

**Publisher**

Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC)

**Title of publication**

The evaluation of higher education in law

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The evaluation of higher education in law was carried out between 2020 and 2021 and it focused on provision of higher education in law at universities and universities of applied sciences (UAS). Special attention was paid to the competence produced by the degree programmes, their working-life relevance and continuous learning. The evaluation questions were:

- What competence does higher education in law produce and how?
- How does higher education in law anticipate and respond to future competence needs?
- What is the working life relevance of higher education in law like?
- What kind of provision and practices of continuous education are there in higher education in law?

The national degree structure of the field consists of the degree programmes leading to a Bachelor of Laws degree, offered by five universities. Four universities offer education in degree programmes leading to a Master of Laws degree. In addition, education provision in law is offered by five other universities, in which law is studied in degree programmes in business or administrative sciences. Eight UASs offer degree programmes leading to a bachelor's degree in business management and two UASs degree programmes leading to a UAS's master's degree.

Diverse methods and material were used in the evaluation: already existing feedback material, such as Finnish Bachelor's Graduate Survey and Career Monitoring of masters' graduates, responses to four different self-evaluation surveys targeted at units and degree programmes in the field of law, interviews conducted during evaluation visits to universities, a workshop organised to degree programmes of UASs, group interviews conducted with representatives of stakeholders and material from student workshops. In addition, preliminary conclusions and development recommendations were prepared at the final stage of the evaluation in a webinar dealing with the development of evaluation in the field of law.

Based on the evaluation, **the key strengths** of higher education in law are the following:

- The national degree structures in the field of law mainly function well.
- The degrees in law meet the needs of the working life as graduates find employment successfully.
- The emphasis on general learning in jurisprudence and general knowledge of law supports students' abilities to work in a variety of positions.
- Compared to other fields of education, the law provides an exceptionally wide variety of continuous learning. In addition to higher education institutions, there are also numerous other parties providing further and continuing education in the field.

**The key development recommendations** for higher education in law are the following:

- The teaching resources in the field of law must be increased and the teacher-student ratio improved quantitatively so that interactive teaching, active learning and feedback on student guidance and students' competence can be increased.
- To develop the alignment of the learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment of competence, common assessment criteria must be drawn up, good practices must be shared between different higher education institutions and the development of teachers' pedagogical competence must be supported.
- Units must conduct joint discussions on systematic development of education cooperation and organise the cooperation better.
- The planning, implementation and assessment of the education offered in continuous learning must be made systematic and the relevant responsibilities must be assigned.

**Keywords:** competence, educational provision, evaluation, continuous learning, higher education institutions, law, working-live relevance, universities, universities of applied sciences.