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# Pedagogical principles guide vocational education

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**The pedagogical principles behind Finnish vocational education and training are competence-based education, personalisation, and working life collaboration. These principles have been jointly agreed upon, and since 2018 the legislation has required the educational establishments to adhere to them.**

In competence-based education, the focus is on learning goals and vocational competence requirements. The vocational competence requirements describe in clear and concrete terms what the students need to be able to do when they graduate. These requirements form the content base for personalisation and evaluation. The students' prior competences and/or competence-based assessment are also compared to the requirements.

**“Most of the students’ studies take place in workplaces.”**



Competence-based pedagogy has the following characteristics:

- 1. The competences required by the field are defined in collaboration with the working life as the starting point for the education.**
- 2. Learning is not tied to time, place, or pre-set learning processes and study methods.**
- 3. Competences are often developed in working life environments.**
- 4. Competences are evaluated before the learning process, during it, and after it in comparison with the vocational competence requirements.**
- 5. Evaluation emphasises the recognition of prior competences and the possibility for individual planning or personalisation.**
- 6. Students' self-direction and responsibility are highlighted, which creates readiness for continuous learning.**

The scope of vocational qualifications is described as competence points. They describe the scope, difficulty, and significance of the vocational qualification unit compared to the overall goals of the qualification. They do not describe the time required nor the amount of teaching.

Each student gets a personal competence development plan (PCDP). It contains information about the recognition, accreditation, gaining, developing, and demonstrating the student's competences. In addition, the plan may also include guidance and support actions the student needs in their studies.

Collaboration with the working life means planning, implementing, and developing the training and qualifications at a vocational college in collaboration with the working life. Collaboration is important for predicting the competence goals for education, and enabling the students to learn the ways of the working life already during the studies. A further goal is to offer the students evaluation in practical tasks at workplaces.

Most of the students' studies take place in workplaces. Teachers, workplace instructors, and the student agree together how the competence goals are reached at the workplace. The studying at the workplace is flexibly connected with the studies at, for example, vocational college premises, online learning environments, and virtual learning environments. Reaching the competence goals is further supported by students' independent studying.

The quality of vocational education and its connection to the working life is ensured by working life committees. They represent employers, employees, entrepreneurs, and education providers.



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