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Adult Education and Personalisation

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ADULT EDUCATION

The Adult Education Centre maintains and improves the vocational skills of adults, promotes employment and entrepreneurship, develops the world of work and supports life-long learning.

Competence-based qualifications – the best asset on the labour market

A person who has obtained a competence-based qualification has good employability and can apply to e.g. a polytechnic.

The system of competence-based qualifications gives you a flexible way of renewing and maintaining your vocational skills. A competence-based qualification provides the opportunity to demonstrate your vocational skills regardless of whether you have acquired the skills through work experience, studies or other activities. What counts is vocational competence. The world of work and industry takes an active part in planning, implementing and evaluating competence-based qualifications.

A competence-based qualification involves three different levels:

- Those with a vocational upper secondary qualification are capable of taking jobs in the field.
- Those with a further vocational qualification possess the vocational skills required of a professional.
- A person with a specialist vocational qualification masters the most demanding tasks.

Vocational skill requirements determine the level of competence. Taking a qualification requires the mastery of the vocational skills needed in the field. The requirements have been set forth in collaboration with business and industry based on work modules. The vocational skills required for competence-based qualifications are defined in the requirements of competence-based qualifications set forth by the Finnish National Board of Education. You can get familiar with the requirements and test your current knowledge at www.osaan.fi (in Finnish).

There are no requirements in terms of age, work experience or education in competence-based qualifications. It is even possible to ask a person with varied and wide vocational skills to demonstrate his or her vocational skills directly, without preparatory training.

Demonstrations are practical tasks. Vocational skills are assessed by experts in the world of work and training. You yourself also assess your vocational skills.



Assessors of demonstrations are representatives of employers, employees and a training institution in the field. It is what is called tripartite assessment. The areas to be assessed and the criteria for assessment have been recorded in the requirements for each qualification. The person's own teacher does not act as an assessor of demonstrations as the qualification system is based on impartial assessment. By contrast, the self-assessment of the person him- or herself is important. Self-assessment also serves to demonstrate to the assessors the vocational maturity level of the student.

The assessment of vocational skills is conducted in accordance with the contract for arranging competence-based qualifications and the plan for arranging competence-based qualifications prepared by the Educational Federation of Municipalities. The Adult Education Centre also takes care of the training of competence-based test assessors. In the implementation of competence-based qualifications co-operation is carried out with other training institutions in the field when needed.

Variety and dependability are key focus areas in the assessment of competence-based tests. A person who takes a qualification can, within 14 days from the time when he or she has been informed of the assessment of the competence-based test or a part of it (through the organiser of the qualification), turn to the qualification committee and claim for rectification of the assessment.

If a mistake has clearly been made in the assessment, assessors may carry out a new assessment without a claim for rectification.

You get a qualification certificate as soon as all parts included in the qualification have been passed and accepted. When needed, you can also obtain a certificate for finishing a part of a qualification. The qualification certificate issued by the qualification committee is official.

For further information on competence-based qualifications and training, see the following pages:

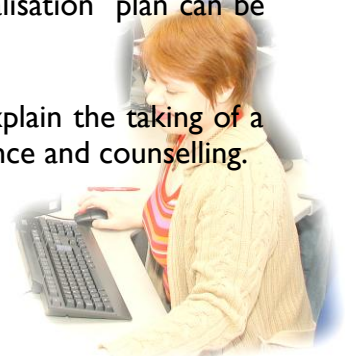
www.oph.fi/nayttotutkinnot

www.koulutusnetti.fi

Personalisation in three stages

The competence-based qualification system puts special emphasis on individuality. The person responsible for competence-based qualifications at the Adult Education Centre, the counsellor and the person responsible for training take care of planning and implementing the personalisation of a competence-based qualification and preparatory training in collaboration with the person taking the qualification, the workplace representative and other necessary experts. An personalisation plan is prepared for everybody taking a qualification right at the beginning, with the plan covering all the details concerning the taking of the qualification and acquiring the necessary vocational skills, such as where, when and how you demonstrate your vocational skills and how you acquire the needed competence. An personalisation plan can be amended upon joint agreement.

It is important for you to participate in the orientation sessions held to explain the taking of a qualification and studying and to attend personally arranged meetings, guidance and counselling.



Stage 1: Personalisation at the applying stage

In the operations of the Adult Education Centre personalisation starts with the first contact made by an adult and will continue for as long as you are registered at the training institution. You will receive further orientation to personalisation under the guidance of the counsellor, the person in charge of the competence-based qualification and the person responsible for the training.

After election an personalisation plan will be prepared for you. Experts will see to it that you will get factual and necessary guidance in taking the qualification and acquiring the vocational skills needed. It is also vital that you yourself participate in the planning of your competence-based qualification and learning to ensure the best outcome.

The starting point is that all skills you have acquired are acknowledged as a qualification or a part of it without preparatory training. If your skills are at the level determined in the written vocational skill requirements for the qualification and therefore comply with the requirements of the world of work today, your skills are proposed to be approved and acknowledged directly as a qualification or a part of it, either based on earlier reliable certificates or by asking you to demonstrate your skills in genuine tasks.

Stage 2: Personalisation in taking a competence-based qualification

Personalisation in taking a competence-based qualification means the planning and implementation of justified demonstrations that are suitable to you. A demonstration given in a demonstration session means that a student taking a qualification shows the vocational skills set forth in the qualification requirements, assessed by experts of the job and training.

Demonstrations are usually given in workplaces, in genuine work tasks. They are composed of work modules valid in each vocational field, and their standard is based on the requirements set forth for the qualification.

As far as personalisation in taking a qualification is concerned, the Adult Education Centre always follows the vocational skill requirements, items to be assessed, criteria of assessment and ways to demonstrate vocational skills that have been defined for the qualification. The schedules and practical arrangements of demonstration sessions are planned to suit you and the situation in the workplace. As a person taking a qualification you may participate in the planning of the setting and the schedule of the competence-based demonstration session under the guidance of the person responsible for the competence-based qualification. Demonstrations have often been distributed over a longer period of time, with the student taking one module at a time.

Stage 3: Personalisation in acquiring necessary vocational skills

Acquiring the needed vocational skills means augmenting your competence in those areas where the targeted competence or vocational skills are still deficient. Personalisation of the



acquisition of the needed vocational skills means planning and implementing flexible study arrangements and learning opportunities as well as choosing learning environments taking into account your life and work situations, earlier competence, defined learning needs and resources.

The acquisition of necessary vocational skills is individualised using counselling, guidance and teaching methods as well as various supporting measures.

ADULT LEARNING

Curriculum

All education and training given at the Adult Education Centre relies on curriculums, i.e. certain general implementation plans, which can be used to individualise learning. The purpose of a curriculum is to help students, teachers and representatives of the world of work and to serve as a tool in the planning and implementation of learning, teaching and guidance.

Adult as a learner

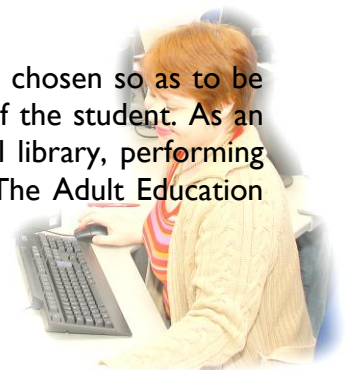
In adult education the role and responsibility taking of the student him- or herself stand out. Studying does not mean the reception of canned information but comparing new information with old, dwelling upon alternatives and solving problems. What counts is not so much remembering details but seeing the big picture and applying the information in practice. An adult's learning is also supported by networking and collaboration. The life experiences and know-how of everybody become an asset for the whole group of students.

Traditional teaching has more and more given way to learning counselling and to a situation where the teacher more than anything promotes learning. This often takes place in the form of classroom or workshop teaching, in the workplace under guidance and increasingly often in the form of e-learning.

In one-to-one counselling discussions held with the teacher and counsellor if needed you choose, based on the learning needs established for you and aided by the teacher, what, how and where to study. Because of this students in the same group may have different learning paths leading to the same goal, i.e. a qualification. What matters most is that you yourself take responsibility for your learning in the way you have agreed to do in your personalisation plan with the responsible person and counsellor. Your signature means that you are committed to studying.

Distance learning

Distance working is suitable for some people. The learning environment is chosen so as to be the best option in terms of the subject matter studied and the situation of the student. As an example you may study one or more days at your home or at your local library, performing tasks and acquiring information either on your own or in a small group. The Adult Education



Centre uses e-learning environments. Distance learning is, however, always guided: there is a contact with the teacher, and outputs are assessed in a similar fashion as in other learning. The person responsible for training introduces you to distance learning. The counsellor also helps in issues related to distance learning. In labour market training, the use of distance learning is agreed upon in supply contracts.

On-the-job learning

Nearly all training includes on-the-job learning periods, during which you have the opportunity to combine theory with practical situations. The student, workplace representative and teacher in collaboration prepare a learning plan, covering the goals and the assessment. Things taken into account in preparing plans are the competence and development needs of the student as well as the needs in the local work community and opportunities to be employed. The learning and development tasks related to the studies are integrated into on-the-job learning. In the workplace you will have an on-the-job instructor, working in collaboration with the teacher.

In apprenticeship training on-the-job learning is planned and implemented in co-operation between the apprenticeship training centre, student, employer and workplace instructor.

Vocational studies of immigrants

At the applying stage we determine how well the person knows Finnish society and working culture and whether he/she has work experience in Finland. We observe the fact that many immigrants need time to absorb these things.

Competence-based qualifications and learning of immigrants are based in the same requirements and goals as in all competence-based qualifications and preparatory training. The background factors, language skills and special needs are determined and taken into account in personalisation plans. An immigrant student has the opportunity to study the Finnish language and to get tutoring in it to support vocational learning within the bounds allowed by various training forms.

We are different learners

Each of us has a personal way to learn. At the applying stage and after the election we will determine the needs in the area of learning and counselling for everybody. The personalisation of the qualification and learning are planned based on this determination. If you are aware of any special requirements for support or counselling in terms of your learning, please contact the counsellor so that you can together find a solution to challenges of this kind. The sooner the needs come up, the better tools can be found to help the taking of a qualification and learning.

Assessment of learning

Learning will be assessed continually in order for you to be aware of your progression and use it personally in the planning and implementation of your learning. Assessment is interactive.



Students, representatives of the world of work and teachers assess the achievement of learning goals and their effectiveness all the time. You will be helped to find your vocational strengths and detect skills that you still need to improve. Your vocational development is supported by the fact that you learn how to assess your own activities.

Items assessed include among others written and practical learning and development tasks carried out on the job. Assessment also takes place in counselling discussions and during counselling related to on-the-job learning. Some training also includes tests and exams.

In apprenticeship training the assessment of theoretical studies is decided by the teacher and in training taking place in the workplace by a person nominated by the employer. The apprenticeship training centre decides upon the combination of theoretical and on-the-job training.

In preparatory training for a vocational upper secondary qualification the assessment scale used is the one defined in the act and decrees on vocational education and training: excellent 3, good 2 and satisfactory 1. In preparatory training for further vocational qualification and specialist qualification the assessment scale is passed - failed.

COUNSELLING

The Adult Education Centre has not only personal counselling in the field of qualification and vocational studies, but also as a wider service corresponding to curator, school psychologist or tutoring activities at other educational institutions. A counselling expert will help you identify how you are as a learner. Likewise, a counselling expert will help you use various tools in order to identify your own learning strengths and your possible learning difficulties, self-direction and counselling needs. Based on the above, the best learning arrangements will be chosen to you in collaboration with the person responsible for training.

The aim in counselling an adult is to promote the well-being of the person taking a qualification and studying as well as supporting the taking of the qualification and learning. Methods used include one-to-one discussions, social guidance, supporting measures related to learning resources, planning of further studies and students' leisure activities.

Counselling discussions are confidential. A meeting with a student's counsellor can be arranged by phone, e-mail or personally. Counsellors will introduce you to how to use counselling services and any supporting measures needed.

Counselling is supported by various ready-made tests and programmes such as www.verkko-ohjaus.net (in Finnish) for adult students/those taking a qualification, adult teachers/ specialists in competence-based qualifications and workplace instructors/ assessors.

