

# VET'S CLIL IN FINLAND

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**sedu**

NATIONAL REPORT



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The VET's CLIL project is aimed at widening the opportunities of VET students in a globalised world by implementing the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) methodology in the curricula.



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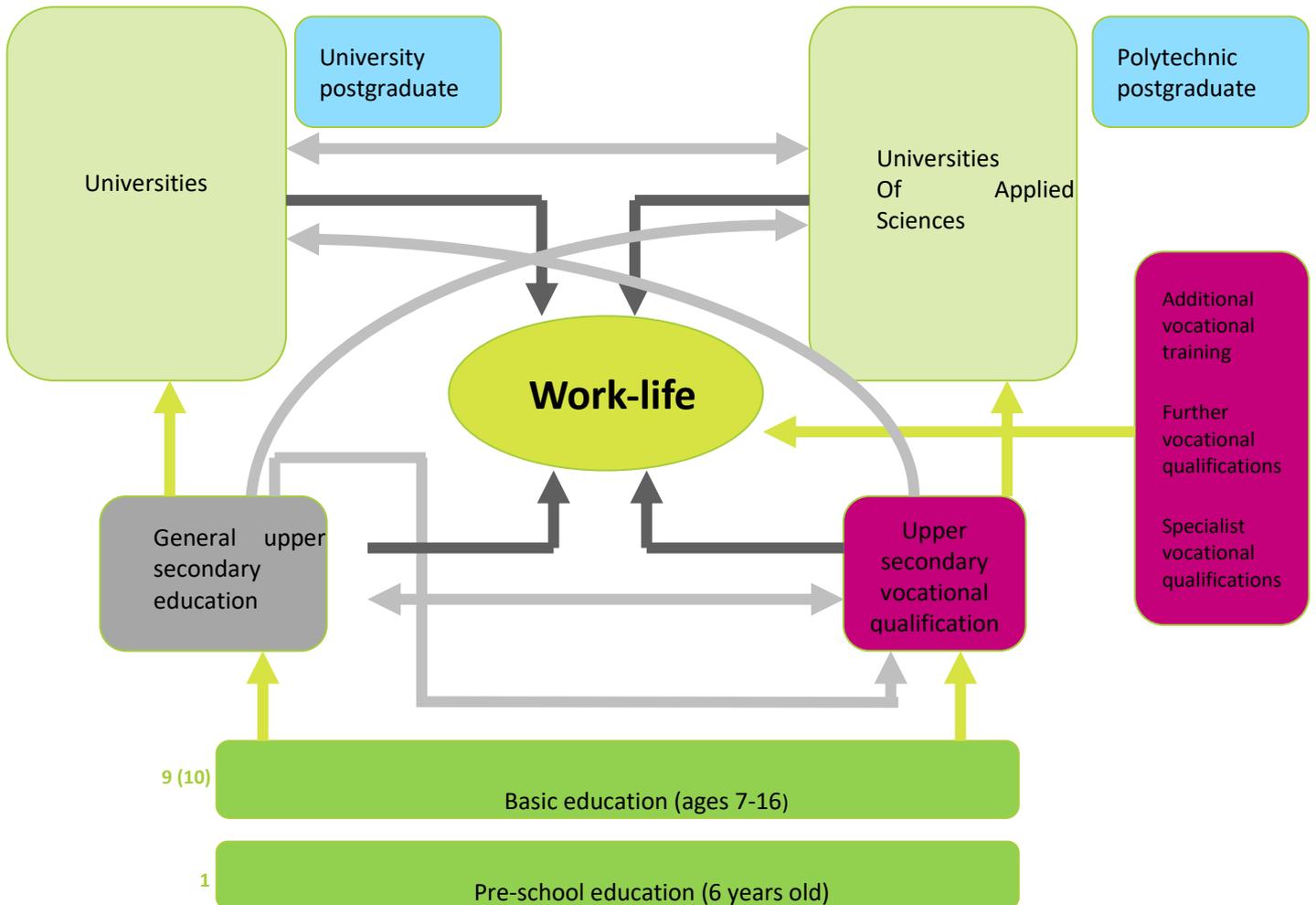
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# 1. VET EDUCATION IN FINLAND<sup>1</sup>

Finland’s educational policy objective is to guarantee **equal educational opportunities for each individual**. The aim is that everyone will complete at least a secondary level qualification. Around half of the students completing their basic education continue to vocational education and training (VET), and the other half pursue general upper secondary education.



<sup>1</sup> The introduction concerning Finnish VET has been compiled from the following handbook: Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland (2018). *Finnish VET in a Nutshell*. Retrieved from: [https://www.oph.fi/download/165770\\_finnish\\_vet\\_in\\_a\\_nutshell.pdf](https://www.oph.fi/download/165770_finnish_vet_in_a_nutshell.pdf).

## 2. VET STUDIES IN FINLAND

### 2.1 COMPETENCE AND FLEXIBILITY ARE KEY PRINCIPLES IN VET QUALIFICATIONS

There are three types of vocational qualifications: *vocational qualifications*, *further vocational qualifications* and *specialist vocational qualifications*. All of them are composed of units of learning outcomes. Vocational qualifications consist of vocational units and common units. Further and specialist qualifications comprise only vocational units and the necessity for common units is assessed when preparing the personal competence development plan.

Vocational units are either compulsory or optional. Students can complete entire parts of them or smaller units, or combine parts of different qualifications based on their needs. Competence requirements are the same in all learning environments, also in workplaces. Qualifications are the same for young people and adults.

Vocational qualifications are independent of the way vocational skills have been acquired. As long as the individual's competences meet the national qualification requirements, they can be acquired in different learning environments and ways, at different times. Students show their skills at practical work competence demonstrations.

### 2.2 THE LATEST TRENDS IN VET IN FINLAND

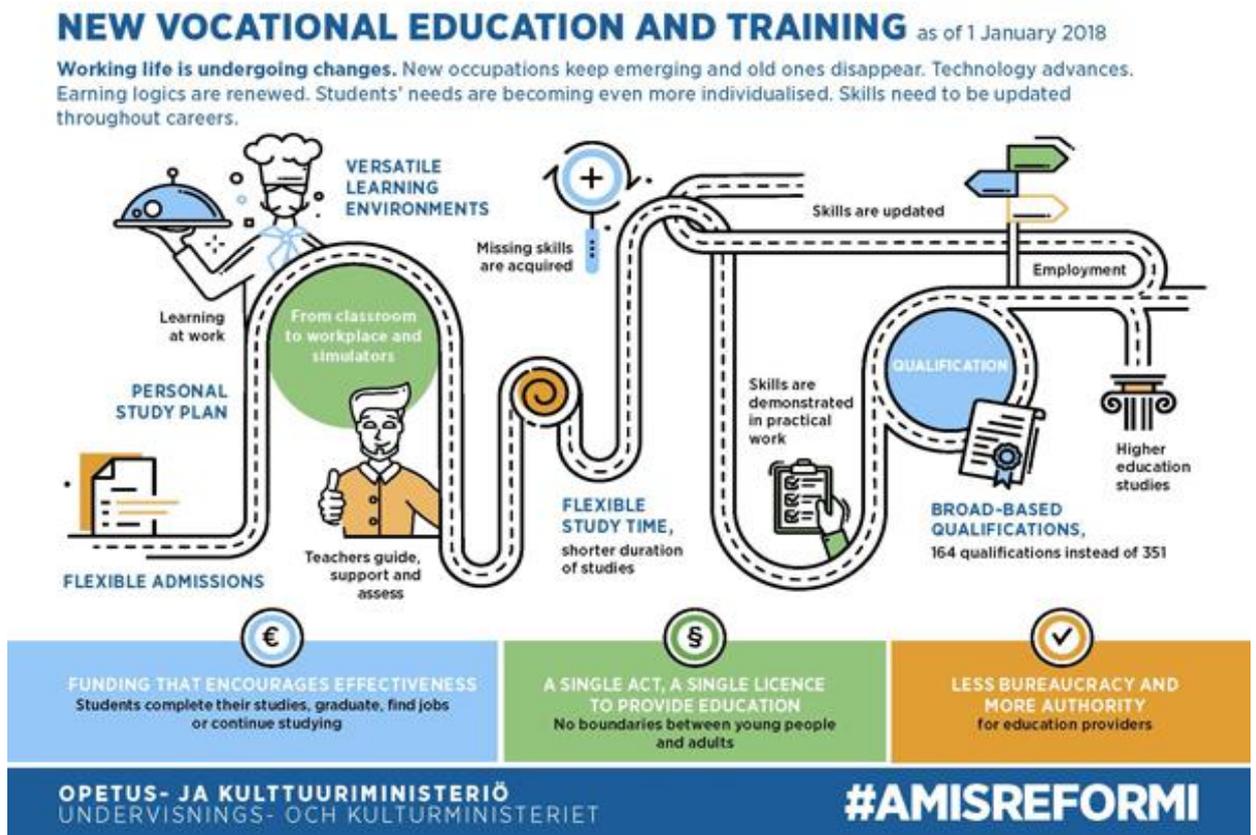
The continuous changes in working life and the transformation of work require constantly updated competences and applied specialised skills. Therefore, another key principle is continuous competence development. In fact, more than half of VET students are between 20 and 60 years old. Finnish vocational education and training is **competence-based and customer-oriented**. Students are assessed and credited for previously acquired competence and only acquire the missing competence during their studies. The system allows students to utilise units of the qualifications and smaller parts corresponding to their own needs.

Prospective students can apply to VET whenever suitable and start their studies **flexibly throughout the year**. National joint application is organised each spring for those who have completed basic education and who do not have a secondary qualification. The aim is to ensure each young person a student place after basic education. A personal competence development plan is drawn up for each student. The plan is drawn up by a teacher or a guidance counsellor together with the student and, when applicable, representative of working life. The plan charts and recognises the skills previously acquired by the student and outlines



what kind of competences the student needs and how they will be acquired in different learning environments. Students may have obtained relevant skills from working life, another school, international study, work placement periods, family and leisure activities or through the media. Previous learning is recognised and only the missing skills are acquired. The plan also includes information on the necessary supportive measures. The support received by a student may involve special teaching and studying arrangements due to learning difficulties, injury or illness, or studies that support study abilities.

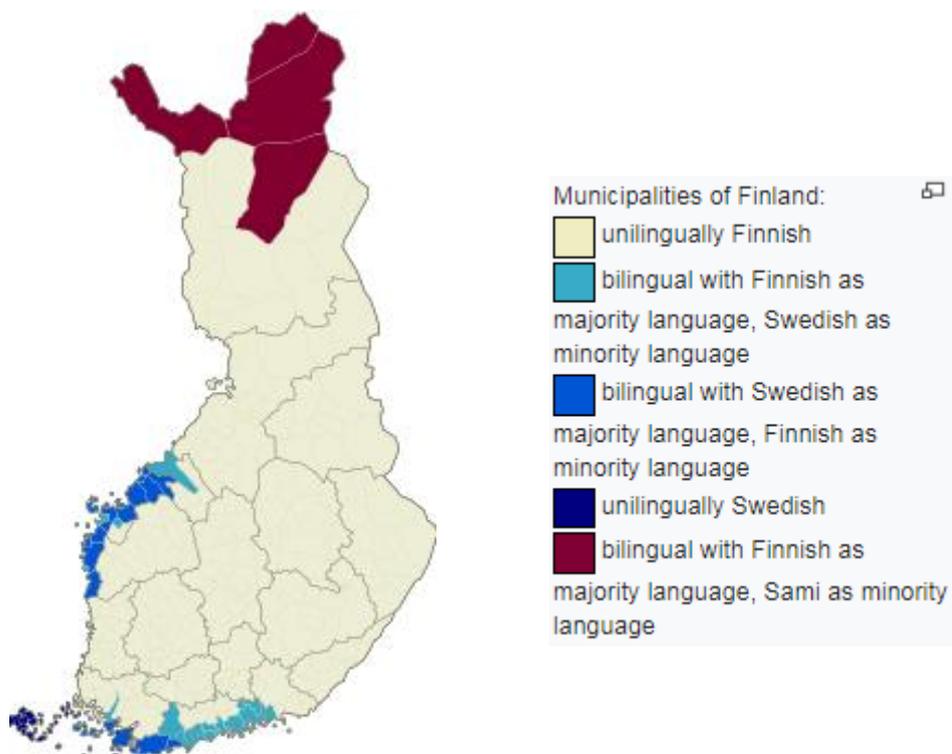
**A part of the learning process always takes place in workplaces.** Studying at the workplace is either based on apprenticeships or on training agreements. Both can be flexibly combined. Learning at work can be used to acquire competences in all vocational qualifications as well as other training advancing or supplementing vocational skills. Studying at the workplace can cover an entire degree, a module or a smaller part of the studies.



### 3. CLIL FACTS

#### 3.1 LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND<sup>2</sup>

Because of its history, Finland is like a multilingual state. According to the constitutional law, Finland has two national languages, Finnish and Swedish. There are about 300,000 Swedish-speaking Finns (5.6% of the population of Finland). Most Swedish speakers live in the coastal areas of Uusimaa, Turunmaa and Ostrobothnia. In the Sami region in Lapland, the Sami language can be taught as a mother tongue or as a second language, or used as the language of instruction. There are about 10,000 Sami people, living in the Northernmost parts of Finland (pictures below: Wikipedia).



#### 3.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF CLIL

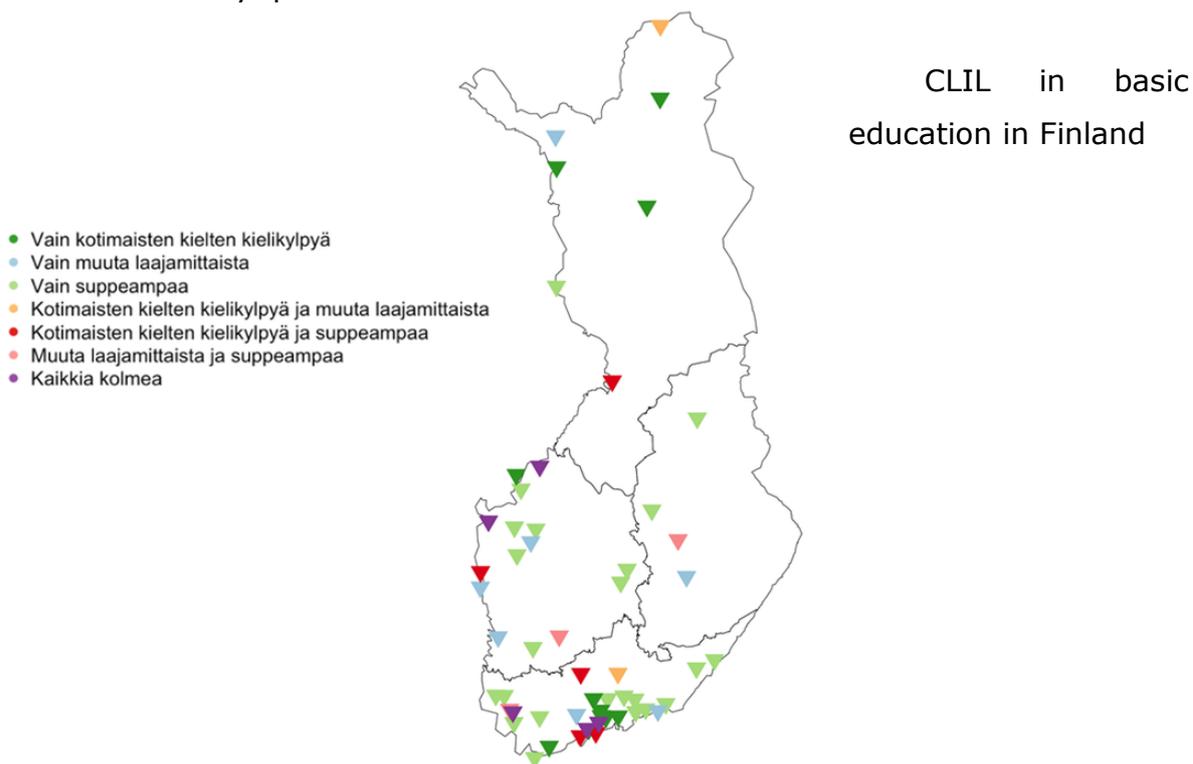
The Finnish system separates teaching in national languages (immersion teaching) from teaching in a foreign language. However, both can be referred to as CLIL teaching. CLIL teaching started in Finland in 1987, when the first Swedish and Finnish language immersion started in the city of Vaasa, a multilingual city on

<sup>2</sup> Marsh, David, *et al.* (1994). "Language teacher training and bilingual education in Finland." Continuing Education Centre. University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Retrieved from: [http://www.celelc.org/projects/Past\\_Projects/TNP\\_Languages/TNP1\\_resources/SP6NatRepFI.pdf](http://www.celelc.org/projects/Past_Projects/TNP_Languages/TNP1_resources/SP6NatRepFI.pdf).



the West coast. The popularity of the CLIL method has grown ever since in the whole country.<sup>3</sup> Studying in English is an increasingly enticing option for many families in bigger cities in Finland.<sup>4</sup>

A survey conducted by the Jyväskylä University in 2012 showed that, altogether, 41 municipalities provide CLIL teaching in Finland on a larger or smaller scale for different pupil levels and age groups. More municipalities would like to implement CLIL, but there is a lack of teachers, and, more specifically, teachers with the necessary qualifications.



The basic education (primary and secondary education) is strictly regulated in Finland and teachers need to meet requirements set by law to be able to work as a CLIL teacher. The requirements for immersion teaching are the following:

- Having completed 80 ETCS of studies of the language in question at a Finnish university , or
- Having passed the language test of the Finnish National Agency of Education in the level 5, or
- Having completed of the whole qualification abroad in the language in question.

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<sup>3</sup> Kangasvieri, Teija *et al.* (2012). *Selvitys kotimaisten kielten kielikylpyopetuksen ja vieraskielisen opetuksen tilanteesta Suomessa: kuntatason tarkastelu.* Jyväskylän Yliopisto, Soveltavan kielentutkimuksen keskus (Solki)

<sup>4</sup> Helminen, Laura and Katajamäki, Miika (2015). *An Introduction to Teaching in Finland for International Staff.*

For teaching in a foreign language (e.g. English, French, German or Russian) the same requirements apply, but the school can decide additional ways for teachers to demonstrate their skills. The universities of Vaasa and Oulu provide training to obtain teacher qualifications in immersion teaching, and the University of Jyväskylä and the Juliet Programme (35 ECTS) offer training for classroom teachers to qualify as a teacher in a foreign language. Also additional trainings in CLIL methods are available at Finnish universities.

The VET sector is completely different from the primary and secondary level, and the above-mentioned requirements do not apply. In CLIL teaching, each education provider can decide for themselves what the regulations are concerning the teachers' language level in the language in which they teach. The education provider is responsible for making sure that the teacher's language skills are sufficient.

Furthermore, no comprehensive surveys have been made on the implementation of CLIL methods in VET schools since the now outdated report of David Marsh in 1994<sup>5</sup>. There are no up-to-date national statistics concerning the use of CLIL methods, such as statistics on the number of teachers and students using CLIL's VET. The National Agency for Education confirms that there are many local trials and projects utilizing CLIL methods, but at the moment, there are no national statistics with detailed information.

## 4. CLIL IN THE SEINÄJOKI REGION

In the Seinäjoki region, in Southern Ostrobothnia, bilingual teaching has been implemented in general education and pre-primary education for 10 years. The languages used in bilingual instruction are Finnish and English. There are bilingual classes in Marttila primary school (grades 1-6) and Seinäjoen Lyseo secondary school (grades 7-9). The method used for bilingual instruction is CLIL. The distribution of lesson hours between Finnish and English instruction is decided depending on the topic but the minimum amount of English instruction is 25%. The level of English increases gradually depending on the group and the skill level of the pupils. Reading and writing is taught in Finnish.

Children who are interested in taking part in CLIL apply for admission in the CLIL class and participate in an aptitude test. After compulsory education, students are able to continue learning in English in Seinäjoki upper secondary school. The

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<sup>5</sup> Marsh, David, et al. (1994). "Language teacher training and bilingual education in Finland." Continuing Education Centre. University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Retrieved from: [http://www.celelc.org/projects/Past\\_Projects/TNP\\_Languages/TNP1\\_resources/SP6NatRepFI.pdf](http://www.celelc.org/projects/Past_Projects/TNP_Languages/TNP1_resources/SP6NatRepFI.pdf).



national curriculum offers some flexibility at the local level and CLIL learning is one of the elements in the local curriculum in Seinäjoki.

In the vocational sector, the local VET provider SEDU offers practical nurse training in English since 2010:

- New practical nurse group admission every two years, 15-20 students per group
- International and Finnish students
- Key concepts taught in Finnish/English, 80% of teaching in English
- Work placements and skills demonstrations in Finnish

In addition, two CLIL groups in electrical engineering have been admitted in SEDU during the years 2010 – 2014, and the plan is to continue this training also in the future. Another CLIL trial in the Business & Administration sector was carried out in 2015. Some short projects and CLIL trials have been carried out in the agricultural and surface treatment sectors in SEDU. There is definitely a need to develop teachers' skills in CLIL and empower them to try new methodologies and tools for a more advanced CLIL.