Guide to post-basic education studies in the Oulu region

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1 General information on applying to education

1.1 Finnish education system

In Finland, children have compulsory education. Compulsory education ends when a person reaches the age of 18 or when he or she previously completes a secondary education qualification (matriculation exam or vocational qualification) or an equivalent foreign education.

Every pupil graduating from comprehensive school must apply for further education. After basic education, the most common options are general upper secondary school and vocational college (vocational education and training). They belong to secondary education. The pupil can also apply to preparatory instruction or the 10th grade. Preparatory instruction usually lasts for one school year.

At vocational college, you can study for a profession. A person who has completed vocational education and training can apply for a job in their own field. General upper secondary school does not give vocational qualifications but it provides general education instead. After general upper secondary education, one usually applies to study at a higher education institution or in upper secondary vocational education and training. It is possible to continue studying at a higher education institution after all secondary studies. In Finland, higher education is provided by universities of applied sciences and universities.
1.2 Small vocabulary

**Vocational upper secondary qualification** = Vocational qualification which provides basic knowledge and basic skills for a profession. Vocational upper secondary qualification also includes training at the workplace. The studies last for approximately three years. After your studies, you can go to work or continue your studies at a university for applied sciences or a university.

**Vocational general upper secondary school** = You can study for a vocational upper secondary qualification simultaneously with general upper secondary school studies. You can participate in the matriculation examination and obtain both a vocational qualification and a matriculation examination certificate.

**grade** = numerical assessment of the subject’s competence in comprehensive school. The grade scale in the basic education ranges from 4 to 10. The highest grade is 10 and the lowest grade is 4. In mathematics, for example, grade 8 is good and in mathematics grade 6 is moderate.

**assessment of linguistic competence** = Assessment in which the skills of the language of instruction, i.e. Finnish, are determined. The assessment linguistic competence is used to determine whether you can carry out your studies in Finnish.

**general upper secondary school** = in general upper secondary school students study the same subjects as in elementary school and, in addition, psychology and philosophy. Some arts and physical education courses are also studied in general upper secondary school. General upper secondary school studies usually last for three years. One cannot get a vocational qualification from the general upper secondary school. At the end of the general upper secondary studies, students participate in the matriculation examination and receive a matriculation examination certificate. After graduating from the general upper secondary school, one can continue studies at a university of applied sciences or a university.

**theoretical subject** = S2 language or mother tongue and literature, Swedish, foreign languages, health education, religion or ethics, history, social studies, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography

**LUVA** = Preparatory instruction for general upper secondary education

**basic education** = grades 1-9

**syllabus of basic education** = You have studied S2 or mother tongue and literature, Swedish, foreign languages, health education, religion or ethics, history, social studies, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, physical education, music, visual arts, crafts and home economics as well as received guidance counselling.

**entrance exam** = Entrance exam is often a written exam that measures the student's skills and knowledge related to the field of study.

**basic education certificate** = you have completed the basic education syllabus

**aptitude test** = a test taken to assess your suitability for a certain field of study. The test can assess a skill, ability, and attribute, such as a musician's playing skills or a security guard's physical coordination and interaction skills.

**arts and physical education** = physical education, music, visual arts, crafts and home economics

**selection based on school certificate** = Students are chosen based on prior school certificate. For instance, a general upper secondary school can choose a student based on the average of the theoretical subjects’ grades in the basic education certificate. A vocational college can choose a
student on the basis of the grades in the final certificate of basic education and, in addition, give extra points for good grades in arts and physical education.

**VALMA** = Preparatory instruction for vocational education and training.

**preparatory instruction** = Instruction where more skills and knowledge are studied. After this instruction, you will apply to a vocational college or a general upper secondary school.

**www.opintopolku.fi** i.e. **Opintopolku** (Study path) = an Internet site through which one applies to study. The application is made electronically on the site only.
1.3 Applying to studies after the basic education (comprehensive school)

In Finland, there are joint application periods every year for further studies. The application period to post-comprehensive school studies is in February-March. 

You can apply to study for a secondary degree diploma in a general upper secondary school or a vocational college. Students are chosen in the general upper secondary schools on the basis of their grades in the basic education certificate. Selection points affect the choice of students in the vocational colleges. You receive points, for example, for your certificate. In addition, there is an entrance examination or an aptitude test for certain educations. Some fields of study may have requirements related to your state of health.

If you want to improve your study skills or you are not certain of your choice of a study field, you can apply to preparatory instruction. LUVA and Lukiostartti are preparatory instructions for the general upper secondary school. In the vocational college, you can apply to VALMA training. Preparatory instruction usually lasts for one year.

If you need special support in your studies and you have participated in special needs education in the comprehensive school, you can apply to study for a vocational upper secondary qualification at Luovi. Luovi also organises VALMA training.

You can also apply for a study place outside the joint application periods. Continuous application is intended, for example, for a person who has been left without a place to study, whose studies have been interrupted or who wishes to change from one educational institution to another. For more information about the continuous application process, please contact the guidance counsellors of the upper secondary institutions. You can also inquire from them for the opportunity to visit an educational institution or take part in a educational trial.
Joint application system for vocational and general upper secondary studies 23 February - 23 March 2021

- General upper secondary schools in the Oulu area
- OSAO i.e. Oulu Vocational College
- OPAO i.e. Oulu Service Sector College
- SDO i.e. Diakonia College of Finland

Applications at www.opintopolku.fi. The title of the application form is Joint application for vocational and general upper secondary education, spring 2021.

Application for Luovi Vocational College 23 February - 23 March 2021

- Vocational upper secondary qualifications at Luovi Vocational College
- VALMA training at Luovi Vocational College

Applications at www.opintopolku.fi. The title of the application form is Application to vocational education as demanding specialised support, spring 2021.

Application to preparatory instructions 23 February - 23 March 2021

- LUVA i.e. preparatory instruction for general upper secondary education
- 10th grade
- VALMA i.e. preparatory training for vocational education and training (OSAO and SDO)

Applications at www.opintopolku.fi. The title of the application is Spring 2021 application to post-basic education preparatory training.

Application to Lukiostartti 1 May - 31 July 2021

The application form can be found on the internet site of the Oulu upper secondary school for adults. Choose the title Opiskelijaksi and after this Valmistava koulutus. Free study places can be requested directly from the Oulu upper secondary school for adults throughout the year.
2 Educational institutions offering education leading to a degree and preparatory training in the Oulu region

1.4 Vocational educations

OSAO i.e. Oulu Vocational College

In OSAO you can study 32 different vocational upper secondary qualifications which will give you a profession. Find out more about the vocational upper secondary qualifications on the Internet page. In the spring of 2021, there are over 1,770 study places available in the joint application system.

In OSAO, you can study in Oulu and the surrounding area in the following places:
- Haukipudas
- Kaukovainio, services
- Kaukovainio, technique
- Kempele
- Liminka
- Kontinkangas
- Muhos
- Taivalkoski
- Pudasjärvi

Virpiemi Sports Institute is not included in the joint application system.

Joint application system: 23 February - 23 March by 3 p.m. Fill in the application at www.opintopolku.fi.

The results of the joint application system will be announced on 17 June 2021. The message contains a link to Opintopolku, where you have to indicate that you will accept the study place. Accept the study place on 1 July 2021 at the latest.


Assessment of language skills: The assessment of language skills for OSAO studies takes place on 22 April 2021. You will be invited in the language skills assessment, if there is a need to determine your language skills.

Entrance exams and aptitude tests: Detailed information can be found at Opintopolku:

Vocational upper secondary education with matriculation exam: In OSAO, you can study in vocational upper secondary education with matriculation exam i.e. you can study for a vocational upper secondary qualification together with general upper secondary studies. The grade point average for theoretical subjects is 7.5 for the vocational upper secondary education with
matriculation exam. Find out more about the vocational upper secondary education with matriculation exam.

**Discretionary admission:** You can apply to some of the studies through discretionary admission. Find out more from your own comprehensive school guidance counsellor.

Ask more about the application from OSAO OVI services for applicants.

**OPAO i.e. Oulu Service Sector College**

At OPAO you can study the vocational upper secondary qualifications of restaurant cook, site facilities operative and domestic operative. You can apply to restaurant waiter/waitress studies through continuous admission.

**Joint application system:** 23 February - 23 March by 3 p.m. Fill in the application at www.opintopolku.fi.

The results of the joint application system will be announced on 17 June 2021. The message contains a link to Opintopolku, where you have to indicate that you will accept the study place. Accept your study place 1 July 2021 at the latest.

**Discretionary admission:** You can also apply to study through the discretionary admission.

**Continuous admission:** You can apply to study flexibly throughout the year. The start of your studies will be planned individually.

Ask about applying to studies: info@opao.fi or Guidance counsellor Päivi Sarkkinen tel. 044 7372009, paivi.sarkkinen@opao.fi

Link for the school’s Internet page

Link to OPAO’s education schedule
SDO i.e. Diakonia College of Finland

SDO is situated at the city centre, at Albertinkatu 16 B 90100 Oulu.

At the Finnish Diakonia College, you can study as a practical nurse, children’s instructor as well as youth and community instructor. Learn more about the practical nursing studies on our Internet page. Also read about the training of children’s instructor and youth and community instructor. In the spring of 2021, there are 56 study places available in the joint application system.

Joint application system: 23 February - 23 March by 3 p.m. Fill in the application at www.opintopolku.fi.

The results of the joint application system will be announced on 17 June 2021. The message contains a link to Opintopolku, where you have to indicate that you will accept the study place. Accept the study place on 1 July 2021 at the latest.

Entrance examinations: You will receive an invitation to the entrance examination in your e-mail.

Assessment of language skills: You will be invited in the language skills assessment, if there is a need to determine your language skills. The language skill requirement is B1.1.

Discretionary admission: You can also apply to study through the discretionary admission. Find out more from your own comprehensive school guidance counsellor.

Ask more about applying for studies at the application services of the Diakonia College of Finland.
Luovi Vocational College, the largest vocational special needs college in Finland.

In Luovi, you can study in preparatory training or complete basic education certificates, basic vocational qualifications or specialist vocational qualifications. For the qualifications, the syllabus of the studies is the same as in other vocational institutions. The qualification makes you eligible for further studies in higher education institutions. You can find out if Luovi would be a suitable vocational college for you by doing the RUORI self-assessment. Fill in the RUORI self-assessment.

**Application:** 23 February - 23 March by 3 p.m. Fill in the application at www.opintopolku.fi. You will be invited to an interview on the basis of your application.

The results of the joint application system will be announced on 17 June 2021. The message contains a link to Opintopolku, where you have to indicate that you will accept the study place. Accept the study place on 1 July 2021 at the latest.

You can ask more about visits or educational trials from the various units:

**Oulu**
 guidance counsellor Minna Barsk, tel. 040 319 3793, minna.barsk@luovi.fi
 guidance counsellor Maarit Mäntynen, tel. 040 319 3717, maarit.mantynen@luovi.fi

**Muhos**
 guidance counsellor Annaliisa Järvikivi, tel. 040 319 3892, annaliisa.jarvikivi@luovi.fi
 guidance counsellor Kaisa Posti, tel. 040 319 3043, kaisa.posti@luovi.fi

Virhe. Hyperlinkin viittaus ei kelpaa.. You can also contact us by phoning 040 319 3000 or via e-mail info@luovi.fi
1.5 General upper secondary schools

General upper secondary education usually last for three years. When you have completed your general upper secondary education, you will receive a graduation certificate. In the general upper secondary school, you can also participate in the international matriculation examination. If you pass the matriculation examination, you will receive a matriculation examination certificate.

In the general upper secondary school, the Finnish language teaching begins at level B1. The basics of the Finnish language are not taught in the general upper secondary school. Thus, it is not enough that you can speak Finnish well. More vocabulary and writing have to be practised all the time. In the general upper secondary school, the same subjects are studied as in the comprehensive school. In addition to them, psychology and philosophy are studied.

The aim of the general upper secondary school is to increase general knowledge. Study skills are also practised and enhanced in the general upper secondary school. They are important for you in order to succeed in your studies after the general upper secondary school. In some general upper secondary schools, it is possible to choose different lines of study such as in the Kastelli upper secondary school specialising in sports.

General upper secondary schools in Oulu

Haukipudas upper secondary school
Kastelli upper secondary school
Kiiminki upper secondary school
Laanila upper secondary school
Madetoja upper secondary school
Merikoski upper secondary school
Oulun Lyseo upper secondary school
- International Baccalaureate Diploma
- August Sahlsten upper secondary school /Tyrnävä
Oulunsalo upper secondary school
Oulun Suomalaisen Yhteiskoulun lukio (upper secondary school)
Pateniemi upper secondary school
Oulun normaalikoulun lukio (upper secondary school)
Oulun steinerkoulu /Waldorf Steiner school in Oulu)
Svenska Privatskolan i Uleåborg

Other upper secondary schools near Oulu

Kempele upper secondary school
Muhos upper secondary school
Utajärvi upper secondary school

Joint application system: 23 February - 23 March by 3 p.m. Fill in the application at www.opintopolku.fi.

The results of the joint application system will be announced on 17 June 2021. The message contains a link to Opintopolku, where you have to indicate that you will accept the study place. Accept the study place on 1 July 2021 at the latest.
You can find more information about the upper secondary schools on the Internet site of the City of Oulu.

In the general upper secondary school guide you can find the grade point averages for entering the upper secondary schools and information about the language choices. Note that the grade point averages for the upper secondary schools change every year. You can find specific information about the schools from the guidance counsellors of the upper secondary schools.

1.6 Options for general upper secondary education and vocational education i.e. preparatory trainings

LUVA and Lukiostartti studies are organised by the Oulun aikuislukio (Oulu upper secondary school for adults). You can apply to study throughout the year. Free study places can be requested directly from the Oulu upper secondary school for adults throughout the year. The address of Oulu upper secondary school for adults is Sairaalanrinne 5 90220 Oulu.

**LUVA** = Preparatory instruction for general upper secondary education

In LUVA, you can strengthen your skills for general upper secondary studies. You can apply to LUVA after comprehensive school. The studies last for one school year. During LUVA you can improve your comprehensive school grades and study upper secondary school courses. Luva instruction is organised as full-time studies. LUVA students are eligible for study grant. Read more about the preparatory instruction for general upper secondary studies [here](https://www.ouka.fi/oulu/oulun-aikuislukio/lukioon-valmistava-koulutus2).

Please note:
- for immigrants and foreign language speakers
- level of Finnish language skills A2.1 or higher
- you must have residence permit for studies
- **Application:** 23 February - 23 March by 3 p.m. [Fill in the application at www.opintopolku.fi](http://www.opintopolku.fi).

**Lukiostartti**

In Lukiostartti, you can strengthen your skills for general upper secondary studies. You can apply to Lukiostartti after comprehensive school. The studies last for one school year. During LUVA, you can improve your comprehensive school grades and study general upper secondary school courses. Luva instruction is organised as full-time studies. Lukiostartti students are not eligible for study grant.

Please note:
- for both Finnish speakers and foreign language speakers
- level of Finnish language skills A2.1 or higher
- you do not have to have a residence permit
• Find out more about Lukiostartti and fill in the application form on the internet site of Oulu upper secondary school for adults (Oulun aikuislukio).

VALMA i.e. preparatory training for vocational education

If you have completed comprehensive school or an equivalent education, you can apply for VALMA training. VALMA suits you if your aim is to apply for vocational education after the preparatory training. In VALMA training, the approach to studies is practical. You can also improve some comprehensive school grades and choose studies from vocational qualifications in addition to your VALMA training. The studies last a maximum for one school year. You can move on to study for a vocational qualification during the school year when you have acquired sufficient skills to do so.

For more information about VALMA training, contact the vocational colleges: OSAO, Diakonia College of Finland and Luovi Vocational College

Application: 23 February - 23 March by 3 p.m. Fill in the application at www.opintopolku.fi.

3 Links and further information

For more information about Finnish education and working life in different languages visit the website InfoFinland.