

Competence-based qualifications; Competence-based qualifications for adults

The system of competence-based qualifications offers the adult population in particular a flexible way to renew and maintain their vocational skills. In competence-based qualifications, vocational skills are demonstrated through competence tests, regardless of whether the skills have been acquired through work experience, studies or other activities. What matters most is vocational competence.

Vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications, and specialist vocational qualifications can be obtained as competence-based qualifications. Besides 52 vocational upper secondary qualifications, there are nearly 300 further vocational and specialist vocational qualifications on offer. In 2004, more than 51,000 people participated in competence tests. Working life, trade and industry have a strong role in the planning, implementation and assessment of competence tests.

There are three levels in the competence tests

- Those who have a vocational upper secondary qualification can switch to jobs in the relevant field.
- Those who have a further vocational qualification have the vocational skills required of professionals in the field.
- Those who have a specialist vocational qualification are competent in the most demanding tasks in the field.

Obtaining a competence-based qualification requires competence in the skills of the field. The skill requirements have been set, in collaboration with the trade and industry, on the basis of work modules in working life. The vocational skills required in competence-based qualifications are defined in the requirements of competence-based qualification, drawn up by the Finnish National Board of Education.

The Finnish National Board of Education appoints a qualification committee for each competence-based qualification. It has a representation of employees, employers and teachers of the field and, if need be, entrepreneurs. The qualification committees agree with education providers and other organizations on the arrangements for competence-based education. The qualification committees are in charge of arranging and monitoring competence tests. They also develop the system of competence-based qualifications.

Training for competence-based qualifications is provided especially by organizations specializing in adult education. Qualification committees make the contracts for arranging competence tests primarily with them.

Obtaining a competence-based qualification is not dependent on how the competence has been acquired. It is possible to participate in a competence test without any training for competence-based qualification. If a person needs further vocational skills to be able to obtain a qualification, he or she can gain them, for instance, through self-motivated education, employment training, apprenticeship training, and corporate or staff training.

When all the parts required for a qualification have been completed, the person will receive the certificate. It is given by the qualification committee. The committee also gives a certificate for partial completion of a qualification.

Education System Chart

