

# Finland:Single Structure Education (Integrated Primary and Lower Secondary Education)

Basic education, compulsory for children between 6/7 and 15/16 years of age, is almost exclusively provided by comprehensive schools (Finnish: peruskoulu Swedish: grundskola). Basic education is integrated within a single structure comprising primary and lower secondary level education. Basic education lasts nine years and is most often preceded by one year pre-primary education (see Chapter 4).

The objective of basic education is to support pupils' growth towards humane and ethically responsible membership of society, and to provide them with the knowledge and skills they will need in life. The instruction is to promote education and equality in society and pupils' opportunities to participate in education and to otherwise develop themselves during their lives.

In June 2012, the Government issued a new Decree (422/2012) on the general national objectives and distribution of lesson hours in basic education. The new Decree was the starting point for a curricular reform. The national core curricula for pre-primary education, basic education and voluntary additional basic education (as well as general upper secondary education, see Chapter 6) are due to be completed by the end of 2014. Local curricula must be approved prior to 1st August 2016, so as to enable provision of education in accordance with the new curricula as from the beginning of the autumn term in 2016. The reform process involves broad-based co-operation with stakeholders and working with experts, as well as support for local curriculum development efforts in many different ways.

[Ehdotus valtioneuvoston strategiaksi koulutuksellisen tasa-arvon edistämiseksi](#)

Quality enhancement in basic education is based on the ideology of continuing quality enhancement and conditions conducive to quality enhancement in schools. The quality of basic education has been addressed for example by drawing up national quality criteria. The purpose is to secure the quality and a diverse supply of education and to guarantee the basic educational rights of children irrespective of their place of residence, native language and economic standing.

A programme for enhancing equality in basic education was proposed in 2012. The objectives are for example to diminish differences in learning outcomes between girls and boys as well as diminish the effects of family background of pupils.

Basic education is governed by the Basic Education Act (628/1998), the Basic Education Decree (852/1998) and the Government Decree on the objectives and distribution of lesson hours in basic education (1435/2001). The national core curriculum prepared by the Finnish National Board of Education are based on these. The latest National Core Curriculum for grades 1-9 was taken into use by 1 August 2006.

[\(See more information from chapter Teaching and learning in Single Structure Education\)](#)

[Perusopetusasetus](#)

[Perusopetuslaki](#)

[Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2004](#)

[Ministry of Education and Culture](#)