



OPETUSHALLITUS  
UTBILDNINGSTYRELSEN

# Recognition of foreign qualifications at the Finnish National Agency for Education

Unit for Recognition of Qualifications and Language Proficiency  
Finnish National Agency for Education  
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# Contents of the webinar

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- Tasks of the Unit for Recognition of Qualifications and Language Proficiency
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# Practical webinar information

- We cannot answer questions concerning specific applications.
- Please keep your microphone muted during the presentation.
- During the presentation, you can ask questions in the chat.
- There is an opportunity to ask questions at specific points during and after the presentation.
- If you want to ask a question, please use the *raise hand* function.
- The links in the presentation can be opened to a web browser during the webinar.

# Tasks of the Unit for Recognition of Qualifications and Language Proficiency

- Recognition decisions on higher education completed abroad
- Information centre on recognition procedures and on Finnish and foreign qualifications
- National assistance centre for the European Union's Professional Qualifications Directive
- National Co-ordination Point (NCP) for the European Qualifications Framework
- Tasks related to National language proficiency examination and certificate (YKI), Civil service language proficiency examination and certificate (VKT), Register of authorized translators, and Register of legal interpreters

# **Website for recognition of qualifications**

# Website on recognition of qualifications provides information for different parties

- All information of this presentation can be found on [our website on recognition of qualifications](#) (in English, Finnish and Swedish).
- Website has separate sections for different target groups:
  - **For a holder of a foreign qualification**
  - For recipients of a decision on recognition
  - **For guidance purposes**
  - **For employers**

# Information for a holder of a foreign qualification

- Do I need a decision on recognition of my qualification?
  - Service guide for recognition of qualifications, flow charts and guidance videos on the recognition of qualifications
- Applying for a decision
  - Application instructions, electronic application forms
- Regulated professions in Finland
- Occupation-specific information (education and training related professions, early childhood and care professions, recognition of a degree as comparable to a Finnish Master of Laws degree)

# Information on recognition of qualifications for guidance purposes

Examples of materials available on [our website for guidance purposes](#):

- Brochure on recognition of qualifications (in English, Finnish, Swedish, Arabic, Estonian, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Persian, Chinese)
- [Flow chart: is a decision on recognition needed?](#)  
(in English, Finnish, Swedish, Ukrainian; more translations to come)
- Guide on recognition of teacher education and early childhood education and care education completed abroad (e.g. information on demonstration of proficiency in Finnish and Swedish)
- [Information about systems of education in different countries](#) (17 diagrams)
- Guidance videos, other links for guidance practitioners working with immigrants

# Information to employers about recognition of qualifications

Examples of materials available on [our website for employers](#):

- When does the employee need a decision?
- Information about the Finnish National Agency for Education's decisions
- Occupation-specific information (regulated professions for which the Finnish National Agency for Education is the competitive authority) e.g.:
  - Guide and chart: Working as a teacher in Finland with a foreign qualification
  - Guide: Working in early childhood education and care with a foreign qualification
  - Chart: Eligibility for a profession in early childhood education and care based on a foreign qualification

# **Recognition of qualifications in Finland**



# What is recognition of qualifications and who are responsible for it?

- Recognition of qualifications refers to a decision on the eligibility that foreign qualifications provide when applying for a job or a studies.
- Depending on the purpose of the recognition, the decisions are made by:
  - the Finnish National Agency for Education
  - other competent authority according to the professional field in question
  - educational institutions
  - the employer
- Private sector employers generally assess themselves the eligibility that a foreign degree gives as well as other competencies.

# Regulated professions in Finland

- A profession is regulated when according to the Finnish legislation, a specific training, qualification or the right to practice a profession is required.
- If a person has qualified abroad to a profession that is regulated in Finland, they will need a recognition decision from the determined competent authority.
- A list of all regulated professions and their competent authorities can be found [on our website](#).

# Examples on the competent authorities

The competent authorities in the given professional fields provide more information as well as instructions for applying for a recognition decision, for example:

- **Finnish National Agency for Education:** teachers, professions in early childhood education and care, professions requiring a Master of Laws degree
- **National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira):** professions in social welfare and health care
- **Finnish Food Authority (Ruokavirasto):** veterinarians

# Recognition decision is not always needed

- Non-regulated professions
  - Employers decide independently on the recognition of foreign qualifications.
- Completing a degree in Finland
  - Educational institutions decide independently on the recognition of foreign qualifications.



# **Decisions on recognition of qualifications made by the Finnish National Agency for Education**

# Decisions made by the Finnish National Agency for Education

The applicant wants to apply for a post whose statutory eligibility requirement is a higher education degree:

- **Decision on the recognition of the degree level.**

The applicant wants to apply for a post that has specific statutory eligibility requirements, e.g. teaching and training, Master of Laws:

- **Decision on eligibility to a certain profession**
- **Decision on recognition of studies as comparable to a certain qualification or study module.**

# General information on decisions made by the Finnish National Agency for Education

- The decision is made based on the documentation of a personal application and it is subject to a fee.
- The decisions are based on law, and the decisions are formulated according to the statutory eligibility requirements in force at the time of the issuance of the decision.
- The decisions may include additional requirements: supplementary studies, adaptation period or aptitude test.
- The decision gives eligibility in terms of education. When appointing to a post or position, there might also be other requirements, such as language skills.

# Legislation applied in the decision-making

The Finnish National Agency for Education issues decisions based on two laws:

- **Professional Qualifications Act (1384/2015),**  
based on a European Union directive  
(In Finnish: Laki ammattipätevyyden tunnustamisesta)
- **Act on Eligibility for Public Posts Provided by Higher Education Studies Completed Abroad (1385/2015)**  
(In Finnish: Laki ulkomailla suoritettujen korkeakouluopintojen tuottamasta virkakelpoisuudesta)

The country where the degree was completed, applicant's nationality, eligibility in the degree issuing country as well as the level and content of the studies affect which one of the above laws are applied in the decision.

# Recognition of professional qualifications

- Issued based on a professional qualification achieved from another EU/EEA member state or Switzerland by an EU/EEA or Swiss citizen
- Can a conditional decision be issued? Yes.
- Additional requirements: aptitude test or adaptation period
- Can work experience or life-long learning be taken into account? Yes.
- Can the decision grant only a part of an eligibility? No.

# Example 1: Decision based on the Professional Qualifications Act 1/2

*Bachelor of Education, Ireland, 2017*

- The applicant's professional qualification in Ireland: *teacher*
- Content of the education: four years of higher education studies, specialising in teaching different subject to pupils aged from 4 to 12.
- Substantial difference to the national training requirement:  
a difference in the content of education: the education does not contain studies providing capabilities to apply scientific knowledge and methods.
- The applicant's professional experience or knowledge, skills and competence acquired through lifelong learning: none

# Example 1: Decision based on the Professional Qualifications Act 2/2

The Finnish National Agency for Education's decision on the recognition of professional qualifications:

- The certificates will confer the eligibility referred to in section 4, subsection 1(1) of the Teaching Qualifications Decree (986/1998) to **provide class instruction in elementary education** once the applicant has completed either an aptitude test or an adaptation period.

# Recognition of comparability of higher education degrees and higher education studies

- Issued based on the comparability of degrees and studies to the statutory eligibility requirements of a regulated profession
- Can a conditional decision be issued? Yes.
- Additional requirements: supplementary higher education studies.
- Can work experience and life-long learning be taken into account? No.
- Can the decision grant only a part of an eligibility? Yes. The applicant can have full eligibility by supplementing their higher educational studies in Finland.

## Example 2: Decision based on the Act on Eligibility for Public Posts 1/2

*Lisans*, Turkey, 2019

- Content of the education: four-year higher education degree in Early Childhood Education and Care. It has included studies preparing for the education and upbringing of children aged 0–6 years.

## Example 2: Decision based on the Act on Eligibility for Public Posts 2/2

Finnish National Agency for Education's decision on comparability of the degree and studies:

- The higher education degree completed by the applicant is comparable to a **bachelor's degree** completed in Finland.
- The higher education degree completed by the applicant is comparable **to the Finnish Bachelor of Arts (Education)** degree.
- The applicant's higher education studies are comparable to the **studies providing professional skills for tasks in ECEC and pre-primary education (60 credits)** completed in Finland, if the applicant completes **supplementary studies** at a Finnish university.

## Example 3: Decision based on the Act on Eligibility for Public Posts 1/2

*Spetsialist*, Ukraine, 1992

- Content of the education: five-year higher education degree. The degree included teacher education which prepared the applicant for teaching physics at different levels of education and in different educational forms.

## Example 3: Decision based on the Act on Eligibility for Public Posts 2/2

Finnish National Agency for Education's decision on comparability of the degree and studies:

- The applicant's higher education degree is recognised as comparable to a **master's degree** completed in Finland.
- The studies in physics included in the applicant's degree are recognised as comparable to **120 credits of studies in physics as a teaching subject**.
- The applicant's studies in education will be recognised as comparable to the **60 credits of teacher's pedagogical studies** completed in Finland if the applicant completes **supplementary teacher education studies** at a Finnish higher education institution.

# **Applying for a recognition decision**



# Applying for a decision

- The applicant fills in the electronic application form on [Studyinfo](#) in English, Finnish or Swedish.
- Application is personal: information on the application and its processing e.g. to an employer only through the applicant.
- The applicant must include all the required documents to the application.
- Information on the processing and possible requests for supplementation are sent to the applicant by email.
- Average processing time is 3 to 4 months, and each application is assessed individually.
- The decision is given in Finnish or Swedish.

# Instructions on how to fill in the application form 1/2

- The application form includes instructions on how to fill in the application form, please read them carefully. If you fill in the application correctly, it can speed up the recognition process.
- It is important to consider, which decision type to choose on the form.
  1. Recognition of the level of the degree
  2. Eligibility for a profession (teaching positions, professions in early childhood education and care)
  3. Recognition of studies as comparable to a certain qualification or study module (e.g. Master of Laws degree, teacher's pedagogical studies)

# Instructions on how to fill in the application form 2/2

- Information on the highest degree completed should be provided in the section Qualification 1.
- Information on the possible preceding higher education degrees should be provided in the sections Qualification 2 and Qualification 3.
- There is a dedicated upload field for each document required for the processing of the application.
- Translations of the original documents should also be uploaded in the dedicated upload field if the application form requires for it.
- The uploaded attachments should be named clearly, because it can speed up the processing of the application.
- The uploaded attachments should be of good quality and legible.

# Paying the processing fee

- A processing fee of 100 € is charged when submitting the application.
- The processing fee is paid online.
- The application will be processed only once the processing fee has been paid.
- The processing fee is not refundable.
- More information on [fees and paying \(oph.fi\)](https://oph.fi/en/fees-and-paying).

# Paying the decision fee

- When a recognition decision has been made, the applicant will receive a link to pay the decision fee
  - The decision fee for recognition of the level of a higher education degree 237 €.
  - The decision fee for recognition of eligibility for a certain profession or certain studies (e.g. professions in teaching, and in early childhood education and care) ranges between 395 € and 671 €. This includes the recognition of the level of the higher education degree.
- The decision fee is paid online.
- The decision is sent to the applicant by email when the decision fee has been paid.
- More information [for recipients of a decision on recognition \(oph.fi\)](https://oph.fi/en/decisions-on-recognition).
- After receiving the decision, the applicant can ask for more information from the Finnish National Agency for Education ([recognition@oph.fi](mailto:recognition@oph.fi)).
- If needed, the applicant has to apply for the study right themselves.

# Possible stumbling blocks

- Online payments and their deadlines
  - The application will expire if the processing fee is not paid within 14 days of submitting the application.
- Required attachments missing from the application
  - The processing of the application will start only once all the required documents have been submitted.
  - If needed, we will ask for more information from the applicant by email.
- Messages that we send from Studyinfo, e.g. requests for supplementation, may end up in the spam folder, and the applicant does not receive information on the processing of their application.

# **Statistics and upcoming webinars**

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# Statistics on recognition of qualifications 1/2

How many applications and decisions?

- 2020: 1083 applications, 1066 decisions
- 2021: 1201 applications, 1206 decisions
- 2022: 998 applications, 1029 decisions
- 2023: 1311 applications, 1178 decisions
- 2024: 1413 applications, 1292 decisions

Nationality of the applicants in 2024

- Finland 23.6 %
- Other EU/EEA country 16.9 %
- Other than an EU/EEA country 59.9 %

# Statistics on recognition of qualifications 2/2

In what countries the applicants had completed their qualifications in 2023?

1. Russia
2. Ukraine
3. Great Britain
4. Sweden
5. Spain
6. Turkey
7. Estonia
8. Nigeria
9. Iraq
10. India

In what countries the applicants had completed their qualifications in 2024?

1. Russia
2. Ukraine
3. Nigeria
4. Pakistan
5. Great Britain
6. India
7. Sweden
8. Spain
9. Cameroon
10. Turkey

## Next webinar

- **Tuesday 4 November at 9 am** Ulkomaille suoritettujen tutkintojen tunnustaminen Opetushallituksessa ja Valvirassa (in Finnish)

More information on the webinar series and links to the sign up is available [on our website](#).



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# Thank you!

Recognition of qualifications:

[recognition@oph.fi](mailto:recognition@oph.fi)

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

Language proficiency and language tests:

[kielitutkinnot@oph.fi](mailto:kielitutkinnot@oph.fi)

