



FINNISH EDUCATION
EVALUATION CENTRE

National Education Evaluation Plan **2024–2027**

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1 FINEEC's task

FINEEC's evaluation activities task

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre FINEEC acts as an independent expert organisation in the evaluation of education and early childhood education and care (ECEC). We produce evaluation-based information to support decision-making in education policy as well as the development of education and ECEC.

Drawing up the evaluation plan is the responsibility of the Evaluation Council appointed by the Government of Finland. The evaluation plan is approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture on the basis of the Evaluation Council's proposal. This evaluation plan has been prepared in broad-based cooperation with the key stakeholders. The national knowledge base for education as well as information produced by other actors have also been used in preparing the evaluation plan.

The evaluation plan is drawn up for four years at a time and it describes the evaluation activities and their timetables for that period.

FINEEC's statutory task is¹

- to conduct evaluations related to education and ECEC as well as the activities of ECEC, education and training providers and higher education institutions
- to carry out learning outcomes evaluations in accordance to the Basic Education Act, the Act on General Upper Secondary Education, the Vocational Education and Training Act and the Act on Basic Education in the Arts
- to support ECEC providers and education and training providers in matters related to quality management

1. Act on the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre 1295/2013 and Government Decree on the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre 1317/2013.

- to develop the evaluation of education and ECEC
- to attend to any other duties that are issued or given to it.

Early childhood education and care providers, teaching and education providers, vocational education and training providers, higher education institutions and liberal adult education institutions must evaluate the education they provide and participate in the external evaluation of their activities. The main results of these evaluations should be made public².

An independent evaluator

FINEEC's strategy (see figure below) supports the implementation of the evaluation plan. With the strategic objectives, we respond to topical themes in education and ECEC: the level of competence, the impacts of education reforms and the state of quality management in education. An analysis of the operating environment and extensive consultations with stakeholders and personnel serve as the starting point for the strategy. The evaluation plan has been built on three strategic goals, which are:

- I Raising the competence and education levels
- II Fostering social, ecological and economic sustainable development
- III Continuous improvement of the quality of education and ECEC.

2. Act on Early Childhood Education and Care 540/2018; Basic Education Act 628/1998; Act on General Upper Secondary Education 714/2018; Act on Vocational Education and Training 531/2017; Act on Liberal Adult Education 632/1998; Act on Basic Education in the Arts 633/1998; Universities of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014 and Universities Act 558/2009.



FINEEC is an independent expert organisation. According to our operating principles, we carry out impactful, reliable, and independent evaluation activities. Our aim is that our evaluation results create impact and are used in making important societal decisions as well as decisions at the national and the local level. Our results are based on reliably produced information and our evaluations are free from external influence. We are committed to following the ethical principles concerning evaluation in all our activities.

Starting points of evaluation activities

The aim of national evaluation is to produce information based on evaluation to promote the achievement of the objectives of the education system and to further improve education and ECEC.

The starting point in FINEEC's evaluations is a systemic view of the phenomena in education and ECEC, the interconnections between issues and the changing operating environment. Our multi-perspective evaluations tackle current topics to provide knowledge and understanding that strengthen the capacity of the education and ECEC system and the ability of organisations to change and adapt and help them to prepare for the future.

FINEEC's evaluations are based on the approach of enhancement-led evaluation, which has also been recorded in the legislation on evaluation of education. The starting point in enhancement-led evaluation is the need for evaluation and the usefulness of the evaluations to the subject of the evaluation, the party commissioning the evaluation, the stakeholders participating in the evaluation and the users of the evaluation results. Enhancement-led evaluation supports the achievement of the goals and promotes learning and change. Interaction, participation, an analysis of the operating environment and an understanding of the situation from the participants' point of view are essential in FINEEC's enhancement-led evaluation. The evaluation is aimed at achieving positive impact already during the evaluation and at using the evaluation results and the proposed recommendations to support change.

The following principles are the starting points of FINEEC's evaluations:

- trust, interaction and learning
- a positive approach and showing appreciation for the participants
- a multi-method approach and fitness for purpose
- aiming for impact.



Photo: Hanna Tarkkainen

Objectives of evaluation activities

FINEEC's evaluation activities are aimed at producing knowledge, enhancing education, and ensuring outcomes.

Production of knowledge

Evaluations strengthen the knowledge base for decision-making concerning education policy at the national and the local level. Evaluations increase knowledge and understanding of the operating environment and the phenomena subject to the evaluation. Information that supports change explains and provides knowledge of the underlying factors affecting the activities and of interconnections between issues. The knowledge base is also strengthened by producing syntheses of information from different sources. What is learned in the evaluations can also be used to produce theories of how reforms are carried out and/or how renewal is caused. Evaluation theories and methodologies can also be developed in evaluations.

Enhancement

Evaluation supports the achievement of the objectives of education and ECEC, promotes learning and the development of competence and improves activities. Evaluations help recognise strengths, good practices and areas in need of enhancement, to plan purposeful development measures and to support the implementation of development programmes. Evaluations are an essential part of the continuous improvement of the operations and quality of education and ECEC organisations. Evaluations strengthen participation and awareness to improve the organisation's own activities.

Ensuring impact

The purpose of evaluation is to verify and monitor the results and impacts of the objectives set for education. Evaluations are conducted to determine how the objectives set for education are implemented and what kind of results are achieved. Evaluations ensure the realisation of accountability and promote the achievement of the objectives.

Types of evaluation

The types of evaluation are based on FINEEC's statutory tasks. The types of evaluation are:

Evaluations of learning outcomes

Evaluations of learning outcomes focus on the learning outcomes of primary and lower secondary education, general upper secondary education, vocational education and training (VET) and basic education in the arts. These evaluations assess the achievement of the objectives set in the national core curriculum and the national qualification requirements as well as the factors affecting learning. Learning outcomes evaluations also provide information on changes in the level of competence in the long term and on the realisation of equality of education.

Thematic evaluations of education and ECEC

FINEEC's thematic evaluations are conducted on current topics related to the entire education system and ECEC and on the operation of ECEC providers, education and training providers and higher education institutions. Thematic evaluations may focus on the state of education and teaching, the functioning of the entire education system or the operation and outcomes of a specific level of education.

Evaluations of quality and quality management

Evaluations of quality management focus on how organisations in education and ECEC maintain and enhance the quality of their activities. FINEEC's evaluations of quality management are aimed at supporting the providers of education and ECEC and higher education institutions in the achievement of objectives and in the continuous improvement of activities.

The impact of evaluation activities

National evaluation activities reinforce the knowledge base for the enhancement of education and ECEC and produce knowledge and understanding that will lead to decisions and development measures. The impact of the activities is realised in the long term in the development and decision-making at the national and the local level. Impactful and transformative evaluation promotes continuous development and strengthens the ability of the education and ECEC system and organisations to use information and to act even in situations that are unexpected in the complex and multifaceted environments of education and ECEC.

The effects and impact of the evaluation activities are promoted using digital evaluation systems and publication platforms, and by developing the evaluation methods and new forms of communications and interaction. FINEEC has a strong role as a supporter of evaluation and quality management in education and ECEC. In addition, we produce analyses using the national statistics and knowledge base and syntheses targeted at the needs of different users of information.

It is essential from the point of view of the impact of evaluation activities that information is produced in evaluations in a long-term, systematic manner. Interaction with those who utilise the data as well as producers of evaluation and research information across administrative sectors supports the production and use of the data.

National evaluation of education aims for the future, which often means changes and creation of something new. The enhancement-led evaluation approach also changes with time and in relation to other developments in society as well as changes in the conceptions of learning and knowledge. FINEEC constantly develops its expertise and aims to be a pioneer in evaluation.

Monitoring of the evaluation plan

The implementation of the evaluation plan is examined halfway through the term of the plan in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture. This involves discussing the completed evaluations and their results as well as any revisions, additions and specifications to the evaluation plan on the basis of a proposal made by the Evaluation Council.

Evaluation services subject to a fee

FINEEC supports the development of education also by offering evaluation services subject to a fee. In other words, it is possible to order training, consultation, evaluations and other services designed to meet the customer's needs from us.

Evaluation services subject to a fee include:

- evaluations of learning outcomes in primary and lower secondary education
- audits of higher education institutions
- accreditations leading to the EUR-ACE quality label for degree programmes in engineering
- international audits of schools following the Finnish education model
- evaluations of topical themes in education
- consultations, lectures, training and visits

FINEEC's clients include ECEC, education and training providers, educational institutions, universities and universities of applied sciences, government agencies and institutes, and other possible organisations both in the public and the private sector. Evaluation services subject to a fee are also provided for international customers.

Evaluation services subject to a fee are provided in compliance with the Act on the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (1295/2013), Government proposal for an Act on the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre

(HE 117/2013 vp) and the Act on Criteria for Charges Payable to the State (150/1992). The government proposal for an Act on the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre notes that some evaluations are conducted as official activities free of charge, and FINEEC also conducts evaluations as services subject to a fee.

Of FINEEC's services subject to a fee, higher education institution audits are services governed by public law, and their pricing is determined in the Ministry of Education and Culture's Decree on Fees Charged for the Finnish National Agency for Education's Services (1188/2023). All other services, with the exception of higher education institution audits, are services priced on a commercial basis.

The services are based on FINEEC's expertise and on FINEEC's strategic objectives. With the help of services subject to a fee and commissioned evaluations, it is possible to respond flexibly to current evaluation needs. Fee-based evaluation activities develop national evaluation competence and contribute to promoting the impact of evaluation activities.

Funding

The costs of evaluations in accordance with the national education evaluation plan are approximately EUR 5 million per year. In the state budget, the costs are covered with the funding for the operating expenses of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, the revenue from co-funded activities and the funding received from evaluation services subject to a fee, which is divided into performances under public law (Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture 87/2020, section 3) and performances under private law.

2 Evaluation activities 2024–2027

This chapter describes the evaluation activities in accordance with FINEEC's tasks and strategic goals. More detailed decisions on the organisation, timetables and methodological solutions of individual evaluations will be made as the evaluation plan period proceeds. Some of the evaluations continue from the previous plan period and some will continue after 2027.



Strategic goal I: Raising the competence and education levels

We work to raise the level of competence and the level of education by producing topical evaluation data on learning, teacherhood, teaching, and pedagogical leadership. Learning outcomes evaluations of pre-primary and primary and lower secondary education are aimed at producing information of the competence level and whether the objectives in relation to the curricula are reached. Additionally, the achievement of the objectives and the realisation of equality of education are examined. In turn, the learning outcomes evaluations of VET produce information about how students have achieved the learning objectives and vocational skills requirements set out in the qualification requirements. Evaluation information is also produced on the quality of the pedagogical activities of the VET providers and on what kind of skills the vocational training provides for working life and further studies. In higher education, the study field evaluations produce information on the ability of higher education institutions to develop educational offerings to meet changing competence requirements and future operating environments.

Evaluation conducted across levels and forms of education

Teaching, teacherhood and pedagogical leadership (2024–2026)

The entity of evaluations across the levels of education produces information on teaching, teacherhood and pedagogical leadership in ECEC, primary and lower secondary education, general upper secondary education, VET and higher education.

Several of FINEEC's evaluations during the plan period 2020–2023 have produced evaluation data on teacherhood and pedagogical leadership in education and ECEC. FINEEC's evaluations have shown that changes in society and in the operating environment of educational institutions have significantly affected daily work of educational institutions. The development of technology, changes in the growth environment of pupils and students, curriculum reforms, changes in the cooperation, operating and working practices, the management of time and work tasks, the development of learning environments, the diversification of learner groups and the increase in the need for support have changed teaching and teacherhood. The job

description and work tasks of teachers in VET were redefined in the reform of VET. Stronger and broader competence in one's own substance field combined with pedagogical competence are criteria that require an ability to adapt and future orientation from teachers in VET.

The recommendations given in the evaluation of the Teacher Education Forum on increasing cooperation with working life and the needs to reform continuing education are still relevant points of view in reforming teachers' work. Working life relevance is also a central theme in the currently ongoing evaluation of education in the ECEC sector.

In the evaluation, we will draw up recommendations for the development of teaching and pedagogical leadership so that the education could even better respond to current and future needs of learning, competence and working life.

In primary and lower secondary education and general upper secondary education, we will evaluate how pedagogical leadership is used to support the achievement of the objectives set in the curricula, the work of teachers and the development of the operating culture in teaching and in educational institutions. In addition, information will be produced on factors that promote pedagogical leadership and those that make it more difficult. The evaluation will also produce information on the diversification of principals' work and the objectives set for their work by the education provider.

In VET, we will produce information on the state of teaching, teachers' competence and pedagogical leadership by investigating the availability and implementation of teaching that meets students' needs in different learning environments. In addition, we will investigate the strengths and development needs in teachers' competence and how pedagogical leadership supports and enables the maintenance and development of teachers' competence.

In higher education, we will produce syntheses, for example, of the following themes: digitalisation in teaching and learning, development of international competence, and curricula and their development. The syntheses will be based on the qualitative data of the evaluation *State and renewal of higher education pedagogy* conducted by us between 2022 and 2023.

Learning outcomes evaluations in primary and lower secondary education

With learning outcomes evaluations, we will investigate how the objectives set in the national core curriculum for primary and lower secondary education are achieved in different subjects. Learning outcomes evaluations will produce information on the realisation of educational equality, for example, according to the pupil's gender and municipality of residence. The evaluations examine the link between pupils' competence and their language background, the size of the school, the level of three-tiered support and the guardians' educational background. To obtain information on the development of the competence, we will carry out longitudinal evaluations to monitor the competence level of the same pupils over several grades. The results of the evaluations can be used nationally and locally in the development of education and teaching.

Longitudinal evaluations

Longitudinal evaluation of learning outcomes in primary and lower secondary education (mother tongue and literature, mathematics), grades 1–9 of primary and lower secondary education (2018–2027)

In the evaluation, we will follow the development of pupils' competence in two key subjects in primary and lower secondary education: mathematics and mother tongue and literature (Finnish, Swedish, Finnish/Swedish as a second language). Pupils' competence will be assessed at the beginning of grade 1, at the transition points in accordance with the national core curriculum and at the end of grade 9. A corresponding longitudinal evaluation in primary and lower secondary education (mother tongue and mathematics) will be launched for grades 1–9 of primary and lower secondary education between 2027 and 2037 to produce trend data.

Follow-up evaluation from primary and lower secondary education to the matriculation examination (2025–2026)

The evaluation will focus on how pupils who at the end of primary and lower secondary education participated in learning outcomes evaluations in mathematics, mother tongue and literature (Finnish and Swedish), English (A syllabus), Swedish (A and B syllabus), and Finnish (A syllabus and native-like syllabus) succeed in

the matriculation examination three years later. In the evaluation, attention will be paid to links between the learning outcomes and the results of the matriculation examination by also examining them with the help of different background variables.

Other evaluations of learning outcomes in primary and lower secondary education

- history and social studies (lower secondary education, grade 9) 2024–2026
- religion or culture, worldview and ethics subjects (lower secondary education, grade 9) 2024–2026
- physics (lower secondary education, grade 9) as part of a longitudinal evaluation 2027
- environmental studies (primary education, grade 6) 2026–2028
- artistic and practical subjects (lower secondary education, grade 9) 2027–2029

Learning outcomes evaluations in VET

Learning outcomes evaluations in VET will produce data on how students have fared at achieving the learning objectives and vocational skills requirements set out in the qualification requirements. In addition, evaluation data will be produced on the quality of education providers' pedagogical activities and on what kind of capabilities VET gives for working life and further studies. The objective of the learning outcomes evaluations is to develop education and training, support learning, and to ensure the high standard of vocational education and training.

Evaluations will focus on vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications, and specialist vocational qualifications. Learning outcomes evaluation of 4–5 qualifications will be launched every year during the evaluation plan period. In addition, we will draw up a synthesis of the results of the learning outcomes evaluations carried out between 2021 and 2026 at the end of the evaluation plan period. As part of the synthesis, we will implement a follow-up of the quality of education providers' demonstration activities on the basis of the report on the quality of demonstration activities, implemented in 2022.

The following vocational qualifications will be evaluated during the plan period:

2024

Vocational Qualification in Natural and Environmental Protection
Further Vocational Qualification in Nature-based Services
Vocational Qualification in the Wood Industry
Further Vocational Qualification in the Wood Industry

2025

Vocational Qualification in Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology
Further Vocational Qualification in Production Technology
Specialist Vocational Qualification in Production Technology
Vocational Qualification in Safety and Security
Further Vocational Qualification in the Security Sector

2026

Vocational Qualification in Circus Arts
Vocational Qualification in Dance
Vocational Qualification in Agriculture
Further Vocational Qualification in Agriculture
Specialist Vocational Qualification in Agriculture

Evaluations of study fields in higher education

Evaluations of study fields in higher education will examine a specific field of study. Evaluations of study fields will produce information on the capacity of the education to respond to the changing competence requirements. They will also provide an overall picture of the strengths and areas requiring development in the examined education programmes in relation to the competence produced by the degrees and their relevance to working life and continuous learning.

ICT and computer science (2025–2026)

Especially as a result of the rapid developments in technology, the fields of ICT and computer science are undergoing constant change. This study field is characterised by the transformation of information work, international competition and, for example, the challenges brought by cyber competence and artificial intelligence. In the evaluation, we will produce information on what kind of competence national education provides and what the education programme's capacity to respond to changes in the operating environment and to the needs of working life is. Both universities of applied sciences and universities will participate in the evaluation of the study field.

Strategic goal II: Fostering social, ecological and economic sustainable development

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development³, we promote general knowledge and ability, as well as equality and wellbeing through thematic evaluations. The knowledge and skills of sustainability competence and equitable opportunities to achieve high-quality education at all levels of education and ECEC are cross-cutting themes in the second strategic goal.

Evaluation conducted across levels and forms of education

Implementation of sustainability competence in education (2025–2027)

Finland is committed to promoting the goals of sustainability education as part of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The European Union has recommended the integration of sustainability education into all levels of education. This will ensure all the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required for sustainability competence. The current state of sustainability competence or its effectiveness have not been evaluated nationally, which has been a shortcoming in supporting and development of sustainability education in education and educational and training organisations. To ensure that the integration of the objectives of sustainability education into education programmes will be done wisely and with a reliable knowledge base, the theme should be visible in the national production of information and development of education.

In the evaluation, we will produce information on the realisation of sustainable principles and sustainability competence in several fields of education. The evaluation will create a national situation picture of the state of sustainability competence in education. The aim is to use the evaluation data to promote sustainability education. The evaluation will also support those who make decisions on education policy by providing them with information on what measures should be taken to promote sustainability education in education.

In higher education institutions, Unifi's Theses on sustainable development and responsibility and Arene's Programme for sustainable development and responsibility will be taken into account in the evaluations.

3. In the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the sustainable development goals include issues such as high-quality education, equality and equity, reducing inequality, sustainable economy, climate action and sustainability competence.

Thematic evaluation of ECEC

Evaluation of the realisation of ECEC for children under the age of three (2026–2027)

This evaluation will be conducted to examine how ECEC for children under the age of three is realised in Finland. The previous evaluations implemented by FINEEC have indicated shortcomings in the pedagogy for children under the age of three. According to the results, the objectives set for e.g., play pedagogy, art education, linguistically rich interaction or activities encouraging exploration are not in all respects realised in ECEC for young children.

Thus, several recent national experiments have focused on children over the age of three. At the same time, the active measures taken to increase the level of participation have also increased the proportion of children under the age of three in ECEC. The evaluation supports comprehensive development of ECEC by producing information on the current state of ECEC for the youngest children.

Thematic evaluation of general upper secondary education

Marginal conditions for organising general upper secondary education (2025–2026)

The Government Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo includes the objective that general upper secondary education will continue to be developed as a distinct form of education. Furthermore, general upper secondary education will be guaranteed in areas where the number of children and young people is falling significantly. The Ministry of Education and Culture is preparing changes to the funding system of general upper secondary education, a reform of the matriculation examination and the general upper secondary school diploma, the implementation of the matriculation examination in English and changes to the support for learning to develop general upper secondary education.

In the coming decades, general upper secondary education will be implemented in increasingly restricted conditions. Alongside reforms that support general upper secondary education, the preconditions for its operation will continue to be affected by factors such as regionally differentiating demographic development and a shortage of workforce, the diminishing municipal economy, regional concentration of places where education is organised and the changing emphases of education policy. Furthermore, the possibilities to provide education will be affected by factors such as digitalisation and distance learning.

The number of students of general upper secondary education age will decline significantly by 2030, especially in sparsely populated areas. The declining size of age groups will also challenge the provision of Swedish-speaking general upper secondary education. On the other hand, the proportion of young people with an immigration background in students will increase in urban areas. With extended compulsory education, a larger number of young people needing support will participate in general upper secondary education. At the local level, solutions related to the issues mentioned above will be required, such as a sufficient number of students, qualified staff, comprehensive provision of studies, different support measures for learning or, for example, student welfare services, and cooperation between education and training providers.

This evaluation will produce information on how education providers intend to implement general upper secondary education with the above marginal conditions in the future. The evaluation examines how equal the opportunities for completing the studies in general upper secondary education are in different municipalities and what kind of solution models have been envisaged and implemented and will be implemented for organising general upper secondary education. It will be investigated how the opportunity to complete the studies in general upper secondary education in the national languages and in English can be ensured and how instruction in Finnish as a second language and sufficient support for learning can be guaranteed across Finland. In addition, the evaluation will highlight education providers' views on what kind of national measures are required to implement general upper secondary education.

Evaluation data will be produced to actors at the national and local level for the planning and resourcing of education and for related decision-making.

Thematic evaluation of vocational education and training

Finding employment after vocational education (2024–2025)

According to FINEEC's evaluation results, challenges in the working life relevance of VET include finding suitable workplaces for workplace education and training and demonstrations and workplace instructors' competence in guiding students at workplaces. There are considerable differences between VET providers, fields of VET and qualifications. Students do not have equal opportunities to develop their capacities for working life and their contacts with workplaces during the studies.

The Government Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo highlights a concern that one in ten graduates with an initial vocational qualification are unable to find employment after graduation. In addition, employment varies by sector. In international comparison, the employment rate of holders of a vocational qualification in Finland remains lower among young adults than, for example, in the other Nordic countries (Education at Glance 2023, OECD). The Government Programme outlines that cooperation between VET and business and industry will be strengthened. The provision of education and training will be reformed to better meet the needs of working life and business and industry, taking into account the needs of regions with export businesses and industries. According to the Government Programme, the funding model of VET will be reformed to support employment after graduation and transition to further studies.

The evaluation will produce information on the current state in finding employment after vocational education, how the opportunities for finding employment can be supported during the education and what kind of development measures are required in VET to promote employment in different sectors and regions. The aim of the evaluation is to produce information to support the implementation of the Government Programme and to support education providers in the development of their activities. In addition, the evaluation aims to identify good practices nationally and internationally to promote employment. The information produced by the evaluation can also be used in the implementation of the employment services reform.

Thematic evaluation of liberal adult education

Societal impact and accessibility of liberal adult education (2025–2026)

Liberal adult education is based on the principles of lifelong learning that supports the integrity of society, equality and active citizenship. The goal of education organised as liberal adult education is to promote people's versatile development, wellbeing and the realisation of democracy, pluralism, sustainable development, multiculturalism and internationalisation. Liberal adult education emphasises voluntary learning, communality, and inclusion. (Act on Liberal Adult Education 1765/2009)

In the evaluation, we will produce information on the societal importance of liberal adult education and how accessible the education activities in liberal adult education are. The evaluation will also produce information on the strengths and enhancement areas in liberal adult education in relation to the objectives set for the activities. All educational institutions providing liberal adult education participate in the evaluation: adult education centres, folk high schools, summer universities, sports institutes and study centres.

Strategic goal III: Continuous improvement of the quality of education and early childhood education and care

We support the continuous development of the quality of education and ECEC. The aim of supporting education providers' quality management and conducting external evaluations of quality systems is to enhance the functioning of the Finnish education system and support the enhancement of the activities so that they will lead to effective development measures.

Quality management support for early childhood education and care providers

The Valssi quality evaluation system maintained by FINEEC is a central part of support for quality management in ECEC. Valssi and the evaluation process developed to support it are aimed at strengthening the quality work implemented in ECEC and making it more systematic. The aim of the evaluations carried out using Valssi is to improve the knowledge base of ECEC and produce self evaluation data for ECEC providers, private service providers and their personnel to use when enhancing their activities and the quality of the activities. In addition, the system produces national evaluation data for the systematic and long-term development of ECEC.

During the evaluation plan period, FINEEC will continue supporting ECEC actors in the implementation of Valssi by maintaining a customer service and providing diverse training and materials to users. We will also continue to market the system. Based on the feedback collected, we will update the evaluation tools linked to Valssi and develop new ones. During the evaluation plan period, the need to update the national quality indicators of ECEC are planned. The maintenance of the digital system and the improvement of its functionalities require constant development. During the evaluation plan period, new properties will be developed to Valssi, such as the capacity to implement national evaluations with the system. A national evaluation on a theme that will be decided later will be carried out using Valssi between 2025 and 2027.

Evaluation and support of quality management in general education

FINEEC supports quality management in pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education by producing evaluation data for the needs of development and decision-making. We carry out

thematic and learning outcomes evaluations in pre-primary, basic and general upper secondary education as well as external evaluations of quality management systems.

During the evaluation plan period, quality management in pre-primary and primary and lower secondary education will be supported with evaluations of learning outcomes and thematic evaluations (e.g., the evaluations *Differentiation in primary and lower secondary education* and *New forms of guidance counselling*). During the evaluation plan period 2024–2027, the quality management of providers of general upper secondary education will be supported with the *Evaluation of the general upper secondary education reform* and the evaluation *Marginal conditions for general upper secondary education*. The evaluation of pedagogical leadership in primary and lower secondary education and general upper secondary education also supports the quality work of education providers.

The method of implementation and dates of the evaluations of the quality management and self-evaluation practices of the providers of pre-primary, basic and general upper secondary education will be prepared during the evaluation plan period 2024–2027. FINEEC evaluated the quality management and self-evaluation practices of the providers of primary and lower secondary education and general upper secondary education in 2017 and carried out a survey of the current state of quality management in primary and lower secondary education in 2022. We participate in the development of the quality criteria for primary and lower secondary education in accordance with the implementation plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The national, regional and local development measures included in the quality strategy for general upper secondary education until 2030 will be evaluated during the next evaluation plan period 2028–2031.

Evaluation and support of quality management in VET

FINEEC supports quality management in VET by producing evaluation data for the needs of development and decision-making by implementing learning outcomes evaluations, thematic and system evaluations and external evaluations of quality management.

FINEEC evaluated the state of quality management of VET providers in 2014–2015 and 2021–2022. During the evaluation plan period, we will conduct follow-up of the development recommendations issued to VET providers in the evaluation of quality management. The follow-up is aimed at supporting VET providers in the implementation of the development recommendations and producing information for preparing the evaluation

of quality management. The method and dates of implementing the next evaluation of quality management of VET providers will be prepared in cooperation with the key stakeholders during the evaluation plan period.

Evaluation and support of quality management in higher education

FINEEC is responsible for the evaluation of quality assurance and enhancement of Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences. The Universities of Applied Sciences Act and the Universities Act oblige higher education institutions to participate in external evaluations of their operation and quality systems on a regular basis.

Audits or corresponding evaluations in higher education

Evaluations of quality management in higher education institutions support the highest possible quality of the system of higher education institutions in Finland. The main aim of the evaluations is to support higher education institutions in the development of their activities and in achieving their objectives. Because the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) have been included in the evaluation model for higher education institutions, the evaluations also have a strong European dimension. Evaluations are used to demonstrate that Finnish higher education institutions have effective ways of maintaining and developing the quality of their activities.

In 2024, we will implement the audits of six higher education institutions using the model of the third audit cycle (2019–2024), after which we will draw up a metasynthesis of the third audit cycle. Between 2024 and 2026, a new evaluation model will be designed in cooperation with the key stakeholders and the model will be piloted in universities of applied sciences and universities. Evaluations in accordance with the new model (2026–2030) will begin in universities of applied sciences and universities in 2027.

Quality management of microcredentials (2024–2026)

The Ministry of Education and Culture has prepared a national framework for microcredentials. Microcredentials make it possible to acquire competence required in working life without completing a whole qualification. FINEEC supports the development of microcredentials by conducting one-off evaluations of higher education institutions between 2024 and 2026 to ensure that the institutions have the procedures required for managing the quality of microcredentials.

3 Syntheses, analyses and summaries

The aim of the evaluation plan period is to strengthen the impact of national evaluation activities and the use of the data in the enhancement of education and ECEC and in decision-making. We provide the knowledge base for national evaluation activities and produce syntheses, analyses and summaries that use national statistical and register data. We use them to produce comprehensive and in-depth evaluation data on the state of education and training for both the national and the local level. Producing information on the state of education and training also requires cooperation with other organisations specialised in the evaluation, research, anticipation and production of register data in the field of education at both the national and the international level.

We produce and publish syntheses, analyses and summaries of evaluation results according to the strategic goals on a regular basis. The different levels and forms of education as well as Swedish-speaking education and ECEC are taken into account in them. The more specific themes are defined according to the national, regional and/or local information needs.

Appendix 1. Evaluations carried over from the previous evaluation period and due to be completed in 2024

Early childhood education and care

- Evaluation of the implementation of anti-bullying activities and methods aiming to prevent bullying and supporting socio-emotional skills

Primary and lower secondary education

- Differentiation in primary and lower secondary education
- Enhancement-led evaluation in the action plan supporting the capabilities for attending school of students with an immigrant background
- Evaluation of the new forms of student counselling (OHJA)
- Social Inclusion Research Project 2021–2025

General upper secondary education

- Evaluation of the general upper secondary education reform (LUKA)

Higher education

- The evaluation of higher education in bioeconomy
- Evaluation of science education

Audits of higher education insitutions

Arcada University of Applied Sciences (international)

Humak University of Applied Sciences

Karelia University of Applied Sciences

LAB University of Applied Sciences

University of Ljubljana (cross-border audit, fee-based service)

Oulu University of Applied Sciences

University of Oulu (international)

Police University College

University of the Arts Helsinki

University of Vaasa (international)

Appendix 2. Annual evaluation project

Evaluations of FINEEC	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategic objectives I Raising the competence and education levels				
Evaluation conducted across levels and forms of education				
Teaching, teacherhood and pedagogical leadership				
Learning outcomes evaluations in primary and lower secondary education				
Longitudinal evaluation of learning outcomes in primary and lower secondary education (mother tongue and literature, mathematics)				
history and social studies (grade 9)				
religion or culture, worldview and ethics subjects (grade 9)				
physics (grade 9)				
environmental studies (grade 6)				
artistic and practical subjects (grade 9)				
Follow-up evaluation from primary and lower secondary education to the matriculation examination				
Learning outcomes evaluations in VET				
Vocational qualification in Natural and Environmental Protection Further vocational qualification in Nature-based Services Vocational qualification in the Wood Industry Further vocational qualification in the Wood Industry				
Vocational qualification in Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology Further vocational qualification in Production Technology Specialist vocational qualification in Production Technology Vocational qualification in Safety and Security Further vocational qualification in the Security Sector				
Vocational qualification in Circus Arts Vocational qualification in Dance Vocational qualification in Agriculture Further vocational qualification in Agriculture Specialist vocational qualification in Agriculture				
Evaluations of fields of study in higher education				
ICT and computer science				
Syntheses				

Strategic objectives II Fostering social, ecological and economic sustainable development				
Evaluation conducted across levels and forms of education				
Implementation of sustainability competence in education				
ECEC				
Evaluation of the realisation of ECEC for children under the age of three				
Thematic evaluation of general upper secondary education				
Marginal conditions for organising general upper secondary education				
Thematic evaluation of vocational education and training				
Finding employment after vocational education				
Thematic evaluation of liberal adult education				
Societal impact and accessibility of liberal adult education				
Syntheses				
Strategic objectives III Continuous improvement of the quality of education				
Quality management support for early childhood education and care providers				
A national evaluation on a theme that will be decided later will be carried out using Valssi				
Evaluation and support of quality management in general education				
Evaluation and support of quality management in VET				
Evaluation and support of quality management in higher education				
Institutional audits (3 rd audit round)				
Planning of new evaluation model				
Quality management of microcredentials				
Syntheses				



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