

# DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

## 8 INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

*The description of the higher education system has been prepared by the Finnish National Board of Education and approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture.*

The Finnish education system consists of basic education, general and vocational upper secondary education, higher education and adult education. The basic education consists of a nine-year compulsory school for all children from 7 to 16 years of age.

Post-compulsory education is given by general upper secondary schools and vocational institutions. The general upper secondary school provides a three-year general education curriculum, at the end of which the pupil takes the national Matriculation examination (ylioppilastutkinto/studentexamen). Vocational institutions provide three-year programmes, which lead to upper secondary vocational qualifications (ammattillinen perustutkinto/yrkesinriktad grundexamen).

General eligibility for higher education is given by the Matriculation examination and the upper secondary vocational qualification. These qualifications require at least 12 years of schooling. Equivalent foreign qualifications also give general eligibility for higher education.

The Finnish higher education system comprises universities (yliopisto/universitet) and polytechnics (ammattikorkeakoulu, AMK/yrkeshögskola, YH). All universities engage both in education and research and have the right to award doctorates. The polytechnics are multi-field institutions of professional higher education. Polytechnics engage in applied research and development. The polytechnics use the terms polytechnic or university of applied sciences when referring to themselves. "In this text the term polytechnic is used .

First and second cycle higher education studies are measured in credits (opintopiste/studiepoäng). Study courses are quantified according to the work load required. One year of studies is equivalent to 1600 hours of student work on average and is defined as 60 credits. The credit system complies with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

### 8.1. University degrees

The Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004) defines the objectives, extent and overall structure of degrees. The universities decide on the detailed contents and structure of the degrees they award. They also decide on their curricula and forms of instruction.

#### 8.1.1. First-cycle university degree

The first-cycle university degree consists of at least 180 credits (three years of full-time study). The degree is called kandidaatti/kandidat in all fields of study except Law (oikeusnotaari/rättsnotarie) and Pharmacy (farmaseutti/farmaceut). The determined English translation for all these degrees is Bachelor's degree, the most common degrees being Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.

Studies leading to the degree provide the student with: (1) knowledge of the fundamentals of the major and minor subjects or corresponding study entities or studies included in the degree programme and the prerequisites for following developments in the field; (2) knowledge and skills needed for scientific thinking and the use of scientific methods or knowledge and skills needed for artistic work; (3) knowledge and skills needed for studies leading to a higher university degree and for continuous learning; (4) a capacity for applying the acquired knowledge and skills to work and in international co-operation; and (5) adequate language and communication skills for working in one's own field and for international work and co-operation.

Studies leading to the degree may include: basic and intermediate studies; language and communication studies; interdisciplinary programmes; other studies and work practice for professional development. The degree includes a Bachelor's thesis (6 – 10 credits).

#### 8.1.2. Second-cycle university degree

The second-cycle university degree consists of at least 120 credits (two years of full-time study). The extent of studies required for a programme leading to the second cycle university degree which is geared towards foreign students is a minimum of 90 credits. The degree is usually called maisteri/magister. Other second-cycle degree titles are diplomi-insinööri/diplomingenjör (Technology), proviisori/provisor (Pharmacy) and arkkitehti/arkitekt (Architecture). The determined English translation for all these degrees is Master's degree, the most common degrees being Master of Arts and Master of Science. The second-cycle university degree title in the fields of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry is lisensiaatti/licentiat, the English title being Licentiate. The admission requirement for the second-cycle university degree is a first-cycle degree.

In the fields of Medicine and Dentistry the university may arrange the education leading to the second-cycle university degree without including a first-cycle university degree in the education. In Medicine the degree consists of 360 credits (six years of full-time study) and in Dentistry the degree consists of 330 credits (five and a half years of full-time study).

Studies leading to the second-cycle university degree provide the student with: (1) good overall knowledge of the major subject or a corresponding entity and conversance with the fundamentals of the minor subject or good knowledge of the advanced studies included in the degree programme; (2) knowledge and skills needed to apply scientific knowledge and scientific methods or knowledge and skills needed for independent and demanding artistic work; (3) knowledge and skills needed for independently operating as an expert and developer of the field and for international co-operation; (4) knowledge and skills needed for scientific or artistic postgraduate education; and (5) good language and communication skills for working in one's own field and for international work and co-operation..

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The studies leading to the second-cycle university degree may include: basic and intermediate studies and advanced studies; language and communication studies; interdisciplinary studies; other studies; and internship improving expertise. The degree includes a Master's thesis (20 – 40 credits).

## 8.2. Doctoral degrees

Students can apply for doctoral studies after the completion of a second-cycle degree. The aim of doctoral studies is to provide student with an in-depth knowledge of their field of research and capabilities to produce novel scientific knowledge independently.

A pre-doctoral degree of *lisensiaatti/licentiat* (Licentiate) may be taken before the Doctor's degree and in general it takes two years of full-time study to complete.

The Doctor's degree takes approximately four years to complete after the second-cycle degree or two further years following the pre-doctoral degree. A student who has been admitted to complete the Doctor's degree must complete a given amount of studies, show independent and critical thinking in the field of research and write a Doctor's dissertation and defend it in public.

## 8.3. Polytechnic degrees

The Polytechnics Act (932/2014 including amendments) defines the objectives, extent and overall structure of polytechnic degrees. The polytechnics decide on the detailed contents and structure of the degrees they award. They also decide on their curricula and forms of instruction.

### 8.3.1. First-cycle polytechnic degrees

The first-cycle polytechnic degree consists of 180, 210, 240 or 270 credits (three to four and a half years of full-time study) depending on the field of study. The first-cycle polytechnic degree is called *ammattikorkeakoulututkinto/yrkeshögskoleexamen*. The determined English translation for the degree is Bachelor's degree. The degree titles indicate the field of study, e.g. Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Health Care.

Studies leading to the degree provide the student with (1) broad overall knowledge and skills with relevant theoretical background for working as expert of the field; (2) knowledge and skills needed for following and advancing developments in the field; (3) knowledge and skills needed for continuous learning; (4) adequate language and communication skills for working in one's own field and for international work and co-operation.

The first-cycle polytechnic degree comprises basic and professional studies, elective studies, a practical training period, and a Bachelor's thesis or a final project.

### 8.3.2. The second-cycle polytechnic degrees

The second-cycle polytechnic degree consists of 60 or 90 credits (a year or a year and a half of full-time study). The degree is called *ylempi ammattikorkeakoulututkinto/högre yrkeshögskoleexamen*. The determined English translation for the second-cycle polytechnic degree is Master's degree. The degree titles indicate the field of study, e.g. Master of Culture and Arts or Master of Business Administration. Eligibility for second-cycle polytechnic degrees is given by a relevant first-cycle degree with at least three years of relevant work or artistic experience.

Studies leading to the degree provide the student with (1) broad and advanced knowledge and skills for developing the professional field as well as the theoretical skills for working in demanding expert and leadership positions in the field; (2) profound understanding of the field, its relation to working life and society at large as well as the knowledge and skills needed for following and analysing both theoretical and professional developments in the field; (3) capacity for life-long learning and continuous development of one's own expertise (4) good language and communication skills for working in one's own field and for international work and co-operation.

The second-cycle polytechnic degree comprises advanced professional studies, elective studies, and a thesis or a final project.