



FINNISH NATIONAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION

RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS IN FINLAND

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Recognition of a qualification refers to a decision on the types of eligibility that a foreign educational qualification provides for a job or a place of study. Responsibility for recognition of qualifications rests with the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE), a field-specific authority, an employer or a higher education institution or some other educational institution, depending on the purpose for which recognition is applied.

- **The Finnish National Board of Education** decides on the eligibility conferred by foreign qualifications for public posts in Finland.
- **Field-specific authorities** decide on granting the right to practise a profession or use a professional title. For instance, decisions on health care professions are made by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health, Valvira (www.valvira.fi).
- **Private sector employers** generally assess the competence conferred by a foreign qualification themselves when deciding on employee recruitment.
- **Higher education institutions and other educational institutions** decide on eligibility conferred by foreign qualifications for further studies and on transfer of credits completed abroad towards a qualification to be taken in Finland.

Finnish National Board of Education decisions on recognition of higher education studies completed abroad

This brochure describes decisions on recognition of higher education studies completed abroad. Such decisions are based on the Act on Eligibility Provided by Foreign Higher Education Studies for Public Posts in Finland (531/1986).

A decision on recognition of foreign higher education studies may be granted to a person who has completed at least a three-year higher education degree outside Finland. The degree must be completed in full. In addition, the degree must fall within the official system of higher education degrees in place in the country of origin and it must have been conferred by an officially recognised higher education institution.

A decision may only be obtained by application. Each application will be processed individually. A decision on recognition of a higher education qualification does not transform a foreign qualification into a Finnish one. The only way to obtain a Finnish qualification or degree title is to complete the relevant Finnish programme at a Finnish higher education institution. People who have completed their qualification abroad should use their original qualification title.

Types of decisions

Decisions issued by the Finnish National Board of Education may concern comparability with a Finnish higher education degree of a certain level or comparability with a certain Finnish study module.

Decisions on recognition of the level of a degree

As a general rule, people who have completed their higher education degree abroad will need to obtain a decision on recognition when applying for a public sector position in Finland which requires a higher education degree of a certain level. A foreign higher education degree can be recognised either as corresponding to a lower or higher university degree, a polytechnic degree, a higher polytechnic degree, a pre-doctoral licentiate or doctor's degree.

A favourable decision on recognition cannot be granted if the applicant's programme of study does not correspond to any Finnish higher education degree in terms of level. These decisions may not impose supplementary studies on applicants.

Decisions on comparability with a certain Finnish study module

Holders of foreign higher education degrees will also need a decision on recognition when applying for eligibility for a regulated profession in Finland, i.e. a position for which the law requires a certain higher education degree or a certain higher education study module. These include positions as a teacher or a social worker, for example.

In order to receive a favourable decision, the applicant must be fully qualified in his or her country of origin for the profession for which he or she is seeking eligibility in Finland. In addition, the studies must correspond to those required for the position in Finland in terms of scope, contents and requirements.

These decisions may impose supplementary studies on applicants. Recipients of such decisions are expected to apply for the right to study at a Finnish higher education institution. The maximum scopes of supplementary studies have been specified in legislation. A favourable decision cannot be granted if the amount of supplementary studies required exceeds the maximum scope specified.

In cases where an EU/EEA citizen who has qualified for a profession in another EU/EEA country or in Switzerland applies for a decision on eligibility for a regulated profession, the decision-making process is governed by the Act on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (1093/2007). Further information is available on the FNBE website.

Applying for a decision and processing the application

To apply for a decision, applicants should send a completed and signed application form to the Finnish National Board of Education. Applications must always be accompanied by the following appendices:

- **Officially certified copies of qualification certificates and transcripts of records.**
The Finnish National Board of Education accepts copies certified by local Register Offices in Finland and Finnish diplomatic missions abroad and copies provided by foreign authorities, accompanied by Apostille certificates.
- **Translations of qualification certificates and transcripts of records drawn up by an authorised translator in Finland, unless the original documents are in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic or English.**
- **Proof of nationality, such as a copy of the passport bio-data page or an extract from a population register.**

In some cases, applications may also need to be accompanied by other documents. Detailed instructions on the required appendices can be found in the application instructions.

The application form and instructions are available in Finnish, Swedish and English on the FNBE website. In addition, the application instructions are available on the website in Russian.

The Finnish National Board of Education will send each applicant confirmation of receipt of the application within one month. The applicant may be asked to provide additional information if necessary. The application will not be processed until the applicant has provided the Board with a completed application form and all the required appendices.

The period for processing an application varies according to whether the Finnish National Board of Education requests any external expert opinions on the qualification. The Finnish National Board of Education will contact the applicant if the eligibility applied for cannot be granted.

A decision may be issued in Finnish or Swedish. It is subject to a fee and is sent to the applicant's address in Finland on a cash-on-delivery basis (COD). The applicant may appeal against the decision to an Administrative Court. The appeal instructions will be appended to the decision.

Finnish National Board of Education statements on foreign vocational qualifications

The Finnish National Board of Education issues advisory statements on foreign vocational qualifications for which it is not possible to issue a decision on eligibility for public posts. A statement can be drawn up on any completed qualification falling within the official qualifications system in the country of origin. Such a statement does not confer eligibility for public posts. Nevertheless, it may be helpful when searching for a job or applying for studies.

A statement on a foreign vocational qualification provides information about the level and content of the qualification and the competence provided by the qualification in the country of origin. The content of the qualification is mainly compared with corresponding Finnish qualifications. Statements are issued in Finnish or Swedish.

To apply for a statement, applicants should send a completed application with appendices to the Finnish National Board of Education. The application form and instructions for applying for a statement are available in Finnish, Swedish and English on the FNBE website. The statement is subject to a fee and it is sent to the applicant's address in Finland on a cash-on-delivery basis (COD).

Where necessary, advice relating to applications is provided via e-mail or by telephone. The Finnish National Board of Education does not have customer reception facilities.

Further information

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recognition@oph.fi
www.oph.fi/tutkintojentunnustaminen (in Finnish)
www.oph.fi/examenserkannande (in Swedish)
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