

Stylman, V. & Jalolahti, J. 2018. Vocational competence in Vocational Qualification in Audiovisual Communication. Helsinki: Finnish Education Evaluation Centre

The evaluation focuses on vocational competence in the upper secondary level Vocational Qualification in Audiovisual Communication. The evaluation data was obtained from vocational skills demonstrations and supplementary material describing the arrangement of such demonstrations. The results describe grades awarded for the vocational skills demonstrations and the activities relating to the arrangement of the skills demonstrations. The evaluation focused on all students who had started studying towards a Vocational Qualification in Audiovisual Communication in vocational upper secondary education and training (VET) in autumn 2013 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 2016. Information on grades and quantitative data on the arrangement of vocational skills demonstrations were supplemented with the self-assessments of VET providers and audit visits. In addition, the evaluation involved analysing the vocational skills demonstration plans and the descriptions of demonstration contents approved by the institutional bodies responsible for the demonstrations. In the analysis of the data and results, the evaluation team drew on the expertise of teachers working in the field and audit visits.

The evaluation of learning outcomes was based on vocational skills demonstrations, thus focusing on vocational competence. The evaluation was based on the vocational skills requirements and the assessment criteria specified for the programme in the Qualification Requirements. In the demonstrations, the assessment of skills focuses on mastering the work process, mastering the working methods, equipment and materials as well as mastering the knowledge forming the basis of the work and key competences for lifelong learning. In other words, the Qualification Requirements functioned as a key starting point for evaluation.

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. The data was collected directly in vocational skills demonstrations organised by VET providers. This development-oriented nature is also reflected in the self-assessments conducted by the VET providers and the feedback reports submitted to them, which providers can use to compare their own results with national results. In addition, the VET providers who were visited received a feedback report on the audit visit.

In autumn 2013, there were a total of 27 VET providers offering the Vocational Qualification in Audiovisual Communication, of whom 23 submitted information on learning outcomes for the evaluation. The VET providers who did not submit information on learning outcomes for the evaluation were those who had a low intake in 2013. The data covered 554 students and 2,012 skills

demonstrations. The evaluation also focused on special needs students. The data covered 223 skills demonstrations performed by special needs students. It included skills demonstration plans from 17 VET providers and a total of 1,916 descriptions of skills demonstrations. Self-assessment data was submitted by 20 providers. The evaluation team carried out two audits.

About three fifths of the students (60%) were awarded the grade “excellent” for the demonstration part of the qualification, 34% the grade “good” and 6% the grade “satisfactory”. The most common grade in all competence areas was “excellent”. The greatest number of “excellent” grades was awarded for key competences for lifelong learning, whereas the greatest number of “satisfactory” grades were awarded for mastering the work process. The greatest share of “good” grades was awarded for mastering the knowledge forming the basis of the work. The averages of the assessed VET providers varied from 2.48 to 2.60. The average of final grades awarded for the demonstrations was 2.54. The gender distribution in the data was relatively even; women had higher grade averages than men, both for grades awarded for the demonstrations and in individual competence areas. There were also found differences in the grades awarded between VET providers.

Special needs students had fewer “excellent” and more “satisfactory” and “good” grades than other students. Almost all special needs students (96%) managed the demonstrations without using individually adjusted objectives. Of the grades awarded for demonstrations without using individually adjusted objectives, 37% were “good”. The share of “excellent” grades was 46% and “satisfactory” grades 17%.

Less than one third (29%) of the demonstrations were performed in the workplace, while more than one half (60%) were given at educational institutions. Approximately one out of ten (11%) were combined demonstrations. Of the demonstrations given by special needs students, 38% were completed in the workplace. Better grades were awarded for demonstrations completed in the workplace than for those performed at educational institutions.

The grades for skills demonstrations were to some extent dependent on the evaluators. Classified by the grade averages, VET providers placed in the top quarter had the greatest proportion of demonstrations performed in the workplace (53%), and the students giving their demonstrations in the workplace were more likely to be awarded better grades than students performing their demonstrations at educational institutions. The evaluation highlighted development needs related to workplace instructors’ assessment skills and teachers’ working life competence. Differences were also observed in the quality of demonstrations and demonstration plans. The assessment highlighted the development needs of VET providers on the one hand, and educational administration on the other.