
**Background.** The evaluation focuses on vocational competence in the upper secondary level Vocational Qualification in Beauty Care. The evaluation data was obtained from vocational skills demonstrations and supplementary data describing the arrangement of such demonstrations. Evaluation of learning outcomes in vocational education and training is development-oriented by its nature, and the implementation of the evaluation emphasises VET providers’ active involvement and the interactive nature of evaluation. This development-oriented nature is also reflected in the self-assessments conducted by the VET providers and the feedback reports submitted to them, which the providers can use to compare their own results with national results.

The evaluation focused on all students who started studying towards a Vocational Qualification in Beauty Care in vocational upper secondary education and training (VET) in autumn 2015 and on all units providing such VET programmes. The evaluation data was collected over the entire duration of the programme until the end of spring term 2018. The evaluation data covered 29 VET providers, 767 students and 3 838 demonstrations.

**Vocational competence.** More than one half (52%) of the grades awarded for demonstrations related to a qualification unit were “excellent”, 42% “good” and 6% “satisfactory”. The most common grade awarded for the demonstration to special needs students was “good”. Special needs students received fewer “excellent” and more “good” and “satisfactory” grades than other students. All special needs students completed the demonstrations without modified learning outcomes. The most common grade awarded to Finnish-speaking students was “excellent” and to Swedish-speaking students “good”. Differences between evaluation practices, VET providers and regions were also found in the awarded grades.

**Working life relevance of the programme.** The VET programmes in beauty care show a reasonably good level of working life relevance. If vocational skills demonstrations organised jointly in the workplace and at the educational institution are included, more than one half of the vocational skills demonstrations (52%) were performed in working life. Representatives from working life took part in the assessments of most of the demonstrations. There was great variation between the VET providers in the number of demonstrations conducted at workplaces. According to the VET providers, the availability of workplaces suitable for acquiring competence and conducting vocational skills demonstrations is reasonable. With the majority of the VET providers, the workplace is a central learning environment and their cooperation with working life is well established.
**Quality of demonstration activities.** The overall quality of the demonstration activities among the VET providers was on average at a developing level and partly had wide variation between the VET providers. A particular strength in the demonstration activities was the evaluation of the key skills of lifelong learning, the implementation of demonstrations in VET institutions and the assessment of competence. According to the VET providers, broad-based assessment based on criteria has also been well implemented in the demonstrations in the field of beauty care. A content analysis of the demonstrations showed that more than one half of them (55%) fell below the accepted level of the vocational skills requirements for the unit, which means that they were too easy. The integration of common units into demonstrations is still uncommon and happens only occasionally at many VET providers.

About one third of the workplace instructors had received training for the guidance and assessment of demonstrations. There was wide variation between the VET providers in the number of trained workplace instructors. According to the evaluation, investments are made in developing the competence of teachers and this is well-established activity at almost all VET providers.

The most important development needs revealed by the evaluation were identified in ensuring and developing the working-life relevance of the VET programme and the guidance and assessment skills of the workplace instructors and in ensuring the quality of the vocational skills demonstrations, assessment and learning environments.