Teachers and Education Staff

Final responsibility and decision-making power concerning teachers and other education staff, their education and working condition, lies with the state, i.e. the Ministry of education, science and culture. The legal context on these issues is stipulated in Law on the education and recruitment of teachers and head teachers in Pre-school, Compulsory school and Upper secondary school and further in legislation on education (Legislation on Pre-school, Compulsory school and Upper secondary school). It is also described in education agreements with Municipalities and private school institutions and in contracts with teacher unions. Titles of teachers at Compulsory and Upper secondary level respectively are protected as licensed professions and the same goes for teaching at Pre-primary level.

Accreditation of private schools lies within the education authorities, following recommendation of respective municipality. Public Upper secondary teachers and headmasters are state employers. In the case of Pre-primary and Compulsory school level teachers and headmasters are municipal employers. Teachers and headmasters in private schools at all levels are hired by respective institution.

General educational requirements to become a Pre-primary, Compulsory and Upper secondary school teacher consists of a five-year course programme (300 ECTS). Most teachers graduate with a Master’s degree in education or in respective field of study together with Teacher Certification Studies. Vocational teachers’ educational requirements include 60 credit units in Teacher Certification Studies in addition to a final diploma in vocational field; such as qualification as Master craftsman in a trade. The 2008 Act has been fully effective since the autumn of 2012.

Continuing professional development of teachers and head teachers is proposed in laws and arranged in accordance with wage agreement. Usually Upper secondary school teachers have min. 80 hours/year for professional development. Compulsory school teachers have 170-90 hours/year, but Pre-school teacher have not a set number of hours for their professional development.

National Council on professional development of teachers, appointed by the Ministry of education, science and culture, Association of municipalities, the Universities offering teacher education and associations of teachers and headmasters, makes policies on in-service education and professional development.