



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
FINLAND

# Insights from Finland's Teacher Education Policy

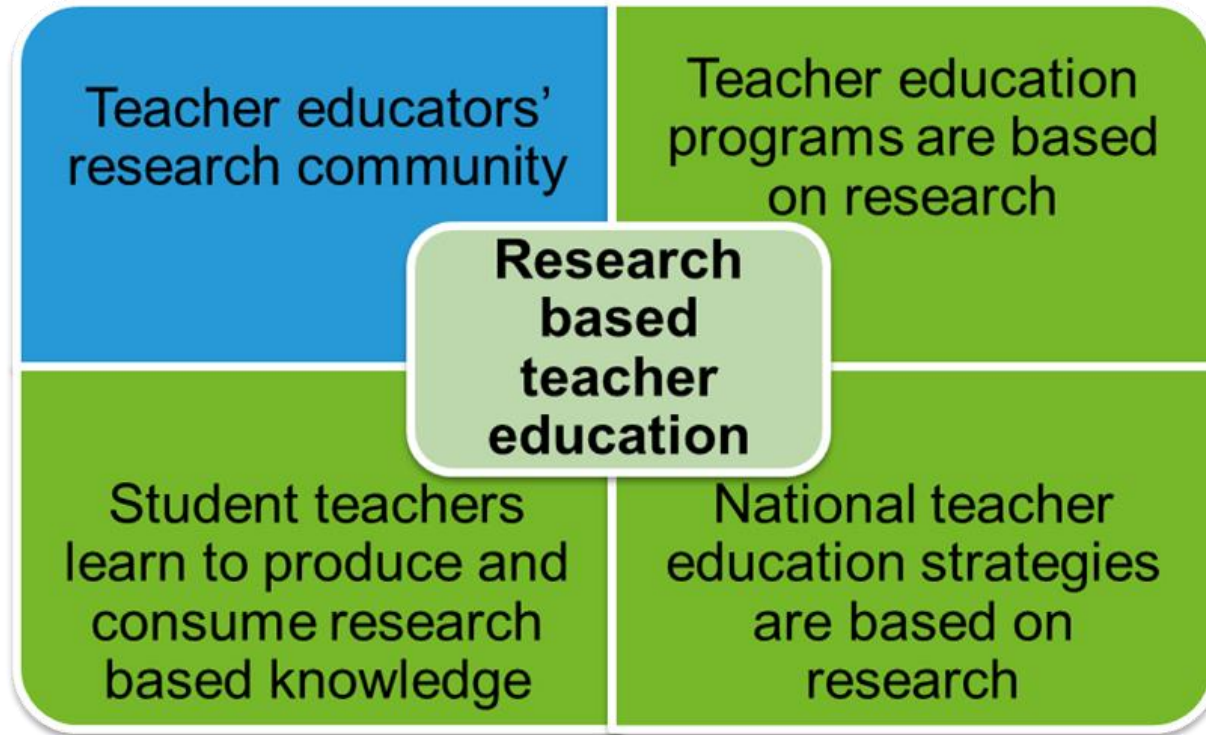
Expert Session: The Vision of Finnish Teacher Education,  
17.9.2024, Helsinki  
Marjo Vesalainen, Senior Ministerial Adviser, PhD

# Some Strengths of Finnish Teacher Education

- Academic education – usually master's degree (300 ECTS cr).
- Studies are researched-based.
- All teacher education involves guided teaching practice.
- Teacher education and profession has remained attractive.



# All teacher educators do research – All researchers teach



# Autonomy of the Finnish Universities

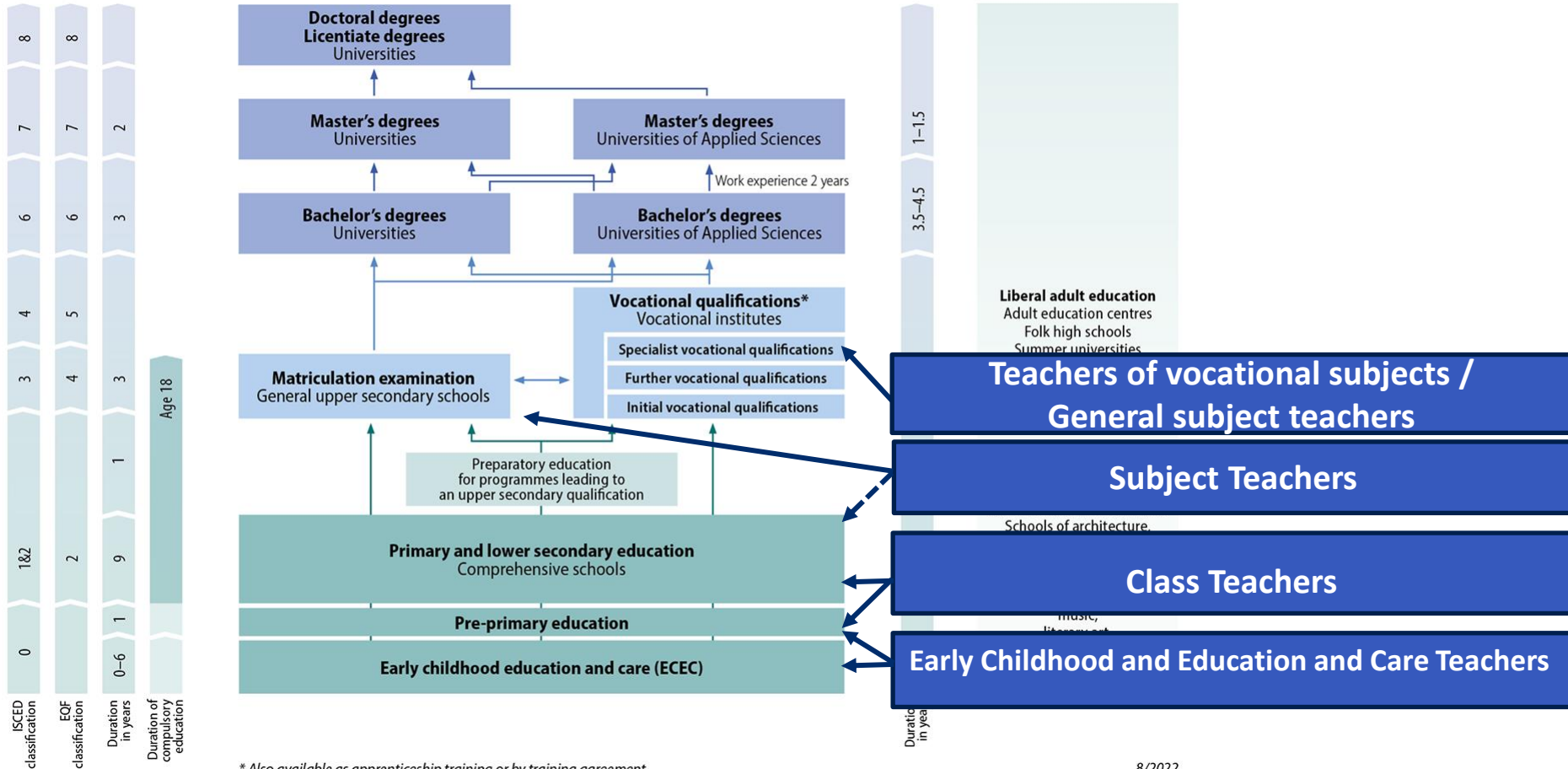
- Universities and universities of applied sciences have extensive autonomy and freedom of education and research.
- We don't have a national level curriculum for teacher education.
- Universities' autonomy covers student admissions, curricula, content and implementation of studies, assessment, recognition of studies etc. They are responsible for the content and quality of the education they provide.

# Teacher education for different teacher groups

- Early childhood education and care teachers
- Class teachers and subject teachers
- Special needs teachers in early childhood education, special class teachers, special needs teachers, vocational special needs teachers
- Vocational teachers: teachers of vocational subjects and general subject teachers
- Guidance counsellors

Eight universities and five universities of applied sciences have educational responsibility for teacher education.

# EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND



# Development of Teacher Education in Finland

- Universities in Finland have a high degree of autonomy in designing their curricula and developing the study programmes.
- Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Ministry has targeted measures to develop teacher education.
- **We trust in broad collaboration and expertise in our policy-planning processes.**



Picture: Riitta Supperi/Keksi/Team Finland

**Measures to develop  
teacher education since  
the beginning of the  
1990s**



- **A working group** on teacher education led by the Ministry to prepare development measures; **evaluation and development projects** that have made recommendations for developing teachers' pre-service and in-service education. The projects have produced numerous reports.
- **National evaluations of teacher education** in 1999 and 2000
- In 2001, the Ministry prepared in cooperation with stakeholders a **development programme for teacher education 2001–2005**. It summarised the development recommendations concerning teacher education provided by universities and universities of applied sciences.
- **A committee** was appointed 2001 by the Ministry **to follow the implementation of the teacher education development programme 2001–2005** and to prepare the assessment of the development programme.
- The Institute for Educational Research conducted in 2005 a **national follow-up and evaluation study of how the recommendations of the teacher development programme have been implemented**. The study was commissioned by the Ministry.

- **A national project to reform teacher education degree programmes** funded by the Ministry was launched in 2003 (Vokke project, 2003-2006).
- In 2007, the Ministry appointed **a working group to assess changes in teacher needs by 2020**. The working group was to propose how the changes should be taken into account in teacher education (dimensioning and structures) and what kind of unit structure of teacher education best promotes research related to teacher education.
- **The Ministry and the higher education institutions interact continuously**. The institutions and the Ministry hold negotiations at the start of each four-year agreement period. Topical issues in teacher education are discussed in agreement negotiations and various meetings between universities and the ministry.
- Since 2016, **the National Teacher Education Forum** has developed teacher education through co-configurative collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

# Teacher Education Forum (2016-2018; 2019-2023)

- **Members:** universities, providers of education and municipalities, teachers and leaders, students, and other relevant stakeholders
- **Coordination:** Ministry of Education and Culture
- **Activities:** National and local seminars, workshops, national brainstorming, thematic working groups, literature reviews, reports, benchmarking, expert consultations. statements etc.
- Research-based development projects
- Collaborative development of national guidance: the Teacher Education Development Programme

# Teacher Education Development Programme 2022-2026 aims to meet the new needs of teacher education in the context of the 2020s

The development programme in English:

<http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2022053140998>

See more:

<https://okm.fi/en/project?tunnus=OKM009:00/2023>

## Teacher Education Development Programme 2022–2026



# Two external evaluations related to the Teacher Education Forum

- **Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) completed 2018 an external evaluation of the Forum.**
  - According to the evaluation, the teacher education reform model that was prepared at the Teacher Education Forum, had many strengths. The core strength of the Teacher Education Forum was their approach based on networking and bringing together different national and regional teacher education actors.
- **FINEEC completed 2023 Evaluation of Government's key projects for higher education 2017–2022.** The evaluation concerned the impacts and effectiveness of the teacher education development projects and the higher education development projects funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
  - One of the key strengths: The Teacher Education Forum played a significant role in the coordination of the development projects in teacher education, the cooperation conducted in them, their monitoring and the dissemination of their results.

# Teacher Education Forum 2024–2027

- In December 2023, the Ministry of Education and Culture granted funding for the new four-year term of the Teacher Education Forum.
- Teacher Education Forum is coordinated by the University of Helsinki.
- The activities are carried out as a joint project of all higher education institutions providing teacher education and relevant stakeholders, as in previous terms.
- The Forum has an international advisory board.



**Thank you!**  
**Kiitos!**

marjo.vesalainen@gov.fi