



Regional strategy for education and research up to 2013

Publications of the Ministry of Education, Finland 2004:11



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Opetusministeriö • Koulutus- ja tiedepolitiikan osasto

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OPETUSMINISTERIÖ

Undervisningsministeriet

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Foreword

In 2002 the Ministry of Education devised a regional strategy for its administrative field up to 2013. In the strategy, the Ministry outlines the following vision for regional development:

“Finland has high-standard educational, research and cultural services covering all parts of the country, which promote welfare in Finnish society and the welfare and equality of its citizens and are responsive to changes in the operational environment.”

The *Ministry of Education Strategy 2015* outlines targets and means for responding to changes in society. One foreseeable change is regional development and differentiation. Regional development can be significantly influenced by means of education, training and research.

This regional strategy for education and research up to 2013 presents the visions and strategic policy lines which underpin efforts to boost the positive regional effect of education and research in the whole of Finland.

Arvo Jäppinen
Director General
Department for Education and Science Policy

Vision and strategic policy lines for the regional development of education and research



vision

“Finland’s welfare and international competitiveness rest on the vitality and innovativeness of the regions, which is promoted by regionally comprehensive provision of education and research.”

Means of promoting the creation and development of competitive regional innovation environments through education and research:

- Supporting quality enhancement in education and research and ensuring sufficient basic resources in different parts of the country.
- Reconciling development objectives set in national and regional policies with development targets set for regional development, with emphasis on the different strengths and development needs of the regions.
- Strengthening regional cooperation between providers of education and research and local business, industry and other stakeholders.
- Stepping up cooperation between the education and research systems with a view to attaining the strategic targets.
- Promoting the development of regional education and research policies by linking education and research with the regional industrial and welfare strategies and by stepping up regional labour and education foresights.
- Boosting the emergence of an international infrastructure of the regions and increasing international exchanges and interaction in secondary and higher education institutions.
- Strengthening linkages between immigration and educational policies by primarily targeting immigrants' education and training outside the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and taking advantage of education and training services which become available in the regions owing to decreasing populations.

Sectoral visions and strategic policy lines in regional development



sectors

*Sectoral and cross-sectoral visions
and strategic policy lines
expanding on the overall line of
action in education and research.*

Pre-primary and basic education

VISION

“Locally and regionally comprehensive, high-standard pre-primary and basic education makes schooling accessible wherever pupils live and equips all school-leavers for further education and training.”

Strategic policy lines

- Education providers' regional cooperation networks will help assure local pre-primary and basic education services.
- Schools providing pre-primary and basic education will cooperate actively at the regional and national levels and participate in international projects geared to develop teaching.
- New teaching methods and virtual learning environments will help secure high-standard basic education all over Finland.

Upper secondary level

General and vocational education

VISION

“The provision of secondary education and training is regionally comprehensive. Education and training equip young people and the adult population with first-rate qualifications for further education and for entering the labour market.”

“The upper secondary school provides a solid and high-standard general education, irrespective the place of residence.”

“Vocational education and training actively promotes regional competitiveness, welfare and working life development by responding to the skills needs of the population and local business and industry.”

Strategic policy lines

- Regionally comprehensive provision of secondary education and training will be secured through the promotion of resource use based on education providers' cooperation.
- The secondary education steering and financing system will be developed to accommodate regional differences in operational environments and to strengthen education providers' prerequisites for carrying out their basic mission in different parts of the country.
- Opportunities for secondary education and training will be expanded and diversified in different regions through the development of ICT-based learning environments, multi-form learning, and pedagogic action models in support of these.
- Measures will be taken to promote secondary education providers' prerequisites for supporting the learning of pupils and students both of different learning capacities and from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as their assimilation into society.
- Adequate resources will be secured to vocational training providers for responding to the knowledge needs of young people and adults in their regions and for functioning as working life developers through the creation of networks which enable them to form regionally strong entities.
- Measures will be taken to enhance the impact of the steering and financing system on regional development through funding based on educational quality, incentive and performance, which will be developed as part of results-based steering and management in vocational education and training.
- The role of vocational education and training in the regional innovation system and as a regional skills developer will be bolstered through enhanced contacts with the world of work and the development of work-based training forms and learning environments.

Higher education



VISION

“A regionally comprehensive higher education system of an international standard works in interaction with society at large and constitutes a strong influence on regional development.”

Strategic policy lines

- The regional impact of higher education will be enhanced through the development of R&D and adult education alongside undergraduate education.
- The activities of the regionally decentralised higher education system will be based on universities' and polytechnics' mutually complementary knowledge, which will be developed with emphasis on the strengths of the regions.
- The practice in cooperation and division of work between higher education institutions will be clarified on the basis of the universities' and polytechnics' joint regional strategies, with due consideration to the fact that the universities' operations are more national in nature.
- Cooperation and structural development will be undertaken to promote the creation of sufficiently large and diversified higher education units needed to assure the quality of education and research.
- The polytechnic network will be developed on the basis of a skeletal structure of large units and a supplementary structure of regional service networks. The universities' activities in the regions will be strengthened through measures to enhance the existing network and further develop the existing regional university centres.
- The special characteristics of the regions will be taken into account in the anticipation of access to graduate labour force. The response to the educational needs of the regions will be based on the use of universities' and polytechnics' current knowledge and service reserves and the further development of their adult education supply. The needs of regional business and industry will be met with a diversified adult education supply at polytechnics.
- The regional networks of universities and polytechnics will be developed to respond to educational needs in the regions. With a view to strengthening the network, open university and polytechnic studies, other adult education, and education relating to educational and cultural self-development will be enhanced with reference to the needs of business and industry and the world of work in general. Open university education will be developed as a track leading to degree studies.
- Measures will be taken to strengthen the prerequisites of higher education institutions for cooperating and networking with other players in their regions.
- Cooperation between the higher education institutions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area will be intensified and their knowledge will also be utilised more widely in the country.
- Surveys and assessments of the regional impact of higher education institutions will be increased with a view to promoting regional innovation systems and identifying problem points in the innovation chain.

Adult education and training

VISION

“An adult education system which responds to changing knowledge needs in society and to adults’ educational and cultural needs offers opportunities for high-quality lifelong learning all over the country.”



Strategic policy lines

- Measures will be taken to secure the supply of and access to adult education and training in all regions through increased cooperation between education providers, secondary institutions, polytechnics and universities, and through the application and development of the new technologies.
- Regions and districts will be encouraged to draw up comprehensive adult education development plans in consultation with local authorities, education providers, polytechnics and universities, business and industry, and civic organisations.
- The system for steering adult education will be developed to enable adult education and training to be planned, steered and monitored both as a whole and as separate sectors at the regional and national levels.
- The programme for raising the level of education among the working age population will be implemented by means of regional cooperation networks, and opportunities will be secured for untrained adults to upgrade their training even after the programme has terminated.
- Adult education and training will be used as a means of enabling all citizens to acquire the basic ICT skills they need in work, studies, transactions in society and other interaction. Adult education and training organisations will take part in different joint projects.
- Measures will be taken to improve adults' access to up-to-date information about education and training supply in their region which meets their needs.
- Access to the educational and recreational services available in liberal adult education will be secured in different parts of the country.
- The educational and cultural needs of the growing retired population will be taken into account especially through measures to enhance the capacity of liberal adult education institutions and to develop cooperation with local and regional cultural administrations, civic organisations and the social and health sector.

Research and development

VISION

“Research and development is of a high quality in the different regions and its results are utilised in a versatile and effective way to strengthen the vitality and welfare of the regions. The regional innovation environments are based on university research and polytechnic R&D, which is geared to working life and regional development.”

Strategic policy lines

- Research and development in higher education institutions will be based on the development of their own strengths and on varied local, national and international networking.
- The Academy of Finland will support high-standard research with long-term funding based on quality.
- Research infrastructures and support services will be developed to make quality R&D results available in different parts of the country.
- The utilisation of research findings will be developed to make the knowledge of universities and polytechnics easily and flexibly accessible in different regions.
- Measures will be taken to strengthen regional research cooperation between universities and polytechnics.
- Measures will be taken to strengthen universities and polytechnics' cooperation with other players in the region.
- Measures will be taken to strengthen universities' and polytechnics' contribution to the Centre of Expertise and Regional Centre Programmes and to science parks and technology centres.
- The operations of large, versatile research environments will be enhanced and their knowledge will also be utilised outside their own regions.

Finland as part of the European education and research area

VISION

“Finland will constitute a respected participant and influence both in European education and research policy and in European cooperation, developing competitive European knowledge and the EU Northern Dimension.”

Strategic policy lines

- The application of new knowledge and the regions' prerequisites will be strengthened by means of cross-border networking between regions.
- The development of regional education, research and innovation will capitalise on the EU Structural Funds and other opportunities inherent in international cooperation.
- In its cooperation with the adjacent areas, Finland will promote cross-border knowledge transfer which supports regional development.

Review and development of the strategy



2013

The units of the Department for Education and Science Policy will see to the implementation of the strategy. The strategy will be revised and further developed at least every four years in response to changes in the operational environments and to policies outlined in the Government Programmes and in the Development Plan for Education and Research.



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