



FINNISH NATIONAL  
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## **TRAINING FOR WORKPLACE INSTRUCTORS, 3 CREDITS**

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## Introduction

These instructions are intended for trainers of workplace instructors. They are recommendatory in nature, and do not constitute a regulation. The Finnish National Board of Education recommends that, where possible, people acting as workplace instructors participate in workplace instructor training. Interaction between workplaces, educational institutions and students can be increased by training workplace instructors, which in turn contributes to the development of training and workplace communities. Close cooperation between educational institutions and workplaces and a trained workplace instructor benefits students, as this improves the quality and quantity of instruction provided to the student as part of training in the workplace. These aspects also contribute to the development of students' vocational skills and their ability to participate in the world of work. Workplace instructor training promotes workers' ability to act as instructors and develop their work.

The 2011–2016 Development plan for Education and Research states that the “contents of workplace instructor training will be developed at national level to broadly cater for on-the-job learning and practical training at various levels of education, while providing for the assessment of vocational competences and the skill requirements of each workplace instructor”. As the authority responsible for the development and implementation of vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications, the Finnish National Board of Education has prepared these instructions to support the training of workplace instructors within vocational upper secondary education and training and within preparatory training for competence-based qualifications, as well as for those within apprenticeship training. Workplace instructors may also apply the capabilities acquired through training when instructing students at other levels of education.

According to the Vocational education and training decree (811/1998, section 5), concluding an agreement on training arranged in the workplace requires that the workplace in question has a sufficient number of employees with vocational skills, education and work experience relevant to training arranged in accordance with the curriculum (currently the requirements for vocational qualifications) and in accordance with the requirements for competence-based qualifications and vocational skills demonstrations, where such employees can be appointed as responsible trainers for the students in question. The aim is to increase the share of vocational education and training, vocational skills demonstrations and competence-based qualifications arranged at workplaces.

Within vocational upper secondary education and training and preparatory training for competence-based qualifications, the concept of ‘workplace instructor’ is an established one, with ‘workplace trainer’ as its counterpart within apprenticeship training. Under these instructions, the concept ‘workplace instructor’ is used to refer to both ‘workplace instructor’ and ‘workplace trainer’; the training is suitable for both workplace instructors and workplace trainers within apprenticeship training.

Training for workplace instructors (3 credits) comprises three modules providing students with the capabilities required in order to plan training at the workplace, vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests, to instruct students and assess learning, as well as equipping the students or candidates with vocational skills.

The training provides employees acting as workplace instructors with the opportunity to obtain the skills and knowledge required in order to plan training arranged at the workplace, instruct students, and assess their learning and vocational skills through vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests. In addition, the training provides workplace instructors with the opportunity to enhance their ability to take account of students in need of special support and of students representing various language and cultural groups.

# 1 Implementation of training for workplace instructors

Workplace instructor training is attended by people working in various organisations and positions. During the planning stage, various vocational and educational fields and workplace-specific needs are taken into account, by tailoring the training accordingly to cater for various sectors and workplaces on the broadest possible basis. Training for workplace instructors is implemented flexibly, in accordance with the current situation and competence needs of employees acting as workplace instructors. Methods employed in training include e.g. multiform learning. The provider of workplace instructor training is responsible for ensuring that the training is personally tailored for each participant, on the basis of whether the participant primarily instructs and assesses students in vocational upper secondary education and training, students in preparatory training for competence-based qualifications, or students in apprenticeship training. In addition, account is taken of the participant's earlier knowledge and skills. A plan must be prepared for the implementation of training, specifying how previously acquired skills and knowledge are identified and recognised. Achieving the training objectives takes approximately three weeks. The participants have the option of completing only parts of the training. The training modules do not have a fixed order of completion. Instead, they can be completed in line with the participants' needs.

For example, training providers may train workplace instructors during vocational teachers' work placement periods. In such a case, the teacher will guide the workplace instructor on how to instruct the students. On the other hand, teachers can also train workplace instructors while on instruction visits to the workplace during the students' on-the-job learning period. Funding for workplace instructor training may be obtained from various sources, for example companies, the national education administration and education and qualification providers. Training for workplace instructors can also be implemented as part of development projects, provided that this contributes to achieving the targets set for the projects in question. The provider of workplace instructor training is responsible for recognising earlier skills and knowledge, as well as for the content and issuing of the certificate.

## **2 Training arranged at the workplace within vocational education and training**

Vocational education and training comprises vocational upper secondary qualifications, as well as vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications completed as competence-based qualifications. Vocational upper secondary education and training and preparatory training for competence-based qualifications can be provided either at educational institutions or workplaces. When vocational skills defined in the Qualification Requirements are acquired by performing work at the workplace, the work tasks and vocational skills requirements defined must correspond to each other. Vocational upper secondary qualifications include an on-the-job learning period, during which the student acquires some of the vocational skills specified in the Qualification Requirements and completes a vocational skills demonstration by performing work assignments. Within adult education and training, competence tests for competence-based qualifications are mainly arranged at the workplace. Apprenticeship training is a form of vocational education primarily based on training provided in the workplace.

### **2.1 Training provided in the workplace as part of vocational upper secondary education and training**

Training provided in the workplace as part of vocational upper secondary education and training involves goal-oriented learning in the workplace, under guidance and subject to assessment. In order to fulfil the vocational skills requirements, on-the-job learning periods must be sufficiently long and versatile. The education provider is responsible for arranging on-the-job learning within vocational upper secondary education and training. During the on-the-job learning period, the student is not viewed as being in an employment relationship with the employer, unless otherwise separately agreed in advance or unless the student is attending apprenticeship training.

According to the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998, section 16), training provided in the workplace during practical work assignments is based on a written agreement between the education provider and the workplace. As a precondition for concluding this agreement, the Vocational Education and Training Decree (811/1998, section 5) specifies that the workplace in question must have a sufficient number of employees with the relevant vocational skills, education and work experience to qualify as responsible trainers for students. The agreement on training provided in the workplace and vocational skills

demonstrations must refer to liability for safety, accidents and damages, and set forth the requirements for insurance coverage. Before starting work, the employer and education provider must ensure that the student can perform the work safely, in accordance with the issued instructions and without any danger being posed to the student's health.

The teacher, workplace instructor and student must cooperate in planning the student's on-the-job learning period and must evaluate the achievement of learning goals set for the learning period. Education providers must ensure that the student receives enough guidance, support and feedback. The teacher and workplace instructor are responsible for the student's instruction during the on-the-job learning period.

### **2.1.1 Competence assessment in vocational skills demonstrations**

Vocational qualification modules are mainly assessed by means of a vocational skills demonstration, i.e. performing work assignments specified in the vocational skills requirements. Vocational skills demonstrations are arranged and assessed jointly by the education provider, student and workplace, on the basis of the Qualification Requirements.

### **2.1.2 Preparatory training for vocational upper secondary education and training**

During preparatory training for vocational upper secondary education and training, students attain the capability to participate in the world of work by engaging in work or preparation for on-the-job learning in accordance with the related curriculum. Non-qualification preparatory training for vocational upper secondary education and training comprises preparatory instruction and guidance for VET, preparatory education for immigrants, rehabilitative instruction and guidance for the disabled, and courses in home economics.

## **2.2 Training provided in the workplace as part of preparatory training for competence-based qualifications**

Vocational skills laid down in the Qualification Requirements for competence-based qualifications can be obtained or supplemented through training arranged at the workplace. The candidate, workplace instructor and representative of the education provider must jointly prepare a plan for such training.

The various methods of acquiring vocational skills are recorded in the individualisation documents. The workplace instructor and teacher responsible for

preparatory training must guide the candidate in obtaining the required vocational skills. As part of preparatory training for competence-based qualifications, the candidate must be provided with the opportunity to participate in competence tests and complete the competence-based qualification.

### **2.2.1 Demonstrating vocational skills in competence tests for competence-based qualifications**

Candidates demonstrate their vocational skills through competence tests arranged in accordance with their individualisation plan for the attainment of the qualification. Vocational skills are mainly demonstrated through work assignments at the workplace. Participation in preparatory training is not a requirement for participation in competence tests. Workplace instructors commonly participate in the planning of competence tests and the related practical arrangements. In addition, workplace instructors may take part in assessing the candidate's vocational skills. When acting as assessors, workplace instructors must take account of issues related to lack of impartiality, in accordance with the principles concerning disqualification laid down in the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003, sections 27–30). If a workplace instructor is disqualified in this way, he or she cannot be appointed as an assessor.

## **2.3 Training arranged at the workplace as part of apprenticeship training**

Apprenticeship training is based on a written fixed-term employment contract between the student and employer (apprenticeship contract) (Vocational Education and Training Act, 630/1998, section 17). According to the Vocational Education and Training Decree (811/1998, section 6), the education provider can decide whether apprenticeship training will be arranged as training that leads to a qualification or as preparatory training for a competence-based qualification. Apprenticeship training differs from training provided at an educational institution in that the former is based on an employment contract. In addition, a major part of such training must be provided at the workplace. Education providers have a clear responsibility to lead and monitor the entire apprenticeship training process. Education providers are responsible for ensuring that training provided in the workplace and theoretical studies form a coherent whole. The workplace instructor and education provider arranging the theoretical studies must cooperate to ensure that the objectives specified in the Qualification Requirements are achieved. Workplace instructors must possess the relevant vocational skills, education and work experience in order to qualify as the student's responsible trainer (Vocational Education and Training Decree, 811/1998, section 5).

The employer must ensure that the student has the opportunity to undertake various tasks appropriate to the profession in question, as defined in the vocational skills requirements for the qualification or qualification modules and included in the student's personal study plan.

### **2.3.1 Demonstrating vocational skills in apprenticeship training**

In apprenticeship training leading to a vocational qualification, vocational skills are assessed through a vocational skills demonstration (see chapter 2.1.1, Competence assessment in vocational skills demonstrations).

The same procedure applies to apprenticeship training leading to the completion of a competence-based qualification and to competence-based qualifications (see chapter 2.2.1, Demonstrating vocational skills in competence tests for competence-based qualifications).

### 3 Content of workplace instructor training

Workplace instructor training (3 credits) comprises three modules:

1. Planning of training provided in the workplace, vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests (1 credit)
2. Instructing the student and assessing learning (1 credit)
3. Assessing the student's or candidate's competences (1 credit)

#### 3.1 Planning of training provided in the workplace, vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests

The aim is that workplace instructors

- are familiar with the qualification structure and forms of arranging education and training
- are familiar with the Qualification Requirements in their vocational field
- are able to plan training arranged at the workplace
- are able to plan vocational skills demonstrations or competence tests jointly with the education provider or organiser of competence tests
- inform the workplace of any training arranged there
- develop their own work as workplace instructors.

Targets of assessment	Assessment criteria
Familiarity with the qualification structure and forms of education and training provision	Workplace instructors <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are familiar with the structure of vocational education and the various forms of education and training provision</li></ul>
Familiarity with Qualification Requirements for the workplace instructor's own vocational field	Workplace instructors <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• utilise Qualification Requirements determined for their vocational fields in training provided in the workplace and when organising vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests.</li></ul>

<p>Planning training provided in the workplace jointly with a representative of the education provider</p>	<p>Workplace instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand what kinds of plans and agreements must be drawn up on training provided in the workplace, as part of various forms of educational provision</li> <li>• during planning, state what kinds of work tasks the workplace can offer to various groups of students and candidates</li> <li>• ensure, for their part, that orders, instructions and recommendations related to the work tasks and workplace, such as occupational health and safety orders and agreements within the sector, are taken into account in the plan</li> <li>• in planning, take account of documents guiding the student's studies at the workplace. Such documents might include, for example, an individual study plan for vocational upper secondary education and training, an individual education plan in special needs education, an individualisation document for competence-based qualifications or a personal study plan for apprenticeship training.</li> </ul>
<p>Participating in the planning of vocational skills demonstrations</p>	<p>Workplace instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at the planning stage, as representatives of the workplace, state the workplace's opportunities for arranging vocational skills demonstrations in accordance with the Qualification Requirements</li> <li>• state which valid occupational safety and health and work safety regulations are observed at the workplace, as well as which special regulations for the vocational field apply.</li> </ul>

Participating in the planning of competence tests	<p>Workplace instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● state, as representatives of the workplace, the workplace's opportunities for arranging competence tests when planning such tests, taking account of the Qualification Requirements and matters agreed in the plan for arranging competence tests</li> <li>● state which occupational safety and health and work safety regulations are observed at the workplace, and refer to any special regulations applying to the vocational field.</li> </ul>
Communications	<p>Workplace instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● jointly with the employer, inform the entire workplace community of any training arranged at the workplace, and of any vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests, in good time</li> </ul>
Personal development as a workplace instructor	<p>Workplace instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● critically assess their instruction skills</li> <li>● receive and collect feedback on their instruction from students, candidates, the workplace community, and representatives of the education provider</li> <li>● actively make use of any feedback received to develop their instruction skills</li> <li>● develop their instruction on the basis of any feedback received.</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Instructing the student and assessing learning

The aim is that workplace instructors are able to

- induct the student
- instruct on and guide the student's learning habits
- assess the student's learning habits.

Targets of assessment	Assessment criteria
Induction of the student	Workplace instructors <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• induct the student, to provide him or her with a clear overall understanding of the workplace, workplace processes and his or her own tasks</li><li>• induct the student in occupational safety and health in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the workplace instructions, collective agreements and other sector-specific regulations</li><li>• make clear to the student what kind of knowledge and skills are required at the workplace.</li></ul>

<p>Instruction of the student</p>	<p>Workplace instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure, together with representatives of the education provider or organiser of the competence-based qualification and the student, that the learning objectives for workplace training comply with the vocational skills requirements defined in the Qualification Requirements</li> <li>• are able to describe the various phases of the work process to the student</li> <li>• are able to connect the work tasks assigned to the student with the vocational skill requirements defined in the Qualification Requirements and can diversify the work tasks when necessary</li> <li>• take account of individual students, the students' preconditions for learning, their health and ability to function, and possible needs for support, when providing instruction</li> <li>• encourage students to monitor and document their learning progress</li> <li>• take the student's personal learning objectives into account during instruction</li> <li>• create a positive and confidential atmosphere when providing instruction</li> <li>• provide guidance and encouragement to the student in learning situations experienced as difficult</li> <li>• take account of occupational safety and health matters during instruction</li> <li>• use versatile methods when instructing the student, as appropriate</li> <li>• use the available information and communications technology and social media tools, where possible.</li> </ul>
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Assessment of learning in accordance with assessment criteria defined in the Qualification Requirements

Workplace instructors

- follow progress in the student's learning by monitoring and observing the student's work and progress
- provide the student with sufficient and timely constructive feedback on progress made in learning, using encouraging and motivating methods
- where possible utilise the available information and communications technology and social media tools when working with the student
- guide and encourage the student to perform self-assessment
- are able to differentiate between assessment of learning and assessment of competence in the context of vocational skills demonstrations.

### 3.3 Assessing the student's or candidate's competences

The aim is that workplace instructors are able to

- assess the student's competences in vocational skills demonstrations or the candidate's competences in competence tests.

Targets of assessment	Assessment criteria
<p>Assessment of the student's competences in vocational skills demonstrations, in accordance with the assessment criteria defined in the Qualification Requirements</p>	<p>Workplace instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess the student's competences in accordance with the Qualification Requirements, using versatile methods of assessment</li> <li>• take account of students requiring special support when performing the assessment, as well as of students with various language and cultural backgrounds</li> <li>• assess the student's work during a vocational skills demonstration by monitoring and making observations</li> <li>• participate in the assessment discussion by providing their own view of the student's competence</li> <li>• document their own assessment where necessary and comply with orders concerning confidentiality, in accordance with instructions from the education provider</li> <li>• deliver any documents related to the assessment to the education provider, as agreed</li> <li>• are aware of the issues related to lack of impartiality when acting as an assessor</li> </ul>

Assessing the candidate's competences in competence tests, in accordance with the assessment criteria defined in the Qualification Requirements

Workplace instructors

- assesses the candidate's competences in accordance with the Qualification Requirements, using versatile methods of assessment
- take account of students requiring special support and of students with various language and cultural backgrounds, when performing the assessment
- participate, where necessary, in an oral discussion in which the candidate supplements his or her competence test performance
- are able to provide grounds for their assessment
- document their own assessment where necessary and comply with orders concerning confidentiality, in accordance with instructions received from the organiser of the competence-based qualification
- deliver documents related to the assessment to the organiser of the qualification, as agreed
- are aware of issues related to lack of impartiality when acting as an assessor



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