



Policy analysis

Examination of national policy measures based on the top challenges experienced by international talents

Tommi Pukkinen, Oskar Aaltonen (UTU)
Tiina Rättilä (UEF)
Autumn 2023



Policy analysis



Image: Pixabay

One of the key objectives of HIWE is to study how international talents experience living, working and being an entrepreneur in Finland. For this purpose, we have conducted 61 interviews among internationals from various backgrounds and industries, living in different parts of Finland.

In order to put this research knowledge to good use, we also chart the policy measures and actors that guide and offer services to internationals nationally and locally. We compare how the policies and services aimed at them manage to meet the challenges they experience, and how policies could be developed to address the potential gaps.

Finally, the results of the gap analysis are used to make policy recommendations to improve international talents' opportunities to find employment, become entrepreneurs and generally integrate into Finnish society.

In this presentation, we chart the **top challenges** found in the interview data, identify responding **policies** and suggest potential **policy gaps**.

Top challenges experienced by international talents

1. Labour market

1.1 Finding a (paid) job

- Language related issues
- Talent/Skill/Experience recognition
- Recruitment practices
- Employment services
- End of studies - transition to work life

1.2 Working life and culture

- Language related issues
- Misconduct / Discrimination / Racism / Bad experiences

1.3 Entrepreneurship

- Regulatory environment

2. Institutions and integration

2.1 Public and private institutions

- Residency (Migri)
- Lack of knowledge

2.2 Social integration and wellbeing

- Socialising with Finnish people
- Opportunities to influence

Main national policy documents

EU:n alue- ja rakennepolitiikan ohjelma (2023). Uudistuva ja osaava Suomi 2021–2027 ohjelma: Maahanmuuttaneiden toimiva arki Suomessa: työ, osaaminen ja osallisuus

Kansalaisuuslaki 359/2003; suunnitelma ko. lain muuttamisesta

Laki julkisesta työvoima- ja yrityspalvelusta 28.12.2012/916

Laki kolmansien maiden kansalaisten maahantulon ja oleskelun edellytyksistä tutkimuksen, opiskelun, työharjoittelun ja vapaaehtoistoiminnan perusteella (719/2018); Laki ko. lain muuttamisesta 277/2022

Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä 1386/2010 (uusi laki 14.4.2023/681, voimassa 1.1.2025 alkaen)

Laki työvoimapolitettien järjestämisestä 23.3.2023/380 (Voimassa 1.1.2025 alkaen)

OKM (2019a) Korkeakoulutus ja tutkimus 2030-luvulle: vision tiekartta

OKM (2019b) Kansainvälisten korkeakouluopiskelijoiden maahantulo ja integroituminen sujuvaksi yhteistyöllä

OKM (2021) Kohti saavutettavampaa korkeakoulutusta ja korkeakoulua

OPH (2021) Kansallinen lukutaitostrategia ja -ohjelma 2030

OM (2021) Yhdenvertainen Suomi: Valtioneuvoston toimintaohjelma rasismien torjumiseksi ja hyvien väestösuhteiden edistämiseksi

OM (2022) Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös suomalaisesta demokraatiopolitiikasta 2020-luvulla.

SM (2023) Näkökohtia ulkomaalaislain kokonaisuudistuksen valmisteluun

TEM (2020) Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelma

TEM (2021) Työelämän monimuotoisuusohjelma: Toimenpideohjelma työelämän monimuotoisuuden edistämiseksi maahanmuuton ja kotoutumisen näkökulmasta

TEM (2022) Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö: Yrittäjyysstrategia

TEM (2023) Kotoutumisen kumppanuusohjelma. Kumppanuusohjelman toimintasuunnitelma 2023-2024

Ulkomaalaislaki 30.4.2004/301; Laki ko. lain muuttamisesta 389/2923

VM (2023) Kasvutyöryhmän loppuraportti : Vaihtoehtoja kestävä kasvun vauhdittamiseksi

VN (2019) Pääministeri Sanna Marinin hallituksen ohjelma. Osallistava ja osaava Suomi – sosiaalisesti, taloudellisesti ja ekologisesti kestävä yhteiskunta

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021b) Maahan muuttaneiden koulutus- ja työllisyyspolut

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

VN (2021d) Kansallinen tutkimuksen, kehittämisen ja innovaatioiden päivitetty tiekartta

VN (2022) Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös yrittäjyydestä

VNK (2023) Vahva ja välittävä Suomi - Pääministeri Petteri Orpon hallitusohjelma

Yhdenvertaisuuslaki 1325/2014

Information on policy documents in English

The Innovation and Skills in Finland 2021–2017 programme (2023). <https://rakennerahastot.fi/en/innovation-and-skills-in-finland-2021-2027>

Vision for higher education and research in 2030 (2019). <https://okm.fi/en/vision-2030>

An Equal Finland: Government Action Plan for Combating Racism and Promoting Good Relations between Population Groups (2021). <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/163737>

Talent Boost Programme (2020). <https://tem.fi/en/talent-boost-en>

Working Life Diversity Programme (2021). <https://tem.fi/en/working-life-diversity-programme>

Government Resolution on Entrepreneurship (2022). <https://tem.fi/en/entrepreneurship-strategy>

The Partnership Programme (Integration.fi, 2023). <https://kotoutuminen.fi/en/partnership-programme>

Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government (2019). Inclusive and competent Finland - a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society. <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161935>

Roadmap for Education-based and Work-based Immigration 2035 (2021). <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/163576>

A report on the education and employment of immigrants (2021). <https://vm.fi/en/-//3464316/immigrants-would-benefit-from-more-flexible-pathways-to-education-and-employment>

The National Roadmap for Research, Development and Innovation (2021). <https://okm.fi/en/rdi-roadmap>

A strong and committed Finland. Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government (2023). <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/governments/government-programme#/>

Results of the analysis:

Overview of policy measures

1. Overview of measures within public administration

- **Legislative changes** (in force, about to enter into force or in preparation: Kansalaisuuslaki, Kolmansien maiden kansalaisten maahantulo, Kotoutumisen edistäminen, Työvoimapalveluiden järjestäminen, Ulkomaalaislaki, Yhdenvertaisuuslaki)
- **Talent Boost** service model and **Talent Hub** networks (involving e.g. city, ELY Centre, TE Administration, higher education institutions, business representation)
- Development of **business services in TE Offices** (municipal experiments, TE 2024 reform, international recruitment as an integral part of business services)
- Cross-governmental **working groups** and **advisory councils** (State Secretariat working group to steer progress on roadmap measures and cross-governmental cooperation; expert group on anti-racism; advisory council on residence permits; advisory council on entrepreneurship)
- **SIMHE** cooperation between higher education institutions
- **Ecosystem agreements** between state and municipalities, Team Finland link (international talent in international business growth)

Overview of measures within public administration (cont'd)

- **Strengthening stakeholder cooperation** of public administration:
 - supporting the work of the Regional Advisory Councils on Ethnic Relations (Etno)
 - partnership networks for promoting integration (kotoutumisen kumppanusverkostot) and a digital platform for mutual information (kotoutumisentukena.fi)
 - collaboration with (other) civil society actors (stronger role of cultural institutions and sports clubs in integration)
 - collaboration with employers and educational institutions (skills identification, work-based learning)
- **Staff training** (eOppiva.fi platform), guides and tools (topics: assessment of qualifications and competences, equality, integration, diverse working life, promotion of good relations with the population) (target group: TE Offices, educational institutions, whole public sector)
- Systematic **data collection** and monitoring indicators (racism, discrimination, hate crimes and hate actions; indicators and monitoring of governance and contractual practices of higher education institutions to build and describe internationalisation)

Overview of measures within public administration (cont'd)

- **Information systems** (e.g. automation of residence permit processes (in preparation), development of Virtual Finland service platform (ongoing), monitoring and effectiveness of integration process)
- **Centres of Excellence** (Centre of Excellence for Integration, Service Centre for Continuous Learning and Employment; Conceptualisation of the Centre of Excellence for Anti-Hate Crime and Anti-Discrimination)
- **Models of action** (recognition of degrees, recruitment practices in the public sector such as adapted language requirements, possibility of positive discrimination, promotion of a language-aware working culture, national brand work, development of Migri towards a customer-oriented service unit supporting international recruitment, development of language training in educational institutions, integration as a cross-cutting theme in different policy areas, renewal of the concepts of integration promotion; development of participation methods for immigrants)

2. Overview of measures targeted at international talents

- **Courses, training, studies** (language studies in higher education (also in the country of origin), Kielibuusti.fi, integration training of TE-services, working life-oriented education (company visits, projects, theses, mentoring))
- **Guidance and coaching** (job search coaching (and materials) in SIMHE services, customer guidance in TE services)
- **Guides and tools** (Qualification Recognition Service Guide, Worker's Guide, Rules of the Game Guide, Welcome to Finland Guide, Work in Finland Guide)
- **Online infosites** (general: InfoFinland.fi; general and entrepreneurship: Suomi.fi; diversity: Yhdvertaisuus.fi)
- **Online platforms** (job search: Jobs in Finland, Work in Finland, Job Market Finland, EU EURES portal)
- **Peer support** (Study & Stay activities for students (peer stories on career building, language clubs, buddy programmes); mentoring and mentoring for entrepreneurs; spouse programmes)
- **Permits** (fast-track residence permit processing for experts, specialists and start-up entrepreneurs; 2-year temporary residence permit for job-seeking for graduates in Finland)

Overview of measures targeted at international talents (cont'd)

- Communication **campaigns** (country profile in selected target countries)
- **Events** (recruitment and diversity: online TE-live broadcasts, Talent Boost Summit, EURES European Job Days in target countries)
- **Centralised service points** (International House offices, SIMHE services in higher education institutions and integration services in TE Offices, Enterprise Finland helpline)
- **Co-development and feedback** channels/instruments (TE Offices, discussion forums for civil society on the preliminary study project on the reform of Ulkomaalaislaki)
- **Financial support** (unemployment benefit and start-up allowance, with conditions)

3. Overview of measures targeted at employers

- **Courses and training** (IMAGO training, eOppiva.fi, TE Office workplace training in Finnish and Swedish – työpaikkasuomi/ruotsi, recruiting training in the country of origin in health and social services sector: familiarising employees with language, culture and working life)
- **Guides and tools** (Guide to diversity recruitment, Diversity toolkit: Talent Boost indicators, Diversity management self-assessment tool, Diversity in the workplace guide)
- **Testing services** (ELY Centre's recruitment skills testing in technology industries)
- **Online infosite** (Yhdvertaisuus.fi)
- **Online platforms** (job advertisements: Jobs in Finland, Work in Finland, Job Market Finland, EU EURES portal)
- **Marketing material** (Why Finland presentations and videos, Finland Toolbox materials)

Overview of measures targeted at employers (cont'd)

- **Events** (recruitment and diversity: TE-live broadcasts online, Talent Boost Summit, EURES European Job Days in target countries)
- Communication **campaigns** (diversity)
- **One-stop shops** (International House offices, EURES services in TE Offices, Migra's employer services, Work in Finland: employer advice for international recruitment by phone)
- **Financial support** (Business Finland: Talent, Tempo and Explorer funding to reform operating methods and management, partly also for staff costs; ELY Centre support for employee placement, TE Services' EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme and TE Services' unemployed jobseeker's wage subsidy)

Results of the analysis: Challenges and policy measures

1. Challenges related to the labour market

1.1. Finding a job

Policy measures

1.2. Working life and culture

Policy measures

1.3. Entrepreneurship – regulatory environment

Policy measures

Labour market

1.1. Finding a job: language related issues

Challenges

No high-quality jobs available for non-Finnish speakers, especially in smaller companies and regions

Native Finnish expected by employer

Finnish required but unclear why (employers not interested to change the business language)

Mixed messages: hiring internationals (job ads in English) but (fluent) Finnish required

Language requirement changes during recruitment process;

Related policy documents

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021b) Maahan muuttaneiden koulutus- ja työllisyyspolut

TEM (2021) Työelämän monimuotoisuusohjelma: Toimenpideohjelma työelämän monimuotoisuuden edistämiseksi maahanmuuton ja kotoutumisen näkökulmasta

VNK (2023) Vahva ja välittävä Suomi - Pääministeri Petteri Orpon hallitusohjelma

Policy measures

More and better opportunities to study Finnish and Swedish as well as learn about Finnish culture (VN 2021a, 2021b; VNK 2023)

- New pedagogical methods and digital learning environments (Kielibuusti.fi), more diversified course offerings in higher education, more Finnish language courses at foreign universities

Diversity campaigns for employers (VN 2021a; TEM 2021)

- Recognition of employees' diverse language skills as an organisational resource
- Identifying jobs where native language skills are not essential, making effective use of employees' existing language skills

Tools to take diversity into account in job advertisements (e.g. language of advertisement vs. job function) (TEM 2020; 2021)

- Digital tools for diversity management (Diversity Toolkit: Diversity Management Self-Assessment Tool)
- Development of digital job search and advertisement platforms (e.g. information on jobs where Finnish is not required) (VN 2021a)
- Jobs in Finland, Work in Finland, Job Market Finland

Policy measures (cont'd)

Developing the diversity capacity of public and third sector organisations (VN 2021a; TEM 2021)

- Models and practices to increase the number of employees with a migrant background
- Adapted language skills requirements (competences that can be acquired at work, as part of career thinking)
- Information on the possibility of positive discrimination in recruitment
- Promoting a language-aware working culture in organisations
- Diversity training for staff (eOppiva.fi)

Labour market

Finding a job: talent/skill/experience recognition

Challenges

International work experience not recognised in the job market

International degrees not valued by employers

International degrees complicated and/or arduous to get validated in Finland (e.g., educators, nurses)

'Työvoimaneuvojat' in TE services have no experience/knowledge in recognising special skills

Related policy documents

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021b) Maahan muuttaneiden koulutus- ja työllisyyspolut

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

TEM (2020) Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelma

VNK (2023) Vahva ja välittävä Suomi - Pääministeri Petteri Orpon hallitusohjelma

Policy measures

Public administration reforms (VN 2021a, 2021b)

- Cooperation: employers to be involved in the process of identification and recognition of competences in employment services and educational institutions
- Guidance and training: for educational institutions and TE-services on qualifications and skills assessment
- Additional funding: for learning and employment service centres to provide training
- Strengthening the role of SIMHE universities
- Tools, models, methodologies: development and dissemination of models for the recognition of competences; wider use of the OPH service guide for the recognition of qualifications at national and regional level
- Digital documentation: information system for transferring information on skills assessments between actors (TE Offices, educational institutions)
- Promotion of qualifications: information systems and platforms to promote local provision at national level
- Developing legalisation pathways: a fast, secure and efficient pathway for skilled people trained abroad (including in the social economy) to qualify for the labour market

Policy measures (cont'd)

Systematising the identification of skills acquired abroad (often as part of integration) (TEM 2020; VN 2021b)

- Self-assessment tools (Qualifications Recognition Service Guide, EU Europass)
- Skills assessments: for migrants as part of integration training in TE services and at different stages of the educational pathway; digital document for job search and integration
- Guidance and counselling: more guidance for highly skilled migrants as part of integration (e.g. SIMHE career guidance and counselling)

Flexible and functional services for the assimilation and recognition of qualifications obtained abroad (VN 2021a; VN 2021b; VNK 2023)

- SIMHE services for equivalence and complementarity of higher education qualifications (International House offices and higher education institutions)
- Guidance and training: for employers on the assessment of qualifications and competences (e.g. OPH website)

Improved access to training that complements skills or qualifications (in regulated sectors) (VN 2021a, 2021c; VNK 2023)

- Work-related studies: more work-related studies and partial degrees to complement competences
- Qualification training: consolidate and diversify provision (including education and early childhood sectors)
- Aptitude tests and complementary studies: for those with a conditional decision of the authority to assimilate/recognise
- Country of origin training (Talent Boost: social & health care sectors, paid ELY or TE service for employers)

Labour market

Finding a job: recruitment practices

Challenges

Difficult to write a good application and CV (Finnish practices differ from previous experiences)

Job applications responded to slowly or not at all

Job ad and recruitment don't match (feeling of being hired for a wrong position)

Hiring culture not transparent (informal connections matter over skills; “internal recruitment”)

Formal degrees (“papers”) valued over work experience / skills / “person behind the papers”

Employers not willing or under resourced to invest in training employees for a longer term, but expect ready workers / vast experience

Rude treatment in recruitment process: focus on applicant’s weaknesses rather than strengths, expressed suspicion towards the applicant’s skills and experience, lack of polite and helpful encouragement for future job hunting

Related policy documents

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

TEM (2020) Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelma

TEM (2021) Työelämän monimuotoisuusohjelma: Toimenpideohjelma työelämän monimuotoisuuden edistämiseksi maahanmuuton ja kotoutumisen näkökulmasta

TEM (2022) Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö: Yrittäjyysstrategia

Policy measures

Public administration reforms (VN 2021a)

- Talent Boost service model and Talent Hub networks
- Development of business services in TE Offices (international recruitment as an integral part of services)
- Ecosystem agreements between the state and municipalities; Team Finland link (international talent in business growth and internationalisation)
- Coordination of #FinlandWorks landscape work

Strengthening employers' willingness and capacity for internationalisation and international recruitment (equality in working life and combating recruitment discrimination) (TEM 2020, 2021, 2022; VN 2021a; VN 2022; OKM 2022)

- Increasing business communication: diversity benefits, tools and services (campaigns, events such as Talent Boost Summit, business services channels)
- Training: IMAGO coaching service for businesses (free of charge); international recruitment and diversity solution clinics
- Tools (online): international recruitment guide, diversity guide; diversity toolkit; diversity toolkit; Talent Boost indicators; diversity management self-assessment tool

Policy measures (cont'd)

- Financial support: Business Finland Talent Funding (for policy and leadership change)
- Internationalisation of higher education institutions: staff competency mapping tool; diversity in action plans; multilingual culture; diverse international mobility; internationalisation building and description toolkit and monitoring in higher education governance and contracting practices

Comprehensive recruitment services for (potential) employers (TEM 2020; VN 2021a)

- National helpline (Work in Finland website and helpline)
- Regional service points (EURES services in TE Offices, International House offices; Talent Hubs)
- Sector-specific international recruitment programmes and recruitment channels (health and social services)

Permit advice (TEM 2020)

- Migri employer services (website and helpline: e.g. on residence permits, filling in applications and right to work; Worker's Guide)

Policy measures (cont'd)

Contacts between employers and international talent (TEM 2020; VN 2021a)

- Recruitment platforms (online: Työmarkkinatori; Jobs in Finland; Work in Finland vacancies)
- Recruitment events (in target countries: EURES programme; online: Finland Works website, TE-live broadcasts)
- Labour market training, work placements and mentoring, co-creation models
- Marketing materials (in-country: 'Why Finland' presentations and videos; Finland Toolbox website materials)

Jobseeker testing and training (TEM 2020; VN 2021a; VNK 2023)

- Recruitment skills testing (supported by ELY Centre/Talent Boost service: technology industry sectors)
- Joint procurement training (RekryKoulutus, including recruiting country of origin training for the sote sector, supported by the ELY and TE service: introduction to the workplace, working life, society and culture in Finland and language training)
- Language training (TE services: Työpaikkasuomi/ruotsi -koulutus)

Recruitment and orientation of workers (TEM 2020, 2021; VN 2021a)

- Increasing the recruitment of foreign staff in the public sector and in higher education
- Financial support for wage costs (TE services' wage subsidy for unemployed jobseekers; Business Finland's Tempo and Explorer funding, partly for wage costs)
- Worker relocation services (financial support and organisation of implementation of the ELY Centre and the Kokka kohti Suomea project)
- Financial support for worker orientation (EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme of the TE services)

Labour market

Finding a job: employment services

Challenges

Info only in Finnish

Unemployment benefit process incomprehensible

Too time-consuming to deal with

No proactive job offers

No understanding of niche expertise

Regional differences in service quality

Language courses not allowed (during unemployment) although Finnish required for jobs

Shift from a status of entrepreneur to employed not easy and not enough info available

Related policy documents

VN (2019) Pääministeri Sanna Marinin hallituksen ohjelma. Osallistava ja osaava Suomi – sosiaalisesti, taloudellisesti ja ekologisesti kestävä yhteiskunta

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021b) Maahan muuttaneiden koulutus- ja työllisyyspolut

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

OKM (2019b) Kansainvälisten korkeakouluopiskelijoiden maahantulo ja integroituminen sujuvaksi yhteistyöllä

TEM (2022) Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö: Yrittäjyysstrategia

Laki julkisesta työvoima- ja yrityspalvelusta (JTYPL) 28.12.2012/916 (*Voimassa oleva*)

Laki työvoimapalveluiden järjestämisestä 23.3.2023/380 (*Voimassa 1.1.2025 alkaen*)

Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä 1386/2010 (uusi laki [14.4.2023/681](#), *voimassa 1.1.2025 alkaen*)

VNK (2023) Vahva ja välittävä Suomi - Pääministeri Petteri Orpon hallitusohjelma

Policy measures

Public administration reforms (institution building) (VN 2019, 2021c)

- Legislative reforms (Law on the organisation of employment services, Law on the promotion of integration),
- Responsibility for organising TE services to municipalities (municipal employment experiments, TE services 2024 reform)
- Development of International House service points
- Capacity of service organisations to respond to diversity: management support, transparency, staff training and diverse recruitment, better resourcing and organisation of work (individual guidance, same officer), staff discretion (situational flexibility) and specialisation (sectoral expertise), cooperation (cross-government at different territorial levels, stakeholders involved)

More and better services for foreign language clients (VN 2021b; 2021c)

- User-orientation: multilingualism and multiculturalism, personalisation (guidance), accessibility (one-stop shops), continuity (same officer), customer feedback and co-development; service vouchers
- Service points (TE Offices, International House points, TE services' Oma asiointi website (still only in Finnish?))
- National job search platforms (Job Market Finland, Jobs in Finland and Work in Finland)
- TE Live broadcasts (information on job vacancies and employers)
- Self-employment tools: information on skills identification tools to support job search

Policy measures (cont'd)

Customer-oriented targeting of entrepreneurship services for immigrants (VN 2021a; 2021c; TEM 2022)

- Consolidation and promotion of TE services
- Promotion of skills and international business (training provision, support services)
- Openness and attractiveness of networks and innovation platforms (mentoring and twinning, English language services)
- Increased personalised guidance (in English or in the mother tongue) (Enterprise Finland helpline)
- Digital information in English (Job Market Finland and Suomi.fi)

Developing services to promote employment for unemployed immigrants (VN 2021c; VNK 2023; JTYPL 2012; Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä 2010)

- Integration services (initial assessment, integration or employment plan (possible also for non-unemployed, TE services)
- Unemployment security (conditions: residence permit allows, willingness to work full-time, participation in agreed services, work experience in Finland)
- Start-up allowance (TE services)
- Wage subsidies and work trials (TE services for employers)
- Vocational skills development (TE services)
- Language training (TE services)
- Needs of people moving for different reasons / specific target groups (e.g. regional spouse programmes)

Employment of recent graduates → see a separate slide

Finding a job: transition to worklife after studies

Challenges (perceived by int. talents)

Lack of connections to companies

Difficult to get a first job with 'empty' CV

Studies do not prepare for working in Finland (lacking internship opportunities, no teaching of job seeking skills during studies)

Graduates cannot get access to (universities') Finnish courses

No role models of being able to get a high-quality job as a foreign graduate

Related policy documents

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

VN (2021d) Kansallinen tutkimuksen, kehittämisen ja innovaatioiden päivitetty tiekartta

OKM (2019a) Korkeakoulutus ja tutkimus 2030-luvulle: vision tiekartta

OKM (2019b) Kansainvälisten korkeakouluopiskelijoiden maahantulo ja integroituminen sujuvaksi yhteistyöllä

OKM (2021) Kohti saavutettavampaa korkeakoulutusta ja korkeakoulua

TEM (2020) Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelma

TEM (2022) Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö: Yrittäjyysstrategia

SM (2023) Näkökohtia ulkomaalaislain kokonaisuudistuksen valmisteluun

VNK (2023) Vahva ja välittävä Suomi - Pääministeri Petteri Orpon hallitusohjelma

Policy measures

Public administration reforms (OKM 2019, 2021; VN 2021a, 2021c)

- Proposed amendment to Yliopistolaki (provisions on preparatory education for immigrants)
- Strengthening the role of SIMHE universities
- Higher education institutions' international programme (staying in Finland and employment as part of higher education institutions' strategy work)
- Cooperation between higher education institutions and regional actors (Talent Hub ecosystem)
- Consolidation and development of integration services (for students and spouses)
- Building the Stay & Work in Finland brand for the global marketing of higher education institutions

Comprehensive integration into Finland and the labour market (VN 2021a, 2021c, 2021d; OKM 2019a, 2019b; TEM 2020; VNK 2023)

- Individual career guidance (SIMHE services at International House and in higher education institutions)
- Study & Stay activities (Talent Hubs: e.g. peer stories on career building, language clubs, buddy programme)
- Raising awareness of integration services (students and spouses)
- Increased study of native languages in higher education, new forms and pathways of language learning (kielibuusti.fi, language scholarships, bilingual study programmes)
- Help centres for young people (TE services: Ohjaamo-toiminta)
- Residence permits for graduates for job search or business activities (Migri)

Policy measures (cont'd)

Strengthening work-life skills and connections during studies (VN 2021a; TEM 2020, 2022; VNK 2023)

- Digital platform for work-life encounters (connection to Virtual Finland service platform)
- Work-life relevance and cooperation in degrees (work placements, company visits, project and final assignments, mentoring)
- International Talent activities (Talent Hubs: e.g. mentoring)
- Preparation and encouragement for entrepreneurship (training provision, start-up entrepreneur residence permit and marketing of start-up communities)

Promotion of job search (VN 2021a; OKM 2019b)

- Job search coaching and materials (SIMHE services)
- Tailored recruitment services
- Employment events, TE-live broadcasts
- TE services to support labour market transitions (guidance, outreach to higher education institutions during studies and at graduation)
- Increasing employer communication and strengthening companies' recruitment skills (Talent Hub actors: identifying the potential of international students)

1.2. Working life and culture: language related issues

Challenges

Formal communication in workplace in Finnish leading to a feeling of professional exclusion and a need to do extra to translate things

Formal communication a challenging mix: written English vs. spoken Finnish

Colleagues prefer Finnish in informal communication resulting into feeling lonely and isolated in a work community

“Mistakes are not allowed” - Finnish colleagues change language to English when e.g. international’s pronunciation of Finnish is incorrect

Related policy documents

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021b) Maahan muuttaneiden koulutus- ja työllisyyspolut

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

TEM (2020) Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelma

TEM (2021) Työelämän monimuotoisuusohjelma: Toimenpideohjelma työelämän monimuotoisuuden edistämiseksi maahanmuuton ja kotoutumisen näkökulmasta

Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä 1386/2010 (uusi laki [14.4.2023/681](#), voimassa 1.1.2025 alkaen)

Policy measures

Expanding and diversifying language training for immigrants (VN 2021b; VNK 2023)

- Language training as part of integration services also for employed and highly qualified people

Increasing opportunities for language learning at work (VN 2021a; TEM 2020; VN 2021c)

- Support from TE services to private and public organisations to plan, organise and finance language training tailored to the job (Työpaikkasuomi/ruotsi -palvelu)

Promoting language awareness and multilingualism in organisations (VN 2021a; TEM 2020)

- Communication campaigns: encourage reflection on roles where employees' multilingual skills are seen as a resource and where knowledge of the national languages is not a necessity
- Training: e-diversity training for civil servants in government and the public sector (eOppiva); diversity and inclusion training for organisations and municipalities (Integration Partnership Programme and Platform)
- Guides: e-tools to develop workplace capacity (Diversity Toolkit; Yhdenvertaisuus.fi website; Talent Boost indicators, Diversity Management Self-Assessment Tool; Diversity Guide for Working Life)

Working life and culture: misconduct, discrimination, racism, bad experiences



Challenges

Bullying

Racism

Gender discrimination

(Sexual) harassment

Mistreatment

Lack of respectful manners

Unhealthy management practices

Cultural differences not understood

Refusal to speak English in workplace (usually by older Finnish higher-ups)

Employers do not understand that newcomers need help with integration

Related policy documents

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

OKM (2021) Kohti saavutettavampaa korkeakoulutusta ja korkeakoulua

TEM (2021) Työelämän monimuotoisuusohjelma: Toimenpideohjelma työelämän monimuotoisuuden edistämiseksi maahanmuuton ja kotoutumisen näkökulmasta

TEM (2023) Kotoutumisen kumppanuusohjelma. Kumppanuusohjelman toimintasuunnitelma 2023-2024

OM (2021) Yhdenvertainen Suomi: Valtioneuvoston toimintaohjelma rasismien torjumiseksi ja hyvien väestösuhteiden edistämiseksi

EU:n alue- ja rakennepolitiikan ohjelma (2023). Uudistuva ja osaava Suomi 2021–2027 ohjelma: Maahanmuuttaneiden toimiva arki Suomessa: työ, osaaminen ja osallisuus

VNK (2023) Vahva ja välittävä Suomi - Pääministeri Petteri Orpon hallitusohjelma

Yhdenvertaisuuslaki 1325/2014

Policy measures

Public administration reforms (OM 2021; VNK 2023)

- Anti-racism expert group in the Council of State
- Conceptualisation and testing of a centre of excellence for work against hate crime and discrimination
- Legislative changes (reform of the Non-Discrimination Act, increase in the punishability of abuse in working life)
- Improving cooperation and control by the authorities and ensuring support services for victims of crime (combating abuse in the field of labour immigration)

Promoting diversity in the public sector, third sector organisations and higher education (TEM 2021, 2023; OKM 2021)

- Recruitment: increase recruitment of immigrants in the public sector
- Information: positive discrimination in recruitment and language-aware working
- Practices, models and tools (guides, webinars): to support strategic and human resources planning (recruitment, work community skills)
- Training (eOppiva, Centre of Excellence for Integration YouTube channel)
- Guidance, policies and partners: higher education communities active in the fight against harassment, discrimination, racism and bullying

Policy measures (cont'd)

Promoting a diverse (inclusive, welcoming, equal) recruitment and working community (VN 2021a, 2021c; TEM 2021, 2023; VNK 2023; Yhdenvertaisuuslaki 1325/2014)

- Tools: diversity management quality indicators, workshop materials, website, guides (Diversity in Working Life Guide, Equality Planning Guides).
- Communication campaigns: diversity benefits, tools and services
- Obligation to draw up an equality plan (employers with 30 or more employees)
- Information and good practice: improving compliance with legislation
- Training: IMAGO training (employer image, recruitment skills, management skills)
- Support of TE-services in recruitment
- Information on 'työpaikkasuomi' and 'työpaikkaruotsi' service/training
- Information on third sector work and activities for workplaces
- Solution clinics (TE services, under development?)

1.3. Entrepreneurship: regulatory environment

Challenges

Documents (e.g., tax decisions) in Finnish, needing a Finn to do the paperwork

Lack of concrete, personal, in-depth advice

Fee-based advice without notice

Entrepreneurship requires a separate visa

Visa process: slow processing, minimum income (profitability) requirement

Bureaucracy during shifts in employment status: to entrepreneurship, not allowed to work during visa application; away from entrepreneurship, receiving unemployment benefits not easy and not enough info available

Related policy documents

TEM (2022) Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö: Yrittäjyysstrategia

TEM (2020) Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelma

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

Policy measures

Public administration reforms (TEM 2020, 2022; VN 2021a; VN 2022; SM 2023)

- Changes to the residence permit system: fast track, e.g. for growth entrepreneurs; simplification and flexibility of the residence permit system (e.g. shift between permit categories; legislative change to the permit system in preparation)
- Improving educational pathways: more flexible coordination of vocational training and integration training
- Increasing customer orientation of public business services: identification of specific groups and tailoring of services to specific groups (e.g. migrants, families of entrepreneurs in attracting foreign talent)
- Council of State Advisory Board on Entrepreneurship (responsible for implementation and monitoring of the Entrepreneurship Decision of Principle: some of the actions of the Decision of Principle concern entrepreneurship of immigrants, establishment of foreign companies and recruitment of foreign talent)
- More active information: business services and cooperative entrepreneurship (potential immigrant entrepreneurs), Team Finland's international services (immigrant businesses)
- Strengthening the Invest in Finland network (to increase the number of foreign companies and companies set up by foreigners)
- Digital platform for attracting talent, business and investment (Virtual Finland, ongoing)

Policy measures (cont'd)

Development of entrepreneurship services for immigrants (TEM 2020, 2022)

- Language of service: systematisation of services in English, attention to other languages
- Service points: strengthening the "one-stop shop" principle (International House offices, Suomi.fi website, Enterprise Finland helpline)
- Forms and scope of service: personalised service and coaching; the whole start-up phase of a business, in addition to setting up a company
- Networking, openness and attractiveness of innovation platforms: peer support, mentoring, twinning
- Skills development: entrepreneurship, management and business skills (for all specific groups)
- Supporting growth: addressing the specific needs of international talent for international business
- Encouraging graduate students to become entrepreneurs (using the Start-up permit)

2. Challenges related to experiences of public institutions/authorities

2.1. Residency (Migri)

Policy measures

2.2. Lack of knowledge

Policy measures

Public and private institutions

2.1. Residency (Migri)

Challenges

Minimum income requirements: expiring residence permit forces one to take a job beneath one's qualifications, visa for entrepreneurship not granted

Lack of customer orientation in service culture (lack of empathy, fear of deportation)

Inefficiency: service not available or long processing times

Different visas for different types of employment (creates confusion)

Difficulties in getting residency permits to family members

Finnish requirement: problems in learning Finnish results into problems in getting citizenship

Related Policy documents

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035
Ulkomaalaislaki 30.4.2004/301; Laki ko. lain muuttamisesta 389/2023

Laki kolmansien maiden kansalaisten maahantulon ja oleskelun edellytyksistä tutkimuksen, opiskelun, työharjoittelun ja vapaaehtoistoiminnan perusteella (719/2018); Laki ko. lain muuttamisesta 277/2022

Kansalaisuuslaki 359/2003; suunnitelma ko. lain muuttamisesta
TEM (2020) Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelma

OKM (2019b) Kansainvälisten korkeakouluopiskelijoiden maahantulo ja integroituminen sujuvaksi yhteistyöllä

OKM (2021) Kohti saavutettavampaa korkeakoulutusta ja korkeakoulua

SM (2023) Näkökohtia ulkomaalaislain kokonaisuudistuksen valmisteluun

VM (2023) Kasvutyöryhmän loppuraportti : Vaihtoehtoja kestäväen kasvun vauhdittamiseksi

VNK (2023) Vahva ja välittävä Suomi - Pääministeri Petteri Orpon hallitusohjelma

Policy measures

Changes in public administration (overall reform of the education and work-based residence permit system, in preparation) (VN 2021a; TEM 2020; OKM 2021; VN 2022; SM 2023; VM 2023)

- Legislative changes (laws to be amended: Ulkomaalaislaki (301/2004), Laki kolmansien maiden kansalaisten maahan tulon ja opiskelun edellytyksistä... (719/2018))
- Advisory councils to the Council of State (Advisory Council on Residence Permits, Advisory Council on Working Conditions and Permits).
- Types of permits: reduction of the number, new type of (long-stay) visa, ratification of the EU Blue Card
- Simplification of regulation (e.g. length of permit and ex-post control, work-based permits)
- Speeding up administrative procedures
- Development of information systems (automation)
- Increasing the flow of information between different actors (e.g. universities, UM, Migri, TE Offices)
- Improving the functioning of the Immigration Service (improving the knowledge base, customer-oriented authority supporting foreign recruitment),
- Streamlining the labour availability assessment (regional pilot)
- Preventing the exploitation of foreign labour (setting up of an advisory board for the control, monitoring and development of residence permits)

Policy measures (cont'd)

Changes in services: residence permits (as part of the overall reform of the education and work-based residence permit system, in preparation/planning) (VN 2021a; TEM 2020; OKM 2021; VNK 2023)

- **All applicants:**
Shorter processing time (1 month on average), online application, lower processing fees; stricter conditions for permanent residence and citizenship (length of residence, language skills, work history, income, integrity)
- **All workers:**
Lowering of income threshold (VN 2021a) vs. raising it (VNK 2023); 3 months to conclude a new employment contract at the end of an existing one (VN 2023); extension of the right to work (valid in the same sector and in sectors with labour shortages)
- **Specialists and growth entrepreneurs:**
Fast-track processing (1-2 weeks) and long-stay D visa (visa also for researchers)
- **Students:**
Long-term D visa valid for the whole period of the degree and two years afterwards for job search), higher education institution upon application for a permit and after confirmation of the place of study; tightening of the livelihood condition (recourse to income support leads to withdrawal of the permit)
- **Seasonal workers (e.g. tourism):**
Possibility of changing employer

Public and private institutions

2.2. Lack of knowledge

Challenges

Information scattered; no place to ask advice

Not knowing enough about compulsory administrative requirements (e.g., need for social security number)

No understanding of the taxing system

Role of unions not explained, missing contact from labor market associations (e.g., from those related to entrepreneurship)

Experience of relevant information about society and services being “hidden” from non-Finnish speakers

Lack of understanding about how to make an impact through voting (SIIRTO: Opportunities to influence and participate?)

Related policy documents

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

TEM (2020) Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelma

Policy measures

Improving public administration: better content and access to low-threshold services (VN 2021a, 2021c; TEM 2020; VN 2022)

- Improving information, advice and guidance services: multilingualism, diversity, quality criteria, strengthening the skills of advisers
- Development of a digital Virtual Finland service platform (ongoing: linking data, public authorities, public and private sector services)
- Establishment of a Talent Hub cooperation and service model for the major university locations
- Consolidation of multi-channel services (equal access nationwide)
- Strengthening the role of organisations: involvement in the development of public services, digital platform (kotoutumisentukena.fi) for information between actors
- Stakeholder communication: raising awareness among employers and higher education institutions about integration services and activities

Comprehensive information on working, living and related services in Finland (VN 2021a, 2021c)

- International House service points in major cities (services in one place; on-site, online, by phone; multilingual)
- Welcome to Finland guide (digital, multilingual, distributed with residence permit decision)
- InfoFinland website (multilingual; national and local information)

Information on the labour market (VN 2021a)

- Code of Conduct for Working Life guide (prevention of labour exploitation, digital, multilingual, distributed with the residence permit decision)
- Work in Finland website, Work in Finland guide (interactive, Suomi.fi), Työmarkkinatori website (Job Market Finland)

3. Challenges related to social integration and wellbeing

3.1. Socialising with Finnish people

Policy measures

3.2. Opportunities to participate and influence

Policy measures

3.1. Social integration and belonging: socialising with Finnish people



Challenges

- Prejudice towards people with foreign background (based on looks or name, even if speaks Finnish)
- Finns lack curiosity towards others (distant, cold, no initiative in making contact)
- Lack of outgoing social climate in Finland (e.g., quiet on the streets)
- Finns are friendly, but difficult to make friends with (not used to close and warm relationships)
- Lacking communities of which to be/feel part
- Not knowing Finnish makes one feel one is missing key parts of the society, feeling like being in a transitional period
- Finnish needed in everyday services: restaurants, child's healthcare, public places, signing into hobbies
- Not speaking Finnish creates a social barrier
- Finnish language difficult to learn creating dependence on the Finnish spouse (if such exists)
- Difference of the Finnish taught in courses (kirjakieli) and the spoken language
- Finns not good at speaking Finnish to foreigners (switch to English)

Related Policy documents

- VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista
- TEM (2023) Kotoutumisen kumppanuusohjelma. Kumppanuusohjelman toimintasuunnitelma 2023-2024
- OKM (2021) Kohti saavutettavampaa korkeakoulutusta ja korkeakoulua
- OM (2021) Yhdenvertainen Suomi: Valtioneuvoston toimintaohjelma rasismien torjumiseksi ja hyvien väestösuhteiden edistämiseksi
- VN (2021b) Maahan muuttaneiden koulutus- ja työllisyyspolut
- EU:n alue- ja rakennepolitiikan ohjelma (2023). Uudistuva ja osaava Suomi 2021–2027 ohjelma: Maahanmuuttaneiden toimiva arki Suomessa: työ, osaaminen ja osallisuus

Policy measures

Public administration development: coordination and mainstreaming of integration policies (VN 2021c, 2021b; TEM 2023; EU Regional and Structural Policy Programme 2023; VNK 2023; OPH 2021)

- Integration in the planning, implementation and development of different policy areas
- Strengthening the capacity of different service systems to respond to the needs of the growing migrant population
- Cooperation: partnership networks, platforms and measures to promote integration (multidisciplinary culture of integration support work)
- Legislative reform (Integration Act) and related studies, including on municipal integration programmes
- Staff training for those working in basic services (skills related to integration and inclusion)
- Anticipating language and other training needs and coordinating provision, strengthening integration of Swedish-speaking people
- Developing language coaching in educational institutions (work-life orientation, tests, models, materials, links to studies)
- Development of multilingual structures in early childhood education and integration training (Finnish/Swedish and learners' mother tongue)
- Strengthening the activities of the Centre of Excellence for Integration (knowledge production, training)
- Information systems (monitoring and effectiveness of the integration process)

Policy measures (cont'd)

- Stakeholder communication: raising awareness among employers and higher education institutions about integration services and activities
- Gender-sensitivity: inclusion and employability of women, activating men to use support services, to engage in leisure activities and positive encounters with Finnish men, developing and communicating gender and sexual minority services

Strengthening immigrants' knowledge and skills for integration (VN 2021c, 2021b; TEM 2023; VNK 2023; OPH 2021; VN 2022)

- Flexible integration services for different groups and situations (initial assessment, information on society and culture, training: language, study and work skills)
- Support for spouses and families: integration and employment services (public authorities and universities, e.g. Spouse Program, Hidden Gems, HEI LIFE)
- Broad, varied and flexible language learning opportunities at all levels of education (Finnish/Swedish and mother tongue)

Policy measures (cont'd)

Improving public administration: promoting good population relations and dialogue (VN 2021c; OM 2021)

- Expert Group against Racism in the Council of State
- Conceptualisation and testing of a centre of excellence for work against hate crime and discrimination
- Legislative reform (Integration Act)
- Renewal of the concept of promoting integration
- Systematic data collection on (structural) racism and discrimination and their effects
- Information and skills for public authorities on minority issues, equality planning and strengthening inclusion (e.g. online training)
- Better use of equality plans (municipalities, other local actors)
- Guide to promoting good population relations (Municipalities promoting population relations - Practical tools for municipalities' work on population relations) and information on training provision (for municipalities)
- Capacity building in diversity management (in municipalities; training and materials)
- Monitoring indicators and guide on hate crime and hate crime (municipalities, other local actors)
- Support for the activities of regional ethnic relations advisory councils (municipalities, other local actors)

Policy measures (cont'd)

- Strengthening the knowledge of equality and anti-racism in urban planning
- University communities active in the fight against harassment, discrimination, racism and bullying (guidelines, policies and partners)
- Capacity building of primary education staff in anti-racist education (guide to equality planning, seminars and website)
- Funding for the development of anti-racism measures (mobilisation of civil society actors)

Promoting equality among the population: awareness of racism and how to tackle it, media literacy (OM 2021)

- Campaigns for the general public (web, YLE, Anti-Racism Week, Diversity Day/Days)
- Website (anti-racism database; part of yhdenvertaisuus.fi)

3.2. Social integration and belonging: opportunities to participate and influence

Challenges

Unclear how one can make an impact through voting or unions

Not being able to make a change in a city's matters

Feeling of not being heard when trying to make a change in publicly owned corporations

General feeling of not being heard in/by Finnish society

Voice not being heard in policy making (using Finnish in events and reports about immigrants is one way to exclude people)

Feeling of not being able to change big things (e.g., how people view immigrant workers), but having to change oneself instead

Related policy documents

VN (2021a) Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035

VN (2021b) Maahan muuttaneiden koulutus- ja työllisyyspolut

VN (2021c) Valtioneuvoston selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista

TEM (2020) Talent Boost –toimenpideohjelma

OM (2022) Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös suomalaisesta demokratiapolitiikasta 2020-luvulla

Policy measures

Improving public administration: promoting good population relations and inclusion (VN 2021a, 2021c; TEM 2020; OM 2022)

- Service development: identifying and disseminating methods for consultation and participation of different linguistic and cultural groups
- Service delivery: more active training/recruitment of migrants as experts
- Integration training: skills for those who provide training and focus on democracy, human rights and media literacy issues
- Cooperation between public authorities and civil society actors: a stronger role for cultural institutions and sports clubs in integration
- Linking Quebec talent to urban innovation and growth ecosystems (Ambassador programmes)
- Training and educational materials: multilingual and accessible materials on democracy and human rights issues

Empowering migrants (VN 2021c; OM 2022)

- Customer feedback: multi-channel and anonymous feedback (at all levels of government)
- Co-development: possibility to participate in the development of public services (service design)
- Expert positions: multilingual expert positions/tasks in integration services
- Integration training: practical information on rights and empowerment (democracy, human rights, media literacy)
- Political participation: more information on the political system, elections and voting; multiparty candidate selection
- Recreation: low-threshold services for cultural and physical participation (services of civil society actors)



Thank you!

LinkedIn: @HIWE-project

X:@HighHiwe

www.hiwe.fi