

Publisher

Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC)

Title of publication

Vocational competence and pedagogical activities in the Further Vocational Qualification in the Transport Sector

Authors

Veera Hakamäki-Stylman & Paula Kilpeläinen

The evaluation focuses on the Further Vocational Qualification in the Transport Sector and examines the competence of students studying for this qualification in the final stage of their studies or soon after their graduation. In addition, the evaluation has produced information on VET providers' pedagogical activities in the Further Vocational Qualification in the Transport Sector. A total of 24 VET providers participated in the evaluation.

The evaluation was implemented between 2019 and 2020 as part of piloting FINEEC's new learning outcomes evaluation system for VET. The system has been developed for several years on the basis of meta-evaluation, external evaluation and workshops organised for different stakeholders, taking into account the changes that have taken place in the operating environment of VET. In line with the new evaluation system, the role of students and working life in producing evaluation data has been strengthened in this evaluation and national repositories with ready-to-use data have been used as much as possible. This is the first evaluation focusing on a further vocational qualification. Previous evaluations have focused only on vocational upper secondary qualifications.

FINEEC's evaluations follow the principle of enhancement-led evaluation, which emphasises active participation of the evaluated organisations and the interactive nature of the evaluation. The evaluation process is implemented in a way that enables the participants to already enhance their activities during the evaluation. The enhancement-led nature is visible especially in the self-evaluation conducted jointly by the VET providers and workplaces, which produced information on the pedagogical activities of the VET provider. In addition, students assessed their competence in a self-assessment at the end of the education. In the evaluation, interviews were also implemented at workplaces on themes such as planning the education organised at the workplace, induction, guidance provided to students, the assessment of demonstrations of knowledge and skills, and students' competence. Furthermore, ready-to-use data from repositories such as Koski and Amispalaute was used in the evaluation.

According to the evaluation, the pedagogical activities of the VET providers were on average at a developing level on the scale absent-emerging-developing-advanced. There were differences in the quality of pedagogical activities between the VET providers, especially in the development of the competence of teachers and workplace instructors and in the allocation of resources to the guidance of students during VET organised at workplaces. VET providers are also at very different stages in their efforts to establish the plan for the implementation of competence assessments as part of quality assurance in evaluation. The practices and the process related to the personal competence development plan were on average found to be functioning well, but there was still room for improvement in how the personal competence development plan is monitored and updated. In general, the evaluators were satisfied with the competence demonstration activities. Competence demonstrations correspond to the vocational competence requirements in the qualification requirements and goal-oriented and criterion-referenced assessment is well implemented in the assessment of the competence demonstrations. Self-assessments by students are also an established practice at most of the providers. However, cooperation between the VET provider and the workplaces should be intensified in the planning and implementation of VET organised at the workplace. In future, more attention should be paid to monitoring the development of competence and its systematic nature as this function was only at an emerging level at some of the providers.

According to the evaluation, the key strengths in students' competence are competence in the basic skills of the profession, knowledge of occupational safety at a theoretical level, operation of vehicles, and cooperation and interaction skills. The key development needs in their competence in turn focus on the command and application of the theoretical knowledge that the work is based on, the application of occupational safety in practice, and understanding and perceiving the whole work process. The development needs in the generic skills focused especially on the digital skills of adults and the skills related to work ability and wellbeing.

Students were mainly satisfied with the education in the field and felt that it had provided them with competence and vocational skills that they would be able to use. According to the evaluation, workplaces have a mainly positive attitude to students and to VET organised at the workplace as they often see students as future workforce. Students indeed felt it was at the workplaces that they had learned most.

Based on the evaluation results, the report presents development recommendations, for example, for enhancing the competence of workplace instructors and teachers, for intensifying the cooperation between the VET providers and workplaces in VET organised at the workplace, and for the monitoring, evaluation and enhancement of pedagogical activities. The development needs concerning students' competence focused on the command of theoretical knowledge and its application, knowledge of occupational safety at the practical level, and adults' digital skills.

Keywords: Further Vocational Qualification in the Transport Sector, vocational education and training, pedagogical activities, competence demonstration, vocational competence, vocational field-specific and generic skills