

Kilpeläinen, P. & Jalolahti, J. 2018. Vocational competence in the Vocational Qualification in Sports. Helsinki: Finnish Education Evaluation Centre.

**Background.** The evaluation focuses on vocational competence in the upper secondary level Vocational Qualification in Sports. 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 had started studying towards a Vocational Qualification in Sports in vocational upper secondary education and training (VET) in autumn 2014 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 2017. The evaluation data covered 9 VET providers, 268 students and 1,251 demonstrations.

**Vocational competence.** A majority of the students (57%) were given the grade “excellent” for the demonstration part of the qualification, 36 per cent were given the grade “good” and 8 per cent “satisfactory”. The greatest number of “excellent” grades (67%) were awarded to students for key competences for lifelong learning. The largest share of “satisfactory” grades (8%) was awarded for mastering the work process and the underpinning knowledge of the work. The averages of the areas of assessment varied between 2.39 and 2.62, on a scale of 1 to 3. The most common grade for all areas of assessment was “excellent”. The grades received by women were on average better than those received by men. Differences were also found in the grades awarded between VET providers and regions.

**Working life relevance of the programme.** The VET programmes leading to a Vocational Qualification in Sports show a good level of working life relevance. If vocational skills demonstrations organised jointly in the workplace and at the educational institution are included, the majority of the vocational skills demonstrations (75%) were performed in working life. Representatives from working life took part in the assessment of most of the demonstrations. According to VET providers, cooperation with working life is well established, and the availability of workplaces matching the qualification objectives for acquiring and demonstrating skills is good. Learning environments relevant to working life enhance the working-life relevance of the education.

**Quality of demonstration activities.** The overall quality of the demonstration activities of VET providers was on average at an advanced level and there were only minor differences bet-

ween VET providers. A special strength in the demonstration activities was the integration of vocational skills demonstrations into the training provided at the workplace, the assessment of the key skills in lifelong learning, the assessment of the development of competence and the assessment of competence. According to VET providers, broad-based assessment based on criteria has also been well implemented in the demonstrations in the field of sports. A content analysis of the demonstrations showed that about 40 per cent of them 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 rather uncommon and happens only occasionally at many VET providers.

Almost all (99%) of the teachers providing instruction in sports were pedagogically fully qualified. There was wide variation between VET providers in the teachers' participation in the on-the-job learning periods. About 16 per cent of the workplace instructors in the field had been trained.

The most important development needs revealed by the evaluation were identified in ensuring and developing the assessment skills of the workplace instructors and in ensuring the quality of the vocational skills demonstrations and learning environments.