FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE

Transitions from Initial Vocational Education and Training Qualifications to Working Life in Finland – Observations and Reflections from an International Expert Panel

5.2 Trade-offs for policies to increase progression from VET to UASs

Increasing the progression rate from VET to UASs could require stronger general qualifications of VET students. However, if IVET puts stronger emphasis on general qualifications like maths, sciences and foreign languages, this could have negative effects for practice-oriented students from non-academic backgrounds in IVET. This negative effect was identified with the previous strengthening of general qualifications in VET by the reform that provided eligibility for higher education for all IVET students (Ollikainen & Karhunen, 2021). The goal of the government is for all young people to complete at least upper secondary education, but around 15% of each age group enter the labour market without an upper secondary qualification (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). Strengthening the academic orientation of IVET could result in higher dropout rates of practice-oriented students.

This effect could be countered by introducing new forms of streaming in VET based on earlier selection of IVET students in UAS-preparatory streams and employment-oriented streams. Earlier streaming and selection could result in stronger socioeconomic status (SES) background effects in educational attainment. This negative effect on equity could be countered by establishing better opportunities for acquiring higher education entrance qualifications in adult education. Or by learning from European experiences with IVET programmes that give both easy access to employment and eligibility for higher education (Deissinger, et al., 2013).