



National evaluation project:

Impacts of exceptional teaching arrangements on the  
realisation of equality

Finnish Education Evaluation Centre

Project plan  
15 May 2020

## 1. Objectives and underlying principles of the evaluation

*The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is carrying out an evaluation of the impacts of the exceptional teaching arrangements related to the COVID-19 epidemic. The evaluation will produce national-level information on the impacts of the exceptional conditions. In addition, it will produce information on operating models and good practices that ECEC, education and training providers as well as higher education institutions can use to promote equality during and after the exceptional conditions.*

*In spring 2020, FINEEC will also publish online information packages and good practices based on the evaluation data to support education providers with the hashtag [#KarviTukee](#) [#NCUStöder](#).*

The purpose of the evaluation is to produce information on the impacts of the exceptional conditions on the realisation of equality in education and on the functioning of the education system. The evaluation focuses on impacts on learning, assessment, support, guidance and the wellbeing of children and young people. It will produce information on both positive and negative impacts on equal preconditions for learning. The evaluation covers early childhood education and care, basic education, general upper secondary education, vocational education and training as well as higher education and liberal adult education. It examines real-time activities as well as immediate and long-term impacts, which will also be monitored as part of national evaluation work.

The principles guiding the evaluation are the national goals of equality in education and equal learning opportunities. Regardless of their family background and place of residence, each child and young person must have equal opportunities to access high-quality education. Many different groups of actors in the education system have tasks and responsibilities related to delivering equal education and achieving the goals: national policy-makers, education and training providers and higher education institutions as well as teaching and guidance staff, pupils and students. During the exceptional period, legislation has affected some of the actors' responsibilities and obligations.

The evaluation will answer the following questions (detail may be added to the evaluation questions in the course of the project):

- 1) What impacts have the teaching arrangements necessitated by the exceptional situation had on the realisation of educational and social equality?
  - How have the exceptional teaching arrangements affected learning?
  - What impacts has the situation had on learners' and students' needs for guidance and support and on the availability of these services?
  - How have the needs of special groups been addressed?
  - How has assessment of learning and competence been carried out in the exceptional conditions?
- 2) Which factors related to the exceptional teaching arrangements have promoted or prevented the achievement of the objectives set for early childhood education and care, basic education, general upper secondary school, vocational education and training and higher education?
- 3) What changes has the exceptional situation brought about in the progress of studies and the need for support and guidance in the transition phases of different levels of education?
- 4) What impacts have the arrangements necessitated by the exceptional situation had on the well-being of children, pupils, students and teachers? How has their well-being been supported?

## 2. Implementation and phases of the evaluation

The evaluation will be carried out in phases, ensuring that its results can be used as a basis for decision-making during the exceptional situation and when preparing development and support measures after it. In the first phase, a synthesis and situational picture that support the national evaluation were drawn up, underpinned by the existing knowledge base and studies concerning the exceptional situation. In the second phase, an overall evaluation of the impacts of the exceptional teaching arrangements will be carried out, and the necessary national evaluation data on different levels of education will be collected.

As far as possible, the evaluation will draw on the findings and data sets of earlier research and study projects, consequently striving to avoid creating an additional burden for early childhood education and care, schools, educational institutions and higher education institutions as well as overlapping data collection. When using existing studies and interpreting their results, the limitations related to their use and the fact that the objectives and primary uses of these studies differ from those of the national evaluation must be taken into account.

### PART I: Background report for the national evaluation, synthesis and situational picture based on existing data sets

The first phase of the evaluation project was carried out between 1 April and 30 April 2020. As the outcome of the first phase, a report containing a summary of the realisation of equality was compiled based on the findings of evaluations conducted between 2015 and 2020. The summary of the national evaluation findings brings up concerns over factors that may jeopardise the realisation of equal preconditions for learning and should now be given particular attention. On the other hand, the summary highlights the Finnish education system's strengths that support coping with exceptional situations and reduce their negative impacts. In addition, the report contains a compilation of studies on the exceptional situation produced by other actors (10 studies). As a synthesis of their findings, the report presents a situational picture of how equality has been realised and discusses areas in which more evaluation and research information will be needed.

Report: <https://karvi.fi/app/uploads/2020/05/Poikkeuksellisten-opetusj%C3%A4rjestelyjen-vaikutukset-osa-I-Karvi-7.5.2020-1.pdf>

### PART II: National evaluation of the impacts of the exceptional situation on the realisation of equality

The objective of the second part of the evaluation project is to produce national evaluation data that helps to assess the direction and scale of the impacts ensuing from the exceptional situation. Evaluation and research data production should be future-oriented, making it possible to use the data to support education and training providers and higher education institutions in making the changes necessitated by the situation, some of which may be permanent.

In the second phase of the evaluation, evaluation data concerning different levels of education will be collected. The purpose of the data collection carried out by FINEEC is to produce a multi-perspective data set that answers the project's evaluation questions. When collecting the evaluation data, an effort will be made to work together with other actors in order to expand the knowledge base and avoid overlaps and additional strain on the field.

In addition, the aim of the data collection is to produce good practices and operating models identified while the exceptional teaching arrangements and distance learning have been in place in early childhood education and care and at different levels of education, from basic education to HEIs and liberal adult education. By means of good practices and operating models ECEC, education and training providers and higher education institutions can promote the key strengths of the Finnish education system and opportunities for equal learning.

See the list below for the data collections to be carried out in spring and autumn 2020 by level of education:

<b>Basic education and general upper secondary education</b>		
<b>Target group</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Time</b>
Basic education providers	An online survey addressed to all providers. Evaluation questions integrated in surveys conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Regional State Administrative Agency.	
School principals	Sample-based online survey	
Teaching and guidance personnel	Sample-based online survey	
Pupils, grades 1 to 9	Sample-based online survey	Autumn 2020 (to be specified)
General upper secondary students	Sample-based online survey	
Comprehensive School Forum monitoring group	Online survey and consultation	May–June 2020
Assessment of the exceptional situation's impacts on learning outcomes	As part of grade 3 longitudinal assessment	Autumn 2020

<b>Vocational education and training</b>		
<b>Target group</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Time</b>
Providers of vocational education and training	Online survey in cooperation with the Finnish Association for the Development of Vocational Education and Training AMKE	
Teaching and guidance personnel	Online survey	
Students	Online survey in cooperation with the National Union of	

	Vocational Students in Finland SAKKI and the Finnish National Union for Students OSKU	
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<b>Higher education</b>	
<b>Target group and implementation</b>	<b>Time</b>
The data concerning higher education institutions will be collected by drawing up a synthesis of the reports on the exceptional conditions produced by student bodies. Particular attention will be paid to student and staff welfare issues and the future needs for support of these groups.  <b>Data collection targeting HEI management (to be discussed)</b>	

#### Liberal adult education

- For the part of liberal adult education, the collection of evaluation data on the impacts of the exceptional situation will be confirmed later.

#### Early childhood education and care

- For the part of early childhood education and care, the potential collection of evaluation data on the impacts of the exceptional situation as part of national evaluation projects will be confirmed later.

The longer-term impacts of the exceptional arrangements will be monitored as part of the national evaluation plan for 2020–2023. The evaluation plan is based on the following priorities: 1) Learning and competence development, 2) Promoting equality, 3) Increasing the functionality of the education system, and 4) Supporting continuous improvement.

#### Schedule for publishing the evaluation results

The evaluation will be carried out in phases to ensure that the evaluation results concerning the initial phase of the exceptional situation will be available as soon as possible. The findings of the first phase were submitted to the Ministry of Education and Culture at the end of April and published on FINEEC's website in early May.

The first results of the second phase of the project will be reported in mid-June. The remainder of the findings based on data collected in spring 2020 can be published in August 2020.

The longer-term impacts of the exceptional arrangements and the findings will also be discussed at an open national seminar, the Education Evaluation Forum, in January 2021.

### 3. Evaluation organisation

#### Project group

In FINEEC, the evaluation will be carried out by a project team consisting of experts on different levels of education.

Project team members: Hannele Seppälä (Chair), Head of Unit; Jani Goman, Counsellor of

Evaluation; Mira Huusko, Senior Evaluation Advisor; Jari Metsämuuronen, Counsellor of Evaluation; Niina Rumpu, Senior Evaluation Advisor; Salla Venäläinen, Senior Evaluation Advisor; and Carola Åkerlund, Senior Evaluation Advisor.

### **Evaluation panel**

An evaluation panel was appointed for the period May–December 2020.

Evaluation panel members: Pekka Auvinen, Sari Harmoinen, Christina Nygren-Landgårds, Vesa Saarikoski, Jouni Välijärvi, Harri Peltoniemi (Chair), Niina Rumpu (Secretary.)

#### **Evaluation panel's tasks**

- The evaluation panel's task is to support the implementation and impact of the evaluation of the exceptional situation's consequences.
- The evaluation panel participates in the processing of the project plan (evaluation task and conduct of the evaluation).
- The evaluation panel takes part in drawing up the conclusions and development proposals of the evaluation (based on the evaluation data produced by the project team).

#### **More information about the evaluation:**

Finnish Education Evaluation Centre FINEEC

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The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is an independent education evaluation authority.

It conducts evaluations related to education and the operation of education and training providers from early childhood education and care to higher education. In addition, FINEEC conducts assessments of learning outcomes in basic education and upper secondary education. FINEEC's tasks also include supporting education and training providers and higher education institutions in matters concerning evaluation and quality management and developing the evaluation of education.

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