

An abstract graphic on the left side of the page consists of several overlapping puzzle pieces. The pieces are outlined in white and orange, creating a complex, interconnected pattern. The background is a solid blue color.

# Skilful workers in all areas of work

Skills training is  
good for everyone



## Skilful workers in all areas of work

In Finland, vocational skills competitions have been, from the start, an integral part of vocational education and training (VET) and its development. Skills competitions are not organized for the sake of competing, medals and diplomas only. Each national and international skills competition has its own role in the development of VET and vocational skills and competencies.

Skills competitions are the display window of VET and vocational skills and competencies. They bring visibility to VET and the study and career paths offered by it. Also, they increase

the attractiveness and appreciation of VET. Showcasing the students' skills and competencies helps them to find employment. Skills competitions also develop VET and improve its quality. For teachers, participating in the competition and training activities offers an opportunity to create a personalized career path. At their best, the competitions boost business life, as well. When the ways of working, learned and shared during the competition and training, are put to use at vocational institutions and during on-the-job learning, the quality of training improves and companies have access to those professionals and that expertise they need in order to succeed.

The Finnish vocational qualification system is reformed during autumn 2015 and will give better-than-ever opportunities for connecting competition and training into parts of the education providers' curricula and everyday practices at educational institutions. The central targets of the reform is to strengthen competence-based approach, work orientation and flexibility of vocational qualifications. Each student can have his or her individual learning pathway designed in collaboration with working life representatives so that student's own

strengths come into play. When designed in collaboration with business life representatives, these will help create an individual learning pathway for each student so that his or her own strengths come into play. Competition and training is a natural part of a top professional's individual learning pathway. It helps both those with special needs and those with top talent realize their full potential – all the way to being a top-of-the-world professional.

Skills competition activities and training linked with it bring power and effectiveness to vocational education and training. They require close cooperation and belong to everybody while also being advantageous to everybody involved.

When it comes to competing and training, everybody wins – not only those rewarded with medals.

**Seija Rasku**  
*President, Skills Finland  
Counsellor of Education,  
Ministry of Education and Culture  
Official Delegate, WorldSkills*



## Quality and Competitiveness

One important goal of the training and competition activities is to improve the quality and competitiveness of vocational education. Together with our network partners, we at Skills Finland have endeavoured to find ways in which to meet the needs of motivated and talented young people; in other words, we're helping them find their particular "fast lane" to top professionalism.

We have together developed the collaboration between educational institutes and the corporate world, created flexible individual learning pathways and a study entity called

'Working as a top professional', which is incorporated in the basics of the national qualifications. Moreover, the skill managers, experts and coaches have used the school competitions as pedagogical tools. Excellence in skills is also integrated into teacher training.

For the teacher as well, the training and competition activities one opportunity to self-improvement and improved competencies. It makes it possible to enter a personal, different career path. It takes top skills to train top professionals! In some vocational institutions, it is precisely competitive activity that is viewed as the strategic development tool for the personnel's competence.

Why is it, then, that companies want to be a part of the training? Some are looking for visibility among the future professionals and some view participation as a recruitment opportunity. Visibility and image are also important incentives for joining the training circle.

Vocational skills training is a way to boost skills and competencies for all involved. It is a crucial part of the everyday work at vocational institutions.

This publication is meant as tool for all vocational institutions and companies who as our network partners are interested in training and competition activities. In addition we hope to generate new ideas for our international network partners.

### **Teija Ripattila**

*Chief Training Manager*

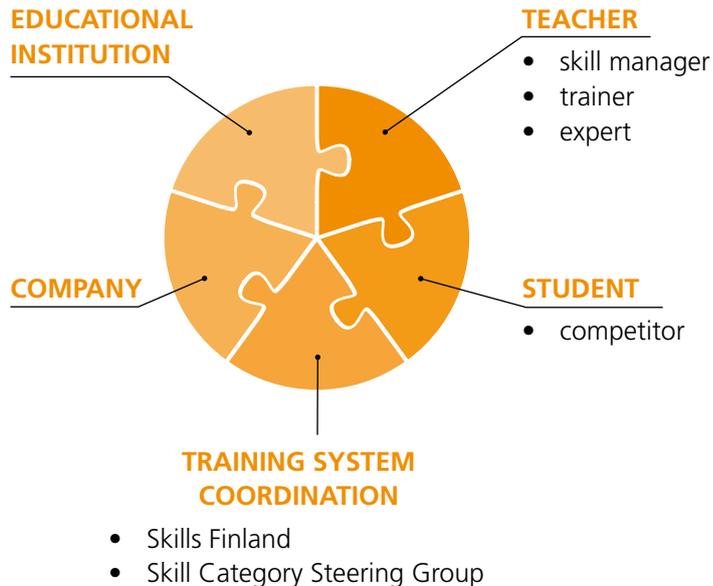
*Official Delegate, WorldSkills Europe*

# Skills training is for everyone

Training leads to a more skilled workforce. The goal is to make Finland the world's most vocationally skilled nation by 2020.

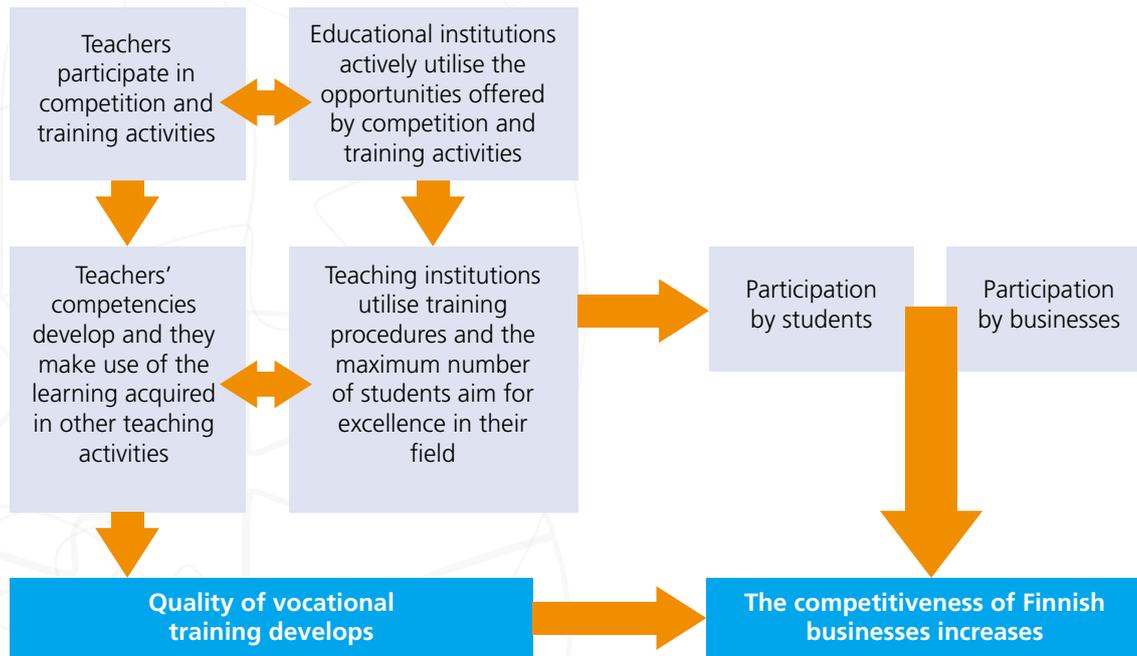
Training develops individuals' skills and also develops the image and quality of vocational education. With the help of training, cooperation improves between companies and educational institutions, so that the skills of graduating students fit well with the needs of working life. Skills are also developed, for example, by participating in the international skills competitions.

There are many different people involved in vocational skills training: businesses, educational institutions, vocational teachers and students can all take part.





# Impact process for the competition and training system







EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

# The educational institution perspective on competition and training activities

- enables support for teacher's vocational development
- builds staff skills and motivation
- benefits the whole staff, because participating teachers share their skills with their work colleagues
- improves the educational institution's image and makes it more attractive
- makes it possible to compare the quality of teaching on both a national and international level
- improves the quality of teaching
- promotes international cooperation
- creates new teaching methods.

The educational institution can participate by giving the teacher the opportunity to work in the training system as a skill manager, expert or trainer. Skills Finland signs a contract with the educational institution.





IMAGE: Juha Rönönen



TEACHER

# The teachers' perspective on competition and training activities

- gives the opportunity to update vocational and teaching skills
- enables teachers to progress in their personal career path
- brings new ideas, content and methods into the teaching, and provides tools for making the teaching more personalised
- build national and international networks which open up new perspectives and bring variety, motivation and inspiration to the work
- gives the possibility to share skills within one's own vocational field or educational institution
- helps keeping up with the developments in one's own field.

**Teachers can participate in the training as either a skill manager, trainer, or expert.**



TEACHER



IMAGE: Juha Böhmén



STUDENT

# The student perspective on competition and training activities

- supports the wide and varied development of one's own knowledge and skills
- enables students to progress in their personal study paths
- builds pride in one's own vocation
- gives the opportunity to network on both a national and international level
- improves graduates' commitment to working life
- enables interactive learning between the teacher and student
- makes it possible to learn from the top names in one's field.

Skills training is meant for all student who want to develop their own skills. To participate you don't need to have special learning needs, nor do you need to be especially gifted. Skills training can be chosen as part of training for a qualification, and the training takes place in the education institution by following personal study paths. The young person's goal can be simply the development of his/her own skills, or if desired, he/she can aim for participation in a vocational skills competition.



STUDENT





COMPANY

# The company perspective on competition and training activities

- helps to develop the skills of one's own staff
- forms for students an image of the company as a potential employer and cooperative partner
- helps with distinguishing oneself from competing companies by providing positive visibility
- creates new working methods
- enables networking both nationally and internationally
- helps to make the skills of graduating students fit better with the needs of working life.

**Companies can participate in the skills training in many ways**, such as by giving jobs or apprenticeships to graduating students, or by offering their own workers for training or as trainers. Companies can also support training by: donating machinery, equipment and programs needed for training; offering short-term training; donating materials for training or competitions; or donating money for training purposes. Companies can also offer their own employees as judges for the vocational skills competitions.



COMPANY





TRAINING SYSTEM

# The training system

Skills Finland organises an open application process for the selection of skill managers, trainers and experts. Skills Finland also signs Unit for Excellence in Training contracts with educational institutions that participate in training activities.

The training is coordinated by the strategic Skill Category Steering Groups, which are nominated by Skills Finland. These groups promote training and cooperation with companies, as well as the development of training for each of the following individual skills. The Skill Category Steering Groups are made up of skill managers, education providers, and employees as well as companies.

The national team competitors are selected via open try-outs. The excellence in skills training system comprises all kinds of training, not only that needed for competitions. The training is carried out by using personalized and flexible study paths and with emphasis on the young person's own objectives.

## Further information

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TRAINING SYSTEM



# Skill Category Steering Groups

## Services 1

Customer Service and Selling  
 Hotel Receptioning  
 Cleaning Services  
 Financial Administration  
 Tourism  
 Entrepreneurship  
 Visual Merchandising

## Services 2

Floristry  
 Health and Social Care  
 Fashion Technology  
 Animal Care  
 Jewellery  
 Hairdressing  
 Beauty Therapy

## Construction 1

Plumbing and Heating  
 Electrical Installations  
 Ventilation Technology  
 Refrigeration  
 Bricklaying  
 Wall and Floor Tiling  
 Carpentry

## Construction 2

Cabinet Making  
 Stonemasonry  
 Painting and Decorating  
 Landscape Gardening  
 Metal Roofing

## Catering Services

Restaurant Service  
 Cook  
 Confectioner / Pastry Cook

## Automobile and Transport Technology

Automobile Technology  
 Autobody Repair  
 Car Painting  
 Transport Technology  
 Operation of Forestry Machinery  
 Aircraft Maintenance

## IT and Communications Technology

Mechanical Engineering  
 Design - CAD  
 Offset Printing  
 Graphic Design Technology  
 IT/Software Applications  
 IT PC/Network Support  
 Creating Web Pages  
 3D modelling

## Industry 1

CNC Turning  
 CNC Milling  
 Manufacturing Team Challenge  
 Polymechanics/Automation  
 Mechanical Assembly and Maintenance  
 Construction Metal Work  
 Welding

## Industry 2

Electronics  
 Industrial Control  
 Mechatronics  
 Mobile Robotics  
 Laboratorian





IMAGE: Antti Varonen

## Skills training is everyone's right and for everyone's benefit

Through this training, a skilled Finnish workforce is built up for many areas of work. Companies, educational institutions, students and vocational teachers can all participate in the training. Everyone benefits from this – inside we explain how.

At Skills Finland, we promote Finnish excellence in vocational skills by organising training and competitions and also by educating professionals for each skill area. The national vocational skills competitions include Taitaja, TaitajaPLUS and Taitaja9; the international competitions are Worldskills, Euroskills and the International Abilympics.



Ministry of  
Education  
and Culture



FINNISH NATIONAL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Between 2011 and 2014 Skills Finland carried out the **'Competitiveness and Quality in Vocational Education with Excellence in Skills'** project (KILTA). Financial support for carrying out the project was received from the European Social Fund. The goal of the project was to improve the quality and competitiveness of vocational education by improving both the skills of teachers and workplace supervisors and also their ability to educate others to the highest skill level.

Leverage from  
the EU  
2007-2013



[www.skillsfinland.fi](http://www.skillsfinland.fi)