

Diploma Supplement

8 INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Finnish education system consists of pre-primary and basic education, general and vocational upper secondary education, higher education and adult education. The compulsory schooling consists of one-year pre-primary education for 6-year-olds and nine-year basic education for children aged 7-16.

Post-compulsory education is given by general upper secondary schools and vocational institutions. The general upper secondary school provides a three-year general education curriculum, at the end of which the pupil takes the national Matriculation examination (*ylioppilastutkinto/studentexamen*). Vocational institutions provide three-year programmes, which lead to upper secondary vocational qualifications (*ammattilinen perustutkinto/yrkesinriktad grundexamen*).

General eligibility for higher education is given by the Matriculation examination, upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and the specialist vocational qualifications.

A foreign qualification that gives eligibility for higher education in the system the qualification belongs to gives general eligibility for higher education also in Finland.

The Finnish higher education system comprises universities (*yliopisto/universitet*) and universities of applied sciences (*ammattikorkeakoulu, AMK/yrkeshögskola, YH*). The universities engage both in education and research and have the right to award doctorates. The universities of applied sciences are multi-field institutions of professional higher education. Universities of applied sciences engage in applied research and development.

First and second cycle higher education studies are measured in credits (*opintopiste/studiepoäng*). Study courses are quantified according to the work load required. One year of full-time study is equivalent to 1600 hours of student work on average and is defined as 60 credits. The credit system complies with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

There are eight levels in the National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules (the Finnish National Qualifications Framework). Higher education qualifications in Finland are referenced at levels 6 – 8 both in the National Qualifications Framework as well as in the European Qualifications Framework.

University degrees

The Government Decree on University Degrees and Specialisation Studies (794/2004 including amendments) defines the objectives, extent and overall structure of degrees. The universities decide on the detailed contents and structure of the degrees they award. They also decide on their curricula and forms of instruction.

First cycle university degree

The first cycle university degree consists of at least 180 credits (three years of full-time study). The degree is called kandidaatti/kandidat in all fields of study except for Law (*oikeusnotaari/rättsnotarie*) and Pharmacy (*farmaseutti/farmaceut*). The determined English translation for all of these degrees is Bachelor's degree, the most common degree titles being Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.

Studies leading to the degree provide the student with: (1) knowledge of the fundamentals of the major and minor subjects or corresponding study entities or studies included in the degree programme and the prerequisites for following developments in the field, (2) knowledge and skills needed for scientific thinking and the use of scientific methods or knowledge and skills needed for artistic work, (3) knowledge and skills needed for studies leading to a higher university degree and for life-long learning, (4) a capacity for applying the acquired knowledge and skills to work and in international co-operation, and (5) adequate language and communication skills for working in one's own field and for international work and co-operation.

Studies leading to the degree may include: basic and intermediate studies; language and communication studies, interdisciplinary programmes, and other studies and work practice for professional development. The degree includes a Bachelor's thesis (6 – 10 credits).

Second cycle university degree

The second cycle university degree consists of at least 120 credits (two years of full-time study). The degree is usually called maisteri/magister. Other second cycle degree titles are diplomi-insinööri/diplomingenjör (Technology), proviisori/provisor (Pharmacy) and arkkitehti/arkitekt (Architecture). The determined English translation for all these degrees is Master's degree, the most common degree titles being Master of Arts and Master of Science. The second cycle university degree title in the fields of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry is lisensiaatti/licentiat, the English title being Licentiate. The admission requirement for the second cycle university degree is a first cycle degree.

In the fields of Medicine and Dentistry the university may arrange the education leading to the second cycle university degree without including a first cycle university degree in the education. In Medicine the degree consists of 360 credits (six years of full-time study) and in Dentistry the degree consists of 330 credits (five and a half years of full-time study).

Studies leading to the second cycle university degree provide the student with: (1) good overall knowledge of the major subject or a corresponding entity and conversance with the fundamentals of the minor subject or good knowledge of the advanced studies included in the degree programme; (2) knowledge and skills needed to apply scientific knowledge and scientific methods or knowledge and skills needed for independent and demanding artistic work; (3) knowledge and skills needed for independently operating as an expert and developer of the field and for international co-operation; (4) knowledge and skills needed for scientific or artistic postgraduate education and for life-long learning; and (5) good language and communication skills for working in one's own field and for international work and co-operation.

The studies leading to the second cycle university degree may include: basic and intermediate studies and advanced studies, language and communication studies; interdisciplinary studies, other studies, and internship improving expertise. The degree includes a Master's thesis (20 – 40 credits).

Doctoral degrees

Students can apply for doctoral studies after the completion of a second cycle degree. The aim of doctoral studies is to provide student with an in-depth knowledge of their field of research and capabilities to produce novel scientific knowledge independently.

The degree of *lisensiaatti/licentiat* (Licentiate) may be taken before the Doctor's degree and in general it takes two years of full-time study to complete.

The Doctor's degree takes approximately four years to complete after a second cycle degree and two years when completed after a Licentiate's degree. A student who has been admitted to complete the Doctor's degree must complete a given amount of studies, show independent and critical thinking in the field of research and write a Doctor's dissertation and defend it in public.

University of applied sciences degrees

The universities of applied sciences Act (932/2014 including amendments) defines the objectives, extent and overall structure of universities of applied sciences degrees. The universities of applied sciences decide on the detailed contents and structure of the degrees they award. They also decide on their curricula and forms of instruction.

First cycle university of applied sciences degrees

The first cycle university of applied sciences degree consists of 180, 210, 240 or 270 credits (three to four and a half years of full-time study) depending on the field of study. The first cycle university of applied sciences degree is called *ammattikorkeakoulututkinto/yrkeshögskoleexamen*. The determined English translation for the degree is Bachelor's degree. The degree titles indicate the field of study, e.g. Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Health Care.

Studies leading to the degree provide the student with: (1) broad overall knowledge and skills with relevant theoretical background for working as expert of the field, (2) knowledge and skills needed for following and advancing developments in the field, (3) knowledge and skills needed for professional development and life-long learning, and (4) adequate language and communication skills for working in one's own field and for international work and co-operation.

The first cycle university of applied sciences degree comprises basic and professional studies, elective studies, a practical training period, and a final project.

The second cycle university of applied sciences degrees

The second cycle university of applied sciences degree consists of 60 or 90 credits (a year or a year and a half of full-time study). The degree is called *ylempi ammattikorkeakoulututkinto/högre yrkeshögskoleexamen*. The determined English translation for the degree is Master's degree. The degree titles indicate the field of study, e.g. Master of Culture and Arts or Master of Business Administration. Eligibility for second cycle university of applied sciences degrees is given by a relevant first cycle degree together with at least three years of relevant work or artistic experience.

Studies leading to the degree provide the student with: (1) broad and advanced knowledge and skills for developing the professional field as well as the theoretical skills for working in demanding expert and leadership positions in the field, (2) profound understanding of the field, its relation to working life and society at large as well as the knowledge and skills needed for following and analysing both theoretical and professional developments in the field, (3) capacity for life-long learning and continuous development of one's own expertise, and (4) good language and communication skills for working in one's own field and for international work and co-operation.

The second cycle university of applied sciences degree comprises advanced professional studies, elective studies, and a final project.