

TEACHER EDUCATION 2050

Vision for Finnish Teacher Education

Finnish Teacher Education Forum



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Abstract

The vision for Finnish teacher education, Teacher Education 2050, guides the development of pre- and in-service teacher education and continuous learning. The aim of the vision is that teacher education, and all key stakeholders, collaborate and contribute so that in Finland we will have the world's best educational system, promoting learning and wellbeing equally and equitably throughout life. The value basis and premises of the vision are realised when enacting the development focuses of teacher education in practice. The aim of the vision is that during the research-based teacher education teachers develop a strong professionalism and professional agency.

Recommendations

- Universities and universities of applied sciences responsible for teacher education develop it systemically, and in a research-based manner in line with the vision for teacher education.
- Universities, universities of applied sciences and stakeholders ensure through collaborative development that enacting teacher education in line with the vision is possible.
- Possibilities for research-based continuous learning, mentoring and support are developed as a continuum for pre-service teacher education by considering various development needs.
- Joint development is done together with local, national, and international responsible and collaborative partners.

Aim and Purpose of Teacher Education

The purpose of institutional education is to create the conditions for a good and sustainable life, educate for democratic and responsible citizenship within and beyond Finland, as well as support continuous growth, development and Bildung throughout life. Enacting this purpose in a more complex and unpredictable world presupposes teachers' strong professionalism and professional agency – their skills, capabilities and will – to learn independently and together with others throughout the teacher career. This creates a foundation for supporting the learning of all children, adolescents, and adults; developing both individual work and educational institutions; building democratic and inclusive society; and sustainable and persistent renewal.

The core of Finnish teacher education is to provide teachers with strong professional agency and broad professionalism. It enables not only producing solutions to partly unpredictable future challenges but also building a desired future actively through education and in everyday life at school. Institutional education, schools, and teachers are the most important resources to build the future of society.

Current Landscape and Challenges

We live in a world with global and complex changes that are challenging to predict. We already know some of the changes that can bring both opportunities and challenges for the educational system, for example increasing diversity in society, demographic change, or polarisation, but the solutions

and means to fully utilise their potential are insufficient. Digitalisation, technologies and rapid development of artificial intelligence are continuously changing the operational environment. This provides both challenges and possible educational solutions. The current ecological state of the world is also cause for extensive concerns. Nevertheless, the development of green innovations provides possibilities for sustainable growth and development, economically and otherwise. At the same time, the changes in security in Europe and around the world have been radical. Although the Finnish educational system is affected by these several foundational developments and changes, as a builder of the future it is also key to solving these problems. The role of schools and educational institutions is central to finding sustainable solutions based on adapted human behaviour and innovations against climate change or biodiversity loss.

In addition to these identified and unsolved problems, the future will also bring as-yet unidentified and unsolved opportunities and challenges. And amid these questions, educational institutions and teachers have a central role in building the future of Finnish society. Overcoming identified and not yet identified challenges presupposes teachers' professional agency and capabilities to learn and create new things. Building hope, understanding, meaningfulness, and future scenarios is critically important in new situations. Teacher education significantly contributes to what and how teachers learn, and how they can respond professionally to new situations and challenges.

A strong professional agency and professionalism are at the core of teacher education.

Research-based Development of Teacher Education

The main responsibility and task of the national Finnish Teacher Education Forum is to renew Finnish research-based teacher education to make it stronger and more effective. The vision for Finnish teacher education, Teacher Education 2050, guides the development of pre- and in-service teacher education and continuous learning. The [national Teacher Education Development Programme 2022–2026](#) and [LUMA\(TE\) strategy 2030](#) have influenced the development of the current vision. The aim of the vision is that teacher education, and all key stakeholders, collaborate and contribute so that in Finland we will have the world's best educational system, promoting learning and wellbeing equally and equitably throughout life. The value basis and premises of the vision are realised when enacting the development focuses of teacher education in practice.

The vision of teacher education is firmly committed to the research-based teacher education.

Finnish teacher education is research-based, as is its development. This means that teacher education curricula, contents and teaching and learning methods are research-based; student teachers learn an inquiring orientation towards teacher's work; learning research methods and doing research are fundamental parts of teacher education; research informs teacher education development activities, and their impact is investigated.

The aim is to build and further develop teacher education, in which

- Teachers learn strong professional agency and professionalism
- Teachers learn capabilities relevant for teacher's practical work
- Teachers learn individually and together with others throughout their careers

Teacher's work is demanding and responsible academic, practical, and ethical professional work. It requires capabilities to work in complex and versatile interactive situations persistently, proactively and flexibly. Teachers are in key positions to support the growth and learning of children, adolescents, and adults, and to enhance the comprehensive development of educational institutions. At best, student teachers learn a strong basis for demanding professional teacher's work during their pre-service teacher education.

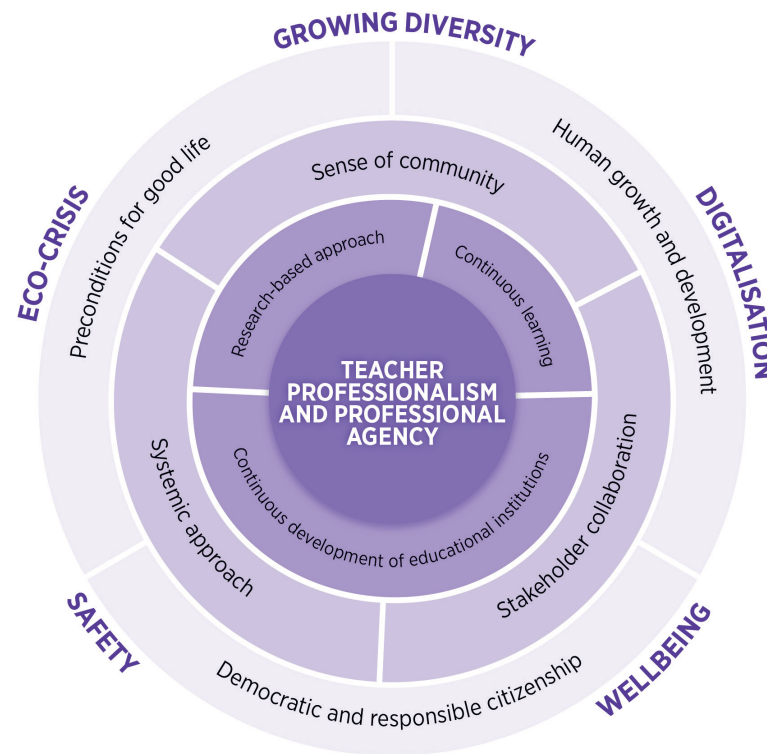


Figure: Aims, practices and contextual factors in the Teacher Education 2050 vision

The aim is that pre- and in-service teacher education form a continuum that supports teachers' continuous learning and development in various phases of their careers.

Universities and universities of applied sciences responsible for teacher education develop it systematically, and in a research-based manner in line with the vision for teacher education. Universities, universities of applied sciences and

stakeholders ensure through collaborative development that enacting teacher education in line with the vision is possible. **Possibilities for research-based continuous learning, mentoring and support are developed as a continuum for pre-service teacher education by considering various development needs.** Joint development is done together with local, national, and international responsible and collaborative partners. This enhances the attractiveness of the teacher profession.

Focuses of Development in Teacher Education

I) Enhancing attractiveness and retention through predictions and student admissions

Higher education institutions predict teacher supply. Higher education institutions use information about teacher groups and teacher capabilities to predict changing teacher needs and supply. The availability of comprehensive, accurate national quantitative and qualitative prediction data is developed collaboratively by higher education institutions and stakeholders. The structural development of prediction data utilisation strengthens the evidence-based development of teacher education and quality enhancement. This allows preparation for national, regional, and global changes in working life and Finnish society.

Higher education institutions enhance the attractiveness of teacher education. Higher education institutions emphasise the significance of teacher education and importance of educators and teachers to the growth and development of all learners. The significance of teacher's work is emphasised, because its appreciation is reflected in the application to teacher education. Strengthening the attractiveness is important in all teacher education programmes. There is a special need to improve attractiveness in early childhood teacher education, STEAM-fields subject teacher education, professional technical field teacher education and Swedish teacher education. Stakeholders and media significantly influence the attractiveness of teacher education. Positive media exposure of the

teacher profession will be improved by education providers and educational institutions.

Student admissions in teacher education are based on research. Research-based admissions means that the student selection criteria and selection methods are grounded on research. This means, for example, that the student selection criteria predict completion of the teacher education studies and commitment to teacher's work. Research-based and joint admissions allow choosing for teacher education suitable and motivated students who are committed to continuous learning. Collaboration among higher education institutions in admissions development is strengthened between the various teacher education programmes in universities as well as between the universities and universities of applied sciences.

Teachers are committed to education and teaching in their work. In research-based teacher education, versatile pedagogical practices support the construction of student teachers' professional agency and expertise as well as their transition into teacher work. Early career teachers' support and mentoring are developed nationally and locally in stakeholder collaboration. Teacher's work-related wellbeing is handled in a variety of ways. Teachers' opportunities for continuous learning and professional development are guaranteed nationally and locally. Education and early childhood and care providers strengthen teachers' commitment to work by developing working conditions, salaries, opportunities for professional learning, and work-related wellbeing.

Well-functioning multiprofessional collaboration, stakeholders and partnerships improve retention in the education, care and teaching sector.

II) Continuous development of teacher expertise

Teacher expertise and support for its continuous development are based on research. Teacher expertise and support for its development, both in pre-service teacher education and in various working environments during the teacher career, are based on scientific knowledge. The three focuses of teacher expertise outlined in the vision constitute suitable teacher education content regardless of discipline or professional field.

Competence on learning and instruction, interaction and development is at the core of teacher expertise.

Broad and versatile **competence on learning and instruction** is at the core of a teacher's expertise. Teachers can facilitate learning processes on individual, group and community levels. They can choose, identify, differentiate, evaluate and develop teaching methods and core contents by considering discipline, professional field and learner diversity. They can support learning of learning skills. Learning is also a core process for teachers' own professional development and the development of instruction. An essential element in a teacher's expertise is to learn both individually and with others as well as build meaningful learning environments for their own and others' learning.

The demanding work of a teacher requires versatile **interaction competence**. Interaction is a key element in supporting learning and emotions and their regulation. Pedagogical interaction in manifold face-to-face and digital environments is central to teacher's work. Teacher's work is about interacting with various actors, professionals in different fields, and stakeholders. The primary actors are learners, colleagues, leaders of educational institutions and schools, guardians, and working life representatives. Teachers need capabilities for skillful interaction and its regulation on individual, group, community, educational institution, working life, and societal levels.

Teachers possessing multifaceted **development competence** can enhance their own professional capabilities systematically throughout their careers and contribute to the development of an educational institution or school by utilising scientific knowledge. A teacher's everyday work forms the primary environment for professional learning and development. An inquiring orientation and approach form the basis for this development. Development is enacted together with learners and colleagues in the professional community and with key stakeholders. Systemic understanding of the development process and its pedagogical leadership are emphasised in teacher's development competence.

III) Strengthening teacher education through collaboration and networks

Collaboration in teacher education and its networks are comprehensive and strong. Collaboration and networks in teacher education are

strengthened in research, teaching, pedagogy, and development within and between higher education institutions, as well as with international stakeholders. Collaboration in the networks supports and promotes research-based experimentation and development to strengthen teacher education and enhance teachers' and teacher educators' learning and professional agency. Changes in the working environment are anticipated and solved sustainably in collaboration with key stakeholders. The research-based approach and collaboration networks combined with technological solutions allow bringing the relevant knowledge and expertise of education, teaching and teacher education to everyone working in the field.

Teachers' continuous learning is supported through societal interaction and in-service teacher education. Teachers' learning during their careers is developed and enhanced systematically using various models, experiments, and technological solutions. The continuous research-based development, of teachers' expertise in various phases of their careers, in collaboration with networks and stakeholders is essential. Current research knowledge on learning, instruction, and learning environments is communicated and delivered for teachers in a structured and usable format.

IV) Skilful leadership enhancing educational institutions to become learning and evolving communities

Pedagogical leadership competence is a part of teacher's expertise. Pedagogical leadership in educational institutions is versatile and complex, and it is regulated and guided by several decrees.

Joint development is done together with local, national, and international partners.

The core pedagogical processes in a teacher's work include curriculum process, collaborative teaching, competence management, and quality enhancement. Shared expertise and its development are central to these processes. Shared leadership is realised in an inquiring and developing approach to work, and in leading versatile expert teams on various systemic levels. Responsibility and ethical aspects are essential elements of pedagogical leadership. Pedagogical leadership is realised both in the work of each teacher and on various systemic levels at educational institutions. It is about leadership of pedagogy, leading pedagogically, and leading educational institutions.

Support for pedagogical leadership and leaders is strong and solid. Pedagogical leadership and leaders are supported in a versatile way by considering various leadership roles. Higher education institutions develop research-based studies in pedagogical leadership. This allows enacting the basic function of the educational institutions and guaranteeing the conditions, continuous learning, expertise development and work-related wellbeing of teachers and pedagogical leaders. It is essential that the provided support is based on a collective understanding of the shared leadership in the educational institution.

In collaboration with higher education institutions responsible for teacher education



In collaboration with key stakeholders



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