

ASSESSMENT IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING COVID-19 EPIDEMY

Finnish National Agency for Education: Guidelines for the Education Providers

Summary

- The student's assessment is carried out during exceptional circumstances in accordance with the national qualification requirements for vocational education and training and regulations in force.
- For graduating students, competence can be demonstrated in other ways than doing practical work tasks, for example when all workplaces in the field are closed to prevent infections or are not accessible to outsiders (eg nursing homes) and practical work tasks cannot be simulated in another student-safe display environment. In this case, the evidence must be arranged in such a way that the methods of demonstrating competence correspond as closely as possible to genuine work tasks and work processes and enable the demonstration and assessment of competences defined in the qualification requirements.
- If it is not possible to provide competence demonstrations for all students, the education provider should give priority to those students who are scheduled to complete a qualification and graduate this spring in accordance with the Personal Competence Development Plan (HOKS).

Personal Competence Development Plan (HOKS)

In vocational education and training, a personal competence development plan is drawn up for each student at the beginning of the education and the plan is updated whenever necessary. Although teaching is organized in alternative ways instead of contact teaching, the aim is for the study to proceed in accordance with personal competence development plan. During exceptional circumstances, the VET provider may use its own discretion in preparing and updating the HOKS.

It is a good idea for the VET provider to plan in advance how, at the end of the emergency, to ensure that students' HOKS can be updated within a reasonable timeframe and that students can flexibly demonstrate their skills at the workplace as soon as it is safely possible.

Demonstration and assessment of competence in a competence demonstration or other competence assessment

The VET provider is responsible for implementing the competence demonstrations. During Covid-19 emergency, the VET provider is obliged to arrange competence demonstrations and other demonstrations of competence only to the extent that the demonstration of competence is possible, and the work environment is safe for the student.

According to section 52 (§4) of the Vocational Education Act, the education provider must provide the student with the opportunity to demonstrate his or her competence as soon as possible after he or she is deemed to have achieved the professional competence requirements or competence objectives in accordance with the qualification or education requirements. This obligation may be waived in exceptional circumstances. If necessary, the competence demonstrations can be postponed.

If it is not possible to arrange competence demonstrations for all students, the education provider should give priority to students who are scheduled to complete the qualification and graduate this spring. This secures the opportunities for graduating students to enter working life or further studies.

For graduating students, it is also possible to deviate from the requirement to arrange demonstrations by doing practical work tasks in real work situations and work processes, if it is not possible to do practical work tasks due to exceptional circumstances. Competence can be demonstrated in other ways instead of doing practical work tasks, for example when all workplaces in the field are closed to prevent infections or are not accessible to outsiders (eg nursing homes) and it is not possible to simulate practical work tasks in another student-safe working-life environment. The competence demonstrations can also be implemented in workplace-like learning environments, for example on the training provider's own construction sites or teaching farms.

The demonstrations must be organised in such a way that the methods of demonstrating competence correspond as closely as possible to genuine work tasks and work processes and enable the demonstration and assessment of professional skills and competence defined in the qualification requirements and assessment criteria.

Competence assessors

The assessment of the competence of the module of the vocational qualification is carried out and decided jointly by two assessors appointed by the VET provider. One of the assessors is a teacher or, for a specific reason, another representative of the VET provider and the other a representative of working life. For a special reason, the assessment can be carried out and the assessment can also be decided by two teachers or another representative of the VET provider. The participation of representatives of working life in the competence demonstration can be facilitated by utilizing various digital solutions.

The assessment of the competence of the common modules is carried out and decided by the teacher or, for a special reason, another representative of the VET provider. When a common module of a qualification is implemented and assessed in connection with a vocational module, a representative of working life may be consulted in the assessment of competence.

Qualification requirements for assessors

Assessors must have sufficient competence and knowledge on the qualification concerned and especially on the module being assessed as well as sufficient familiarity on assessment and requirements on the qualification concerned. It is a duty of an education provider to familiarise representatives of working life to competence assessment.

Teacher means a person who has the qualifications provided for in the Decree on the Qualification of Teaching Staff (986/1998, amendment 1150/2017).



The competency requirements for assessors apply to all assessment situations: assessment related to the recognition of competence, when assessing the timeliness and equivalence of competence, providing feedback on the development of competence and competence demonstration or other competence assessment.