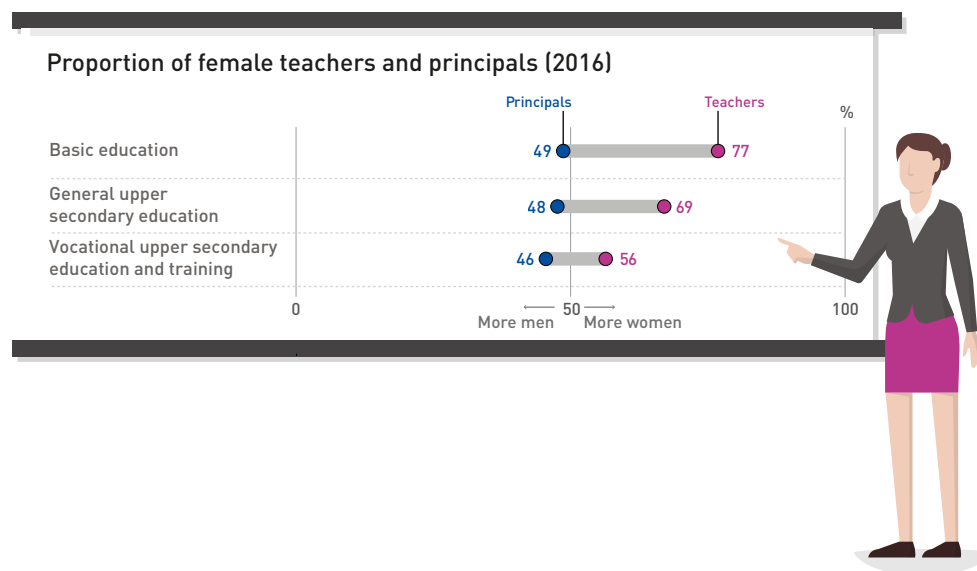
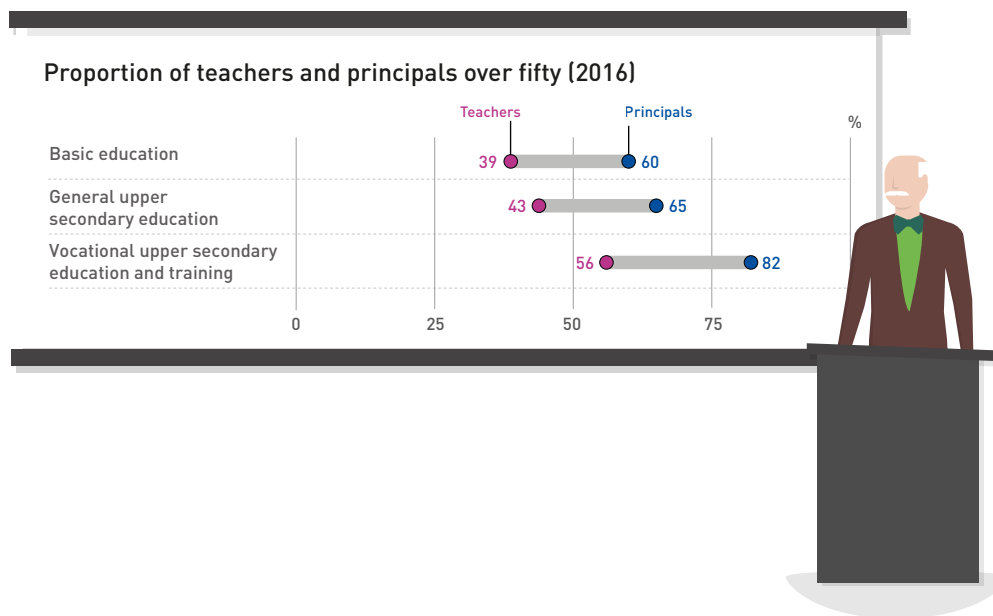
97 per cent of basic education teachers, 99 per cent of upper secondary teachers and 92 per cent of VET teachers were qualified.

In basic education, 87 per cent of special class teachers and special needs teachers were qualified, while this figure for special needs teachers in VET was 94 per cent.

The number of part-time teachers at all levels is very low. Compared to other teacher groups, they are the least qualified one. 61 per cent of part-time teachers in basic education and VET and 79 per cent in general upper secondary education were qualified.

In basic education, the qualification rates of teachers of different subjects varied from 92 per cent to 100 per cent, whereas in general upper secondary education, the range was from 95 per cent to 100 per cent. In VET, there were no differences between the qualification rates of common and vocational subject teachers, and this figure was approximately 90 per cent for both groups.

## 4 TEACHERS' AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION



Source: Vipunen - Education Statistics Finland

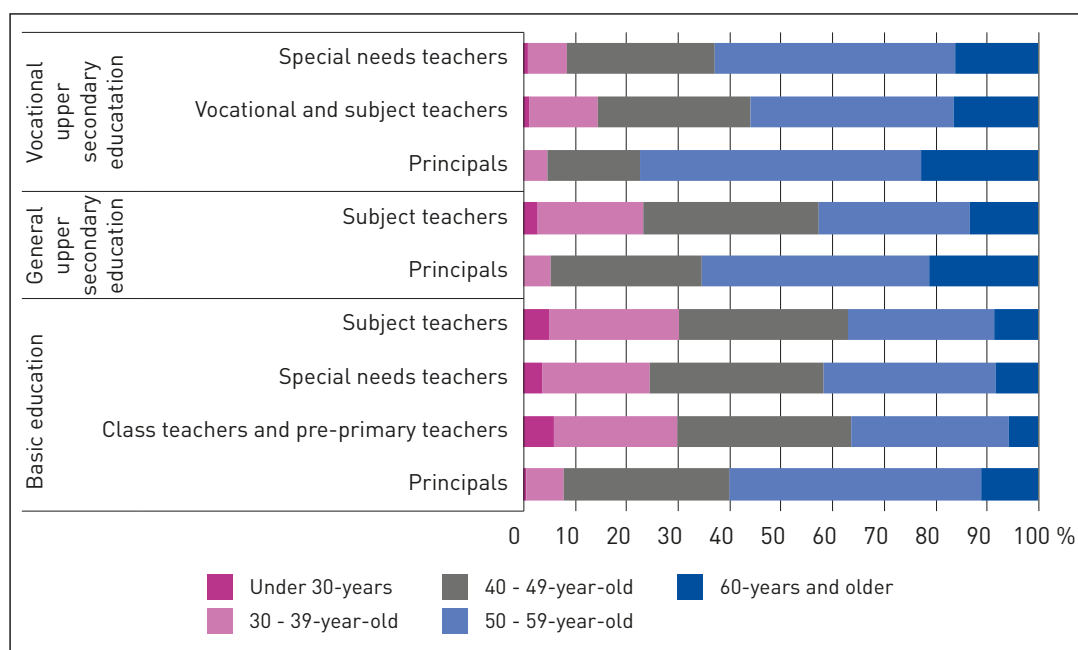
Teachers' age distribution is significant in terms of the school's long-term development. Senior employees have professional skills developed through extensive experience, whereas their juniors have an up-to-date education and usually the most recent knowledge of their field.

Not only the ageing of teachers as a profession but also the uneven distribution of men and women at different levels of education is a globally identified phenomenon. In the international context and also in Finland, principals are more commonly men, while the teaching profession is female-dominated.

## 4.1 The youngest teachers are found in basic education

The ageing of teachers as a profession is a significant concern in several countries. This is also the case in Finland as the largest age group working in schools in almost all teacher groups is over 50-year-olds.

The majority of principals at all levels of education who responded to the Teachers and Principals in Finland survey were aged 50 or over. In VET, this proportion is 82 per cent. Less than a half of full-time teachers in basic and upper secondary education and slightly over a half in VET were in this age group.



**FIGURE 4. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS IN 2016 IN FINLAND**



The age distribution of teachers in the OECD countries is similar at all levels of education. The Education at a Glance 2017 indicators show that of teachers in the lower grades of basic education, on an average 32 per cent in the OECD countries and 33 per cent in the EU22 countries were aged 50 or over.

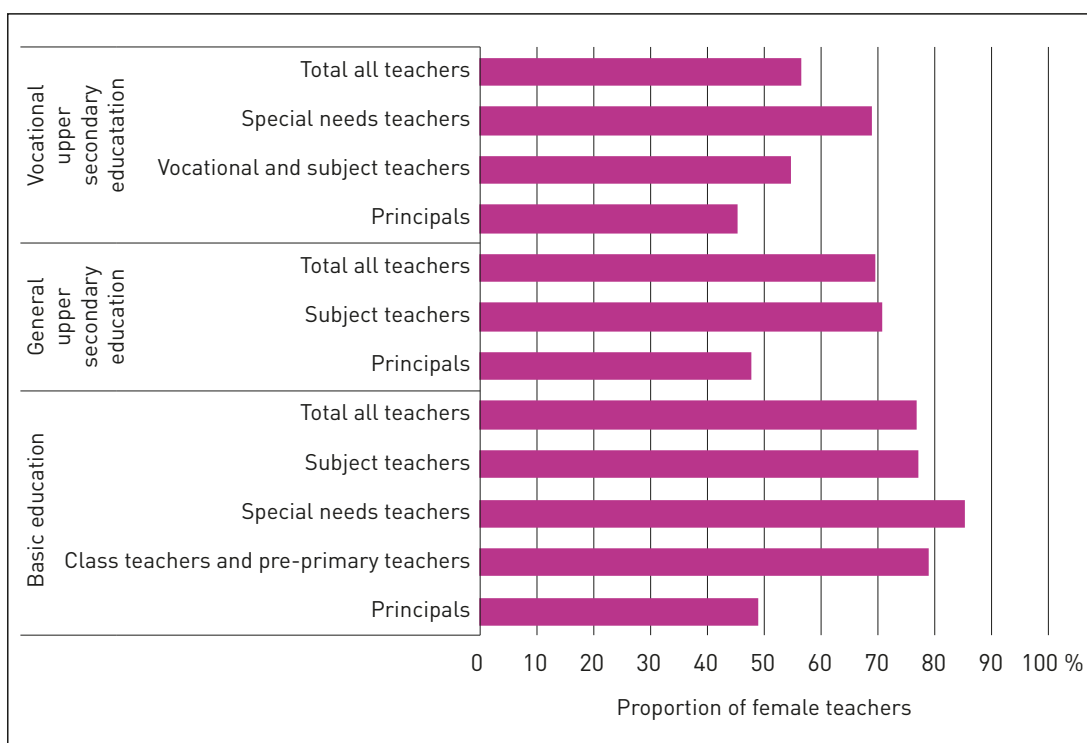
According to the Education at a Glance indicators, the proportion of Finnish teachers over the age of 50 is slightly under the average of OECD countries. When comparing teachers in upper secondary education, Finnish teachers are older than the OECD average.

## **4.2 Gender distribution varies by level of education**

The proportion of women in basic and upper secondary education had increased in 2016. Almost 80 per cent of pre-primary teachers, class teachers and full-time teachers were women. In general upper secondary education, 69 per cent of teachers were women. However, women only accounted for less than a half of principals.

VET teachers differ from their colleagues in other forms of education not only because of their higher age but also in that the profession is not quite as strongly female-dominated. More than a half of principals and directors in VET are men, and 44 per cent of all teachers are men. Women accounted for 46 per cent of principals.

Examined by field of education, technology and transport is a strongly male-dominated field, with men accounting for more than 86 per cent of the teachers. On the other hand, strongly female-dominated fields of education include social services, health and sports (92 per cent women) as well as humanities and education. The majority of special needs teachers and guidance counsellors are also women.

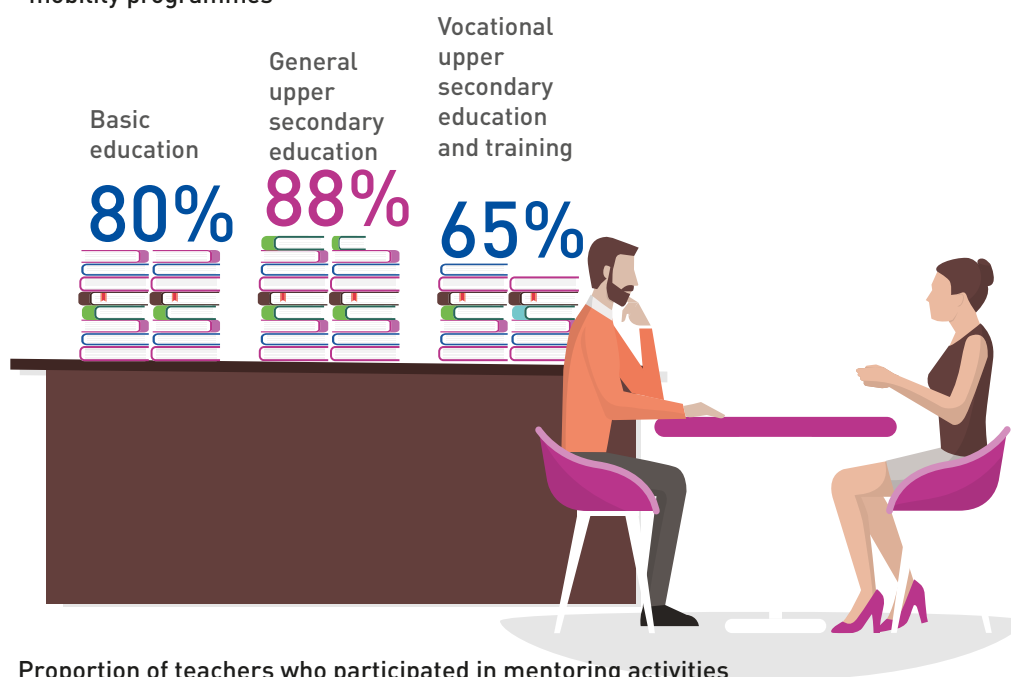


**FIGURE 5. PROPORTION OF FEMALE TEACHERS IN 2016**

The teaching profession is female-dominated everywhere in the world. The Education at a Glance indicators show that the gender distribution in Finland is in line with OECD averages. In the international context, the proportion of men increases when moving towards higher levels of education, and this is also true for Finland.

## 5 TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Proportion of teachers who participated in in-service-training or mobility programmes



Proportion of teachers who participated in mentoring activities

	Has been trained to become a mentor	Has been mentored	Has mentored others
Basic education	1,7%	4,7%	6,2%
General upper secondary education	1,8%	3,1%	6,7%
Upper secondary vocational training and education	2,8%	6,2%	11,3%

Source: Vipunen - Education Statistics Finland

The primary responsibility for continuing professional development (CPD) lies with individual teachers and the employer. Teachers participate in obligatory training with full salary benefits. The state funds CPD that is important for implementing and promoting education policy aims.

Today teachers themselves have been given greater responsibility for developing their professional skills and expertise. More and more attention is being paid to self-motivated CPD.

Teachers in general education are obliged to participate in a maximum of three days per year of CPD or school development under the collective agreements. VET teachers are obligated to participate in school development and continuing professional development activities for up to five days a year. The obligation to participate in CPD depends on the field of education.

Participation in CPD activities does not provide teachers with formal benefits, such as salary increases or promotions. Part of the CPD is compulsory, but studies show that teachers participate in CPD much more than what is formally required. Thus their main motivation is professional development, updating and renewing their knowledge and competence as well as professional ambition.

## **5.1 Teachers' participation in CPD has increased**

Of the Finnish teachers who responded to the TALIS survey, in the lower grades of basic education some 80 per cent (9 percentage points less than the average in other responding countries), and in secondary level education 84 per cent (7 percentage points less than average) had participated in CPD over the last 12 months.

According to their responses, teachers in other parts of the world participate in CPD more than Finnish teachers. Teachers in the other Nordic countries also reported participating in CPD more often than their Finnish colleagues. The highest rate of participation in CPD in Finland's neighbouring countries was reported in Estonia.

According to the Teachers and Principals in Finland 2016 data collection, teachers' participation in CPD as a whole had increased since the previous survey. Major differences can be observed, however, when the results are examined by type of task and region, language and age.

**TABLE 3. DIFFERENCES REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN CPD IN BASIC EDUCATION, GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION AND VET IN 2015**

GENDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women participate in CPD slightly more often than men. The greatest gender difference was found in VET, in which women's rate of participation was 15 percentage points higher than men's.</li> </ul>
AGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The age group 50 to 54 were the most active participants</li> <li>- Those aged under 34 or over 60 were the least active</li> </ul>
TASK TYPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Principals had the highest participation rate</li> <li>- The lowest rate was reported by part-time teachers</li> </ul>

VET teachers' participation rate in CPD has declined. On the other hand, VET teachers participate more frequently in professional development periods in the workplace. About 17 per cent of VET teachers had taken part in such periods in 2015. However, they still clearly fall behind the target of every teacher undertaking a professional development placement at five-year intervals.

## 5.2 Little mentoring is provided in Finland

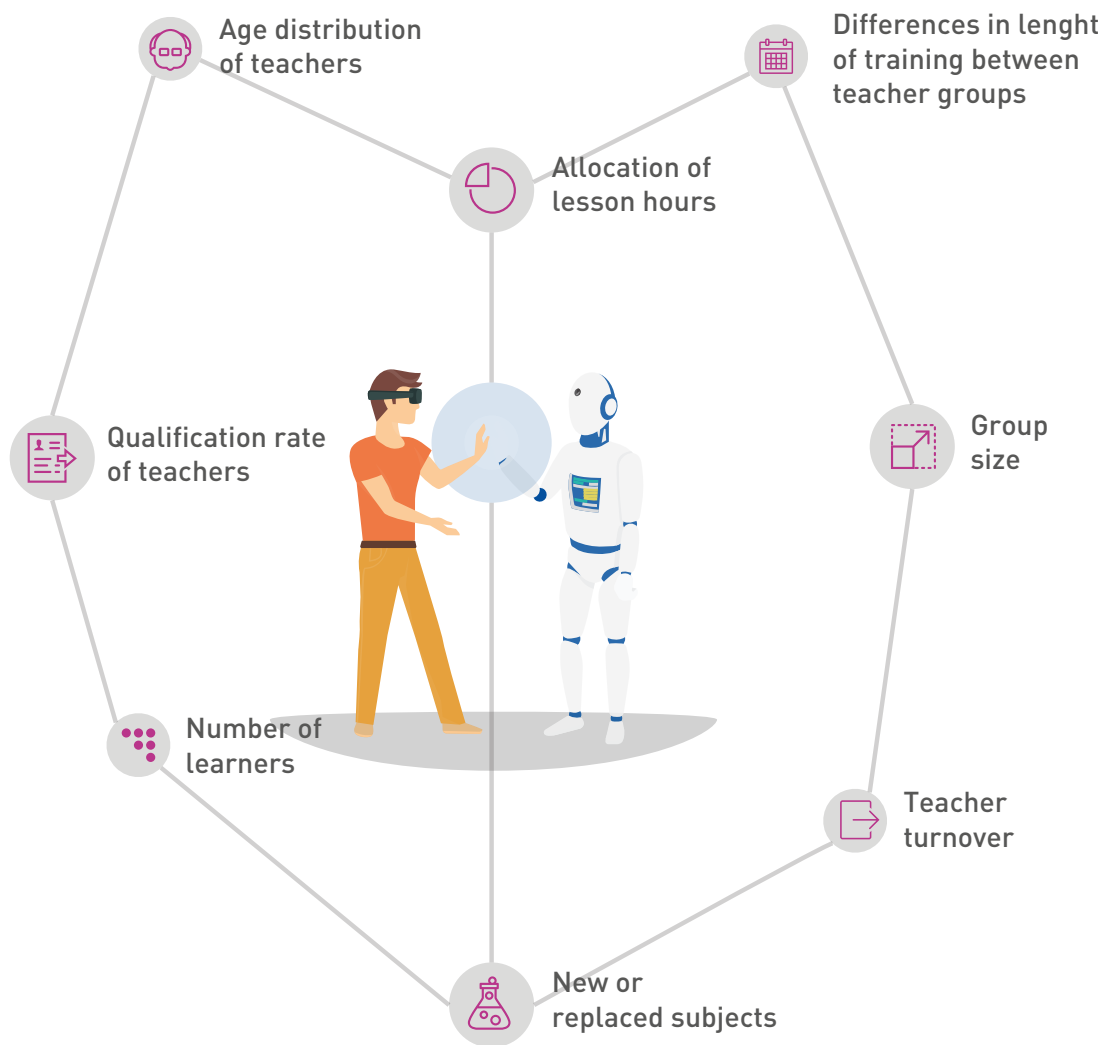
Teachers receive little induction training and support at the beginning of their careers in Finland. Education providers have no obligation to organise induction or mentoring. Systematic efforts, however, have been made to develop mentoring for some time.

The Teachers and Principals in Finland survey contained questions about mentoring. This referred to support activities in an educational institution where more experienced colleagues or external experts guide new teachers, either individually or in groups. The participation rate in mentoring was the lowest in basic education. Depending on the level of education, approximately 2 per cent to 3 per cent of teachers had been trained as mentors during 2015.

Even by international standards, Finnish teachers rarely participated in mentoring. Of the Finnish teachers who responded to the TALIS survey, only three per cent had been assigned a mentor at the lower secondary level. On average, 13 per cent of the respondents to the survey had a mentor. At primary education level, fewer teachers in the OECD countries on average had mentors than at the upper secondary level. In Finland, this difference was not significant.

While the mentoring activities are not yet widespread, on a positive note, there has been a significant increase in Finland in the use of development plans. An increasing number of teachers have a personal training and development plan to support their professional development. The purpose of the professional development plan is to support a teacher in his or her work by identifying the teacher's strengths and setting targets for competence to be developed.

## 6 NEEDS FOR TEACHERS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE



Factors affecting the anticipation of the need for teachers

Some of the factors affecting the need for teachers are difficult to anticipate. The impacts of on-going major changes in VET on teacher needs are a big question. The results of the Teachers and Principals in Finland survey make it possible to monitor changes in qualifications and age distribution, thus guiding the decisions on intake in teacher education.

The results of the Teachers and Principals in Finland survey 2016 indicate that increases in the intake to teacher education provided at universities and universities of applied sciences have had a positive effect on the availability of qualified teachers. For some groups, however, the intake needs to be increased.

The qualification rate of special class teachers and special needs teachers remains at 87 per cent, and more teachers for these roles should be educated in the future. On the other hand, there is a surplus of certain groups of subject teachers (including history, religion and some languages).

The growing need for special needs teachers is a global phenomenon. In the TALIS 2013 survey, principals in the OECD countries reported that the greatest need is felt for special needs teachers, especially in lower secondary schools. An increasing need for special needs teachers was also seen in VET.

In Finland, we now need start preparing for future retirements. Retirements will affect large groups of teachers (for example, mathematics and science subject teachers). More than 56 per cent of VET teachers are already aged 50 or over, and they will be approaching retirement age relatively soon.









Print  
ISBN 978-952-13-6459-4  
ISSN 1798-8918

Online  
ISBN 978-952-13-6460-0  
ISSN 1798-8926

