2019 OECD Skills Strategy: Finland

Since its launch in 2012, the OECD Skills Strategy has provided countries with a strategic and comprehensive approach to assessing their skills challenges and opportunities. The 2019 OECD Skills Strategy incorporates lessons learned from applying the OECD Skills Strategy framework in eleven countries, including new evidence about the implications of so-called megatrends, such as globalisation, digitalisation, population ageing or migration. It also accounts for new evidence about skills policies that work under the proper governance arrangements, including effective co-ordination and accountability mechanisms, efficient funding from different sources and information systems. This document describes the key findings for Finland.

Finland’s skills performance

The Skills Strategy Dashboard shows that Finland achieves both excellence and equity in compulsory education, ranking among the top countries in PISA. Finland has also been successful in developing the skills of its adults, with average PIAAC scores in literacy and numeracy significantly above average compared to other OECD countries. Participation rates in adult formal and non-formal education are also among the highest in the OECD.

Despite this success, there continue to be areas in which Finland could improve. Finland’s PISA scores have been declining since 2006. In addition, performance differs greatly by immigration status. For example, students with an
immigrant background have literacy scores that are only equivalent to the OECD average, and are significantly lower than for native-born Finns. Foreign-born students not only leave education more often, but also tend to repeat grades. In addition, Finland ranks below the average of OECD countries for share of young people who attain tertiary education.

Finland’s performance is average in the activation of skills and in the alignment of skills supply with the needs of labour market. Evidence of under-qualification and under-skilling is mainly found for older workers in Finland, which may call for strengthening lifelong learning, although participation in adult education is among the highest in the OECD. The OECD Skills for Jobs database finds that shortages in verbal, quantitative and reasoning abilities are stronger than in the OECD average. As well, intense shortages are found in several knowledge areas such as computers and electronics and mathematical knowledge.

Finland has taken important steps to further improve its skills performance. The European Commission Education and Training Monitor 2018 identifies that, besides introducing new curricula at all levels of education, Finland is taking a series of additional measures to increase quality in education. The ‘Basic education forum’ proposes to build on the existing highly egalitarian system to introduce the ‘future basic school’. The ‘Vision for higher education and research in Finland 2030’ aims to develop a vision to increase tertiary attainment, improve opportunities for continuous learning, and increase resources for the research outcomes of higher quality. In response to increasing flows of migrants and refugees into Finland, the Liberal Adult Education Act was amended early 2018. The revised act gives greater responsibility to training institutions to provide language and vocational training to facilitate the integration of migrants, including refugees, into society and the labour market. Finally, the Finnish National Agency for Education launched the ‘National anticipation model for adult education’, which will develop and pilot an anticipation system for adult education and training.

Still, Finland could benefit from a renewal of its strategic vision for the future to ensure that all of its people have the skills to respond to the challenges and opportunities of a complex and rapidly changing world. A whole-of-government approach is needed to achieve this aim.

### Key recommendations for improving the performance of countries’ skills system

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<th>Developing relevant skills over the life course: Making skills systems responsive</th>
<th>Using skills effectively in work and society: Making the most of everyone’s potential</th>
<th>Strengthening the governance of skills systems: Tackling increased complexity</th>
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<td>• Making each stage of learning a foundation for success in the next</td>
<td>• Make full use of everyone’s skills</td>
<td>• Promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government</td>
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<td>• Enabling policies to support learning in adulthood</td>
<td>• Making the most of migrants’ skills</td>
<td>• Engaging stakeholders throughout the policy cycle</td>
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<td>• Supporting teachers to become lifelong learners</td>
<td>• Activating skills to build more inclusive and cohesive societies</td>
<td>• Building integrated information systems</td>
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<td>• Financing adult learning</td>
<td>• Making intensive use of skills in work</td>
<td>• Aligning and co-ordinating financing arrangements</td>
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<td>• Harnessing the power of technology as a tool for learning</td>
<td>• Aligning skills with the needs of the economy and society</td>
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### Further reading


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