

EDUCATION

Finland:

Early childhood teachers should get a *Bachelor's degree* in educational science. It allows one to become a kindergarten teacher and a preschool teacher.

Teachers in *pre-primary education* should have university education. They are either ECEC (*Early Childhood Education and Care*) teachers with a minimum of a Bachelor's degree or class teachers with a Master's degree.

Classroom teachers, subject teachers and special-education teachers should get a *Master's degree* in educational science. This degree qualifies to serve as a classroom teacher and as a pre-school teacher; as a subject teacher; as a special-education teacher in comprehensive schools, and as a classroom teacher. ([source](#))

A master's degree program in education includes both academic studies and practical teaching experience. Teacher training can be either concurrent, with pedagogical training integrated into the master's programme, or consecutive, with the pedagogical training completed after the initial degree.

The working methods used in the teacher education and educational institutions **emphasise a learner-oriented, research-based and whole-school approach**. In addition, key issues are the new and diverse learning environments, team-teaching, cross-disciplinary approaches and teachers' management skills. ([source](#))

Teacher candidates not only have to become familiar with the knowledge base in education and human development, but also have to write a research-based thesis as a final requirement for the Master's degree. Much attention is paid to subject pedagogy for future elementary and high school teachers.

Teacher education in Finland also provides future teachers with good **training in diagnosing students with learning difficulties and in adapting teaching to the different needs and learning styles** of their students. ([source](#) - p. 39)

France:

All teachers *of pre-primary, primary and secondary schools* in France typically undergo rigorous training through specialized teacher training universities called "*Instituts nationaux supérieurs du professorat et de l'éducation*" (INSPE - National Higher Institutes for Teaching and Education).

There are also different competitive examinations depending on the level and type of educational institution the candidate aims for (primary/secondary, public/private, general/vocational).

Since the latest reform of teacher training, phased in between 2020 and 2022, the following ISCED levels and examinations are required to teach in primary and secondary state schools:

In *pre-primary education* and *primary education*: *Master's Degree* + a competitive examination (“concours de recrutement de professeur des écoles”).

In *lower and upper secondary general education*, there are 2 possibilities:

1) to become "enseignants certifiés" (minimum and most common qualification): *Master's Degree* + a competitive examination (“concours du certificat d'aptitude au professorat de l'enseignement du second degré”).

2) to become "enseignants agrégés" (maximum qualification): *Master's Degree* + a competitive examination (“concours national d'agrégation”).

All those who passed a competitive examination have to complete a ***one-year paid traineeship as a trainee civil servant***, at the end of which a jury will determine whether or not they can be officially granted the status of fully-qualified teachers and become civil servants. ([source](#))

China:

Teacher education in China is provided by universities, especially *normal universities*. It's composed of two parts: *pre-service education* and *in-service training*. ([source](#))

The *pre-service system* includes secondary normal schools for primary school teachers; junior teachers' colleges for junior secondary school teachers; and provincial or subordinate normal universities for senior secondary school teachers, secondary normal school teachers, and college and university teachers. ([source](#))

In-service training is conducted by education institutes and in-service teacher training schools for teachers of secondary school, primary school and kindergarten teachers.

A major in teacher education is not a prerequisite for becoming a school teacher in China. Students studying at other multi-disciplinary universities who do not major in education can also become school teachers. ([source](#) - slide 13)

Moreover, a ***Bachelor's degree is sufficient to become a teacher.*** ([source](#)) ***Subject knowledge is emphasized more than pedagogical knowledge according to the curricula framework of teacher education in China.***

To be qualified as a teacher, it is necessary to have appropriate evidence of having completed formal training: to become a *kindergarten teacher*, it's important to graduate from a children's normal school or above; a *primary school teacher* - graduation from a secondary normal school or above; a *junior secondary school teacher* or a *teacher of general education and special courses in primary vocational school* - graduation from a specialised higher normal school or other colleges or universities with two or three years of education or higher; an *upper secondary school teacher* or a *teacher of general and specialised courses in a secondary vocational school*, technical school or vocational high school - graduation from a normal (or other) college or university with 4 years of education; a *teacher in an institution of higher learning* - be a postgraduate or university graduate; a *teacher for adult education* - be a graduate of an institution of higher learning, a secondary school or upwards depending on

the level and category of the adult education. ([source](#) - ch. III, art. 11)

The authorities in the Chinese province of Shanghai place special emphasis on equipping future teachers with the skills they will need to conduct action research. As in Finland, in Shanghai all students are expected to perform well, and teachers are expected to make sure that no student falls behind. This makes it essential that teachers identify students who are just starting to fall behind, identify the problem, and have the skills and knowledge needed to build a large and constantly updated pool to address student performance problems ([source](#) - p. 48)

CAREER OPTIONS

Finland:

Finnish teachers have opportunities for career advancement, including opportunities to pursue leadership roles within schools, become educational consultants, or engage in educational research.

Teachers are **obliged to participate in continuing professional development (CPD) for a set number of days per year, with full salary benefits**. Employers determine the accepted training programs and formats.

While education providers hold primary responsibility for CPD, teachers are increasingly expected to take ownership of their professional development. Participation in CPD doesn't directly lead to salary increases or promotions. The main motivators are professional growth, knowledge renewal, and well-being. Employers finance and schedule CPD activities during working hours, either for individual teachers or entire school staff. ([source](#))

France:

In France, teachers have various career advancement opportunities, including opportunities for specialization, leadership roles within schools, and administrative positions within the education system.

Teacher evaluations play a significant role in career advancement. Voluntary participation in ongoing training and professional development can positively impact these evaluations.

Participation in programs within the Plan académique de formation (*PAF - academic plan for continuing training*) doesn't offer direct financial benefits or career advancement but contributes positively to evaluations. ([source](#))

China:

In China, teachers' career options may be more limited, with fewer opportunities for advancement outside of traditional teaching roles. However, there are possibilities for teachers to become involved in curriculum development or teacher training initiatives.

Teacher development schools at different levels should be responsible for the training

of teachers for primary and secondary schools. Administrative departments of education, school departments and schools are developing teacher training programmes and conducting various forms of ideological, political and professional teacher training. The people's governments at various levels take measures to train and educate teachers for regions inhabited by ethnic minorities and for remote and poor areas. ([source](#) - ch. IV, art. 18-19)

Excellent educators across various domains within education, training, research, and community service shall be honored by their institutions. Exceptional contributions are acknowledged by governmental bodies, and significant achievements merit honorary titles as per statutory provisions. ([source](#) - ch. VII, art. 33)

Teachers in Shanghai are divided into four grades that define their professional status. Moving from one grade to another often requires the ability to give demonstration (public) lessons, participate in the training of new teachers, publish in journals on education and teaching, and so on. **The provincial government often identifies the best teachers based on evaluation results and relieves them of some or all of their teaching duties so that they can lecture to their colleagues, give demonstrations, and train other teachers at the district, provincial, and even national level.** ([source](#) - p. 48)

STANDARDS

Finland:

In Finland, the [Decree on the Eligibility Requirements for Teaching Personnel](#) outlines the qualifications and requirements for individuals seeking to work as teachers in educational institutions.

The document provides the list of educational qualifications required for different levels of teaching, such as primary, secondary, or vocational education. It details the subject-specific competence required for teaching various subjects. Teachers need to demonstrate proficiency in their chosen subject areas, which involves specific academic qualifications or professional experience. The decree emphasizes the importance of pedagogical skills and knowledge of effective teaching methods. Teachers are expected to be able to plan and implement instruction that meets the diverse needs of students. There are also some language proficiency requirements for different teaching posts.

France:

In France, teacher standards are outlined by the Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports). While there isn't a single comprehensive document that lists all teacher standards, the ministry provides guidance and expectations for teachers across various areas. Teachers must therefore demonstrate effective teaching skills, including lesson planning, engaging delivery, assessment and differentiation for diverse learners. They must have an in-depth understanding of their subjects and be knowledgeable about standards and curriculum content. Adhering to professional ethics, they must create an inclusive environment that promotes respect and tolerance. Co-operation with colleagues, parents and stakeholders is

beneficial to the well-being of students, which requires strong communication skills. Continuous professional development is encouraged to stay up to date with best practice. Teachers support the holistic development of students by providing guidance and facilitating adaptation and innovation in teaching methods.

China:

The Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China ([link](#)) is a comprehensive legal document that outlines the rights, duties and standards for teachers in China. This law is designed to protect the legitimate rights and interests of teachers, **build a contingent of teachers of high moral character and professional competence, and promote the development of socialist education.** This law applies to teachers specially engaged in education and teaching in schools of various levels and categories or other educational institutions

It consists of 9 chapters and covers the following key points: rights and duties of teachers; functions and duties of educational institutions; qualification and employment of teachers; cultivation and training of teachers; assessment of teachers' political consciousness and ideological level, their professional competence, attitude and performance; material benefits; rewards for teachers; legal responsibility of teachers and those who insult or attack teachers.

1. What is similar/different about them? What is better or worse from your own perspective?

All three countries prioritise the development of teachers' pedagogical skills, including lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement techniques. In each system, teachers are expected to have a deep understanding of the subjects they teach and stay updated with developments in their respective fields. Continuous professional development is encouraged in China, Finland, and France to help teachers improve their practice and stay updated on educational research and best practices.

The **difference lies primarily in the fact that most teaching positions in Finland and France require a Master's degree, while in China you can become a teacher with only a Bachelor's degree. French teacher standards emphasise academic rigour, subject knowledge and adherence to centralised curriculum standards, while Finnish standards focus on the holistic well-being of students, equity and individualised learning.** Chinese standards, in contrast, often prioritise academic performance, discipline and adherence to prescribed curricula, and place a strong emphasis on exam preparation and standardised testing.

Each country's approach to teacher education has its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, Finnish teacher education focuses on holistic student well-being, equity, individualised learning, which creates an inclusive and supportive learning environment. In addition, teacher autonomy, co-operation and continuous professional development promote innovation and flexibility in teaching. French education emphasises subject knowledge, ensuring that teachers have a strong foundation in their disciplines. Chinese education

emphasises performance and discipline, which contributes to high academic performance and student achievement.

However, Chinese teachers may be limited in creativity and innovation due to following prescribed curricula. In Finland, there are no standardised teacher evaluations, which may raise concerns about consistency and quality assurance. In addition, **attending professional development training in Finland and France doesn't offer any financial benefits or career advancement, so teachers may not be motivated to participate in such activities. This may lead to disengagement and reduced investment in improving their teaching practice.**

2. Which system gives teachers more legal protection? How?

Finland provides strong legal protection for teachers through robust unions that advocate for the rights and interests of educators (such as salaries, working conditions, and professional development opportunities), comprehensive employment laws covering various rights (such as working hours, holidays, sick leave, termination procedures, discrimination protections), and a supportive education system emphasizing trust, collaboration, and autonomy for educators.

In France, teachers belong to the body of the public servants and their professional status is subject to the legislation concerning the public service. There are labor laws and regulations that protect workers' rights, including teachers. However, teachers may have less influence over decision-making processes and fewer opportunities for professional growth and advancement compared to Finland.

The Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China offers protections for teachers, including safeguards against insults or assaults, protection from retaliation, a delineation of administrative sanctions for misconduct, provisions for rectifying salary defaults or rights infringements, and an appeal process for teachers whose rights are violated.

3. Which system gives teachers more freedom in designing lessons & planning contents? Why? How?

Finland tends to give teachers the greatest freedom to develop lessons and plan content. Finnish educators have a high degree of professional autonomy and are trusted to create innovative and engaging lessons tailored to the needs of students. In addition, the Finnish curriculum system provides broad guidelines rather than detailed prescriptions, allowing teachers the flexibility to adapt their lessons to the diverse needs of their students. The Finnish system also values creativity and innovation in teaching. Teachers are encouraged to explore different teaching methods and approaches to engage students and promote deeper learning.

France also provides teachers with a considerable degree of freedom in lesson design, although there may be more standardized curriculum requirements than in Finland. In China, teachers may have less freedom in designing lessons, as there is more emphasis on standardised testing and curriculum guidelines.

4. What would you like to implement in your classes that is not currently available in Russia? Are there any other systems of education from which you would like to put into practice something in particular?

First of all, I would like Russia to have legal protection for teachers as in Finland, and for the profession to be prestigious and highly paid, as in Finland and France. I would also like teachers to be given more freedom in the choice of teaching tools, the design of lessons and their content. Teachers should be highly specialised in their subject and profession, **which I believe could be achieved by introducing a Master's level qualification requirement for all teachers**. Secondly, in Finland, teacher education pays a lot of attention to aspects such as cross-disciplinary approaches and teacher management skills, which seem very attractive to me and **I think they could be implemented in the Russian teacher education system to make it more effective and innovative, as this corresponds to current trends in education and can better prepare teachers to meet the diverse needs of students in a rapidly developing world**.

France has a very rigorous teacher education system, which I like halfway. On the one hand, it guarantees excellent training, both theoretically and practically. On the other hand, **such a thorough and serious examination can lead to professional burnout of teachers and decrease their motivation to work**. Therefore, I am not sure if I would like to see such a strict training system in Russian teacher education.

What I like about the Chinese system is that teachers are trained to identify students' learning difficulties early on and **deal with them so that the student doesn't fall behind**. I think this should be introduced into the teacher training system in Russia, because very often students' gaps in knowledge go unnoticed or teachers don't know how to fix them, so students have to ask for tutors.