



## Finland

This report describes the structure of the national higher education system in Finland, focusing on the institutional types as defined by national categories. It builds on the Eurydice Report on the national higher education system but complements it with quantitative information on the role of higher education institution (HEI) types in national systems, based on data derived from the European Tertiary Education Register (<http://www.eter-project.eu>) for the period 2011-2019.

### Types of Higher Education Institutions

According to Eurydice<sup>1</sup>, the Finnish higher education system comprises 13 universities and 23 universities of applied sciences in the Ministry of Education and Culture sector. Higher education institutions are mainly multi-field institutions.

University-level education is also provided by a military institution of higher education, the National Defence University, which is part of the Defence Forces. At university of applied sciences -level there is the Åland University of Applied Sciences in the self-governing Province of Åland and the Police University College of Finland subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior.

Both types of HE institutions have their own purposes according to legislation.

The purpose of **Universities** is to:

- promote independent academic research and academic and artistic education.
- provide higher education based on research.

The purpose of **Universities of Applied Sciences** is to:

- provide higher education for professional expert jobs based on the requirements of working life.
- carry out applied research, development and innovation activities and artistic activities that promote industry, business and regional development and regenerate the industrial structure of the region.

Universities provide Bachelor's, Master's and third-cycle postgraduate degrees. Students at universities of applied sciences can complete Bachelor's and Master's degrees. In addition, universities and universities of applied sciences can provide professional specialisation programmes and non-degree study modules.

### Main institutional characteristics. Legal status and the right to award a PhD

Universities (*Yliopisto*) are all public institutions and have the right to award PhDs. In total, about 35% of all Finnish HEIs are Universities and equivalent institutions. Universities of Applied Sciences (*Ammattikorkeakoulu*) account for almost 65% of all Finnish HEIs, however, none of them awards PhDs; the majority (23) of Universities of Applied Sciences are private, while only a few (2) are public.

Table 1 provides a quantitative overview of the main institutional characteristics by HEI type. Universities (*Yliopisto*) are all public institutions and have the right to award PhDs. In total, about 35% of all Finnish HEIs

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<sup>1</sup>[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/types-higher-education-institutions-25\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/types-higher-education-institutions-25_en)

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Table 1. Institutional type and legal status by HEI type, 2019

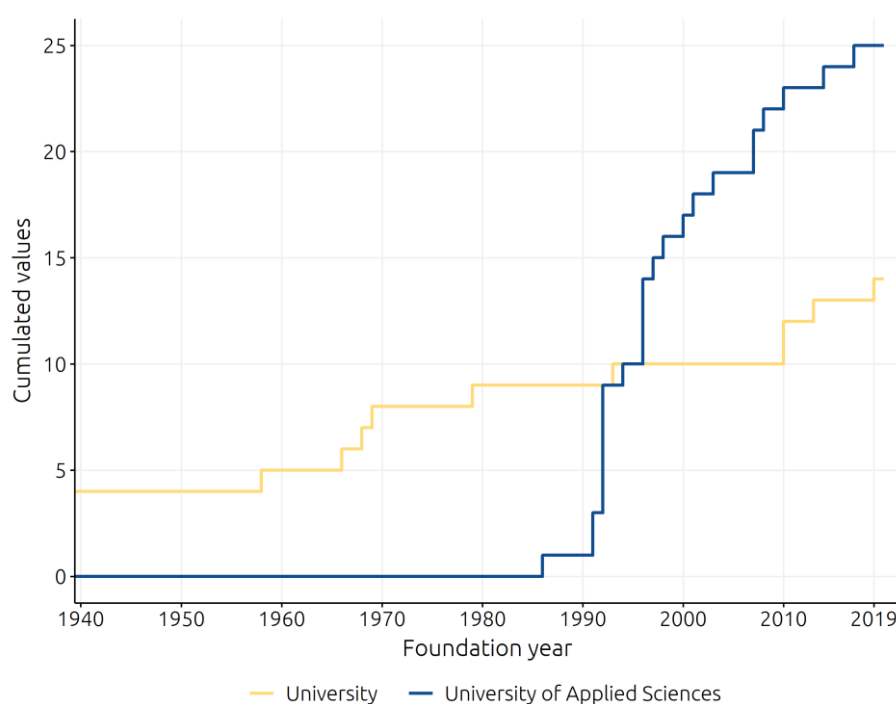
| Category                       |                    | N  | Public | Private government-dependent | PhD awarding |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----|--------|------------------------------|--------------|
| University                     | Yliopisto          | 14 | 14     | 0                            | 14           |
| University of Applied Sciences | Ammattikorkeakoulu | 25 | 2      | 23                           | 0            |
| Total                          |                    | 39 | 16     | 23                           | 14           |

Note: Numbers reflect inclusion in ETER

## Institutional history. Older and younger institutional types

Data on the HEI foundation year provide information on the history of Finland's higher education and its evolution over time. Figure 1 shows that the expansion of the system in terms of the number of HEIs is relatively recent, for Universities (*Yliopisto*) quite steadily after 1960, while for Universities of Applied Sciences (*Ammattikorkeakoulut*) after 1990, with an enormous increase between 1990 and 2000. The University of Helsinki is the oldest Finnish university, dating back to 1640; since then, only three further Universities have been established before the 1960s (Hanken School of Economics in 1909, Abo Akademi University in 1918 and University of Turku in 1920).

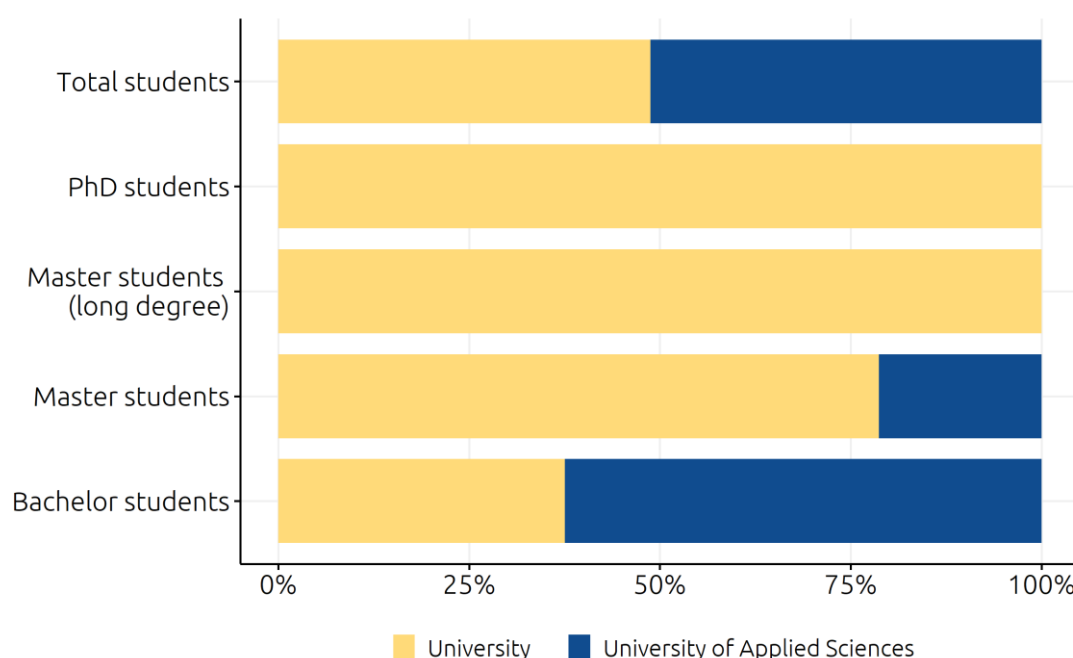
Figure 1. Foundation year of HEIs by type



## How are students distributed?

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of students across the two HEI categories of the Finish HE system. It can be seen that Universities - while accounting just for around one third in terms of the number of institutions – enroll almost half of the total students at Bachelor and Master levels (49%), and naturally all PhD students (given that universities of applied sciences are all non PhD awarding). Looking at Master students enrolment (excluding Master long degrees), Universities account for almost 80%, while for Bachelor students, around 60% are enrolled in Universities of Applied Sciences. Master students long degree are exclusively subject to Universities.

Figure 2. Students by level and type of HEI, 2019



Note: Total students include ISCED 6-7

## Academic personnel and financial resources

As illustrated by Figure 3, in the year 2019, Universities account for more than 70% of financial revenues and academic personnel of the whole HEI system, i.e., substantially more than their share of total students. This broadly corresponds to the fact that Universities also have an important research function. This difference is also reflected in the composition of revenues, where Universities receive a large proportion of revenues from the core budget and (research-related) third-party funds. Overall, state allocation remains dominant for all institutional types in Finland; student fees are not at stake.

Figure 3. Resources, academic personnel and total students enrolled by type of HEI, 2019

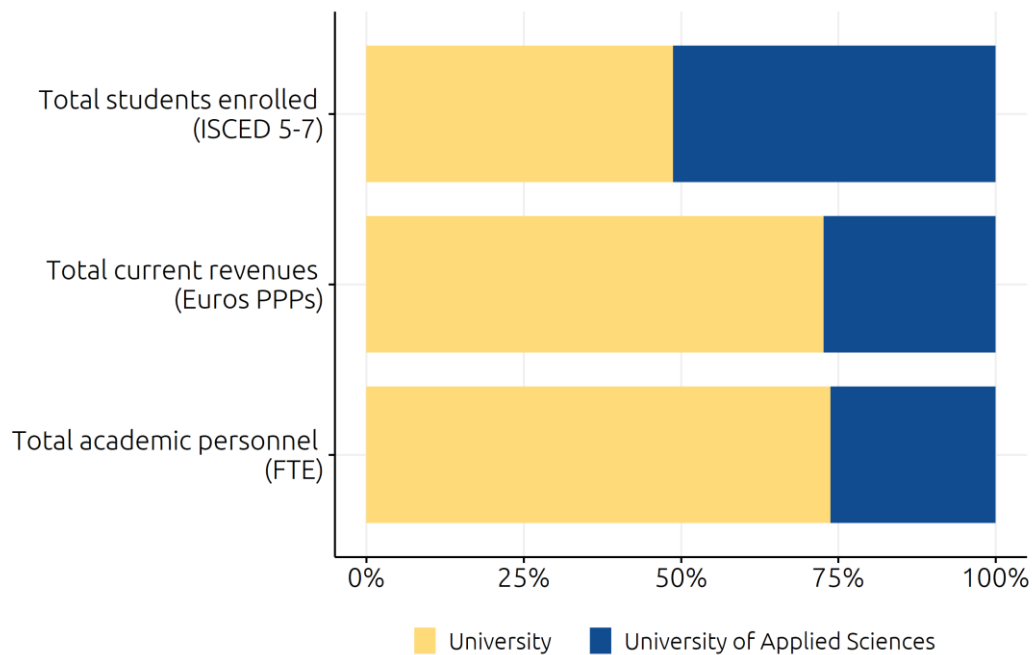
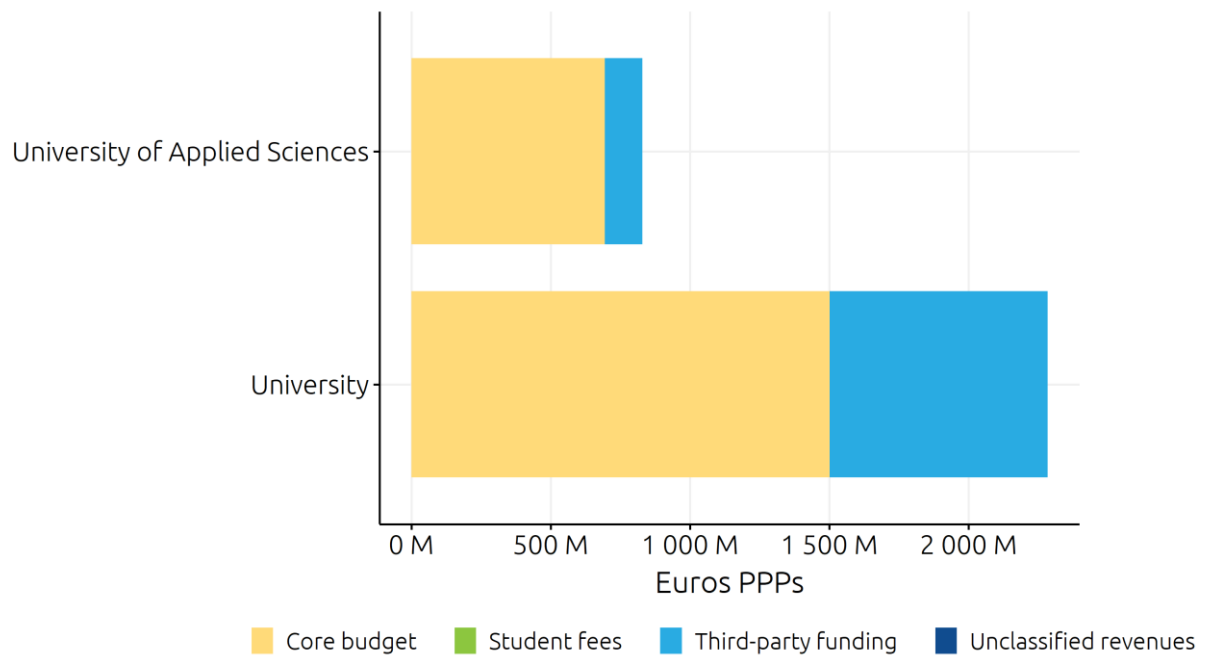


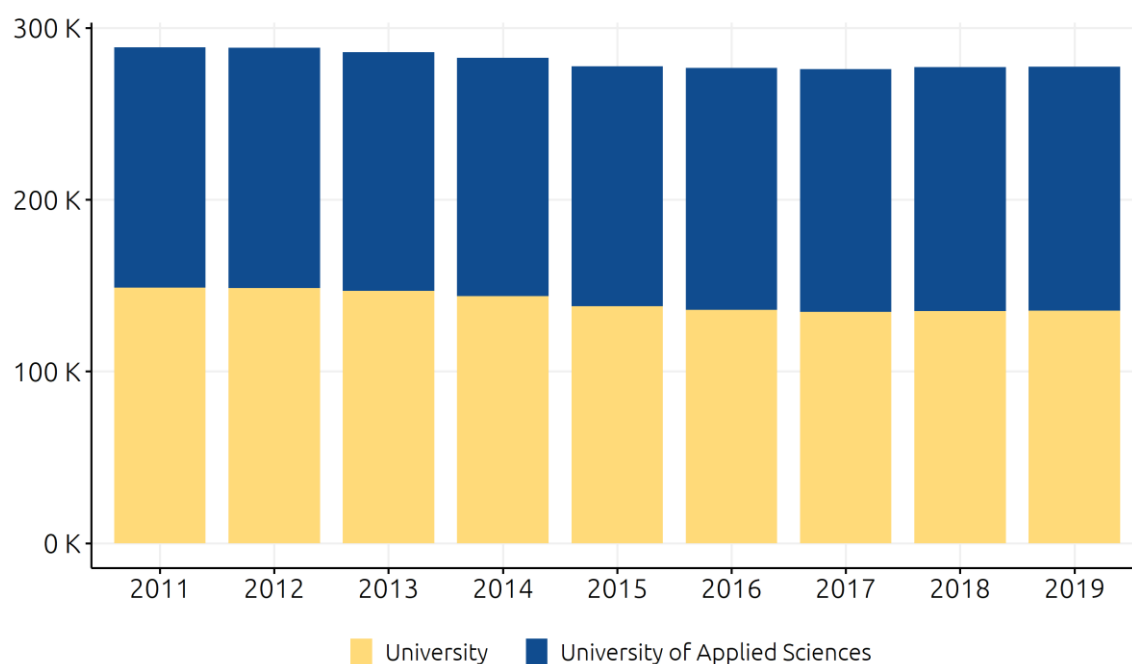
Figure 4. Composition of resources. Universities (Yliopisto) and Universities of Applied Sciences (Ammattikorkeakoulu)



## Changing roles over time

When observed through the lens of the number of students, data show a rather stable pattern over the observed time period, with just a slight decrease of total students from 2011 until 2017, and a stabilization and minor increase after 2017. The distribution between Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences is also just subject to very minor changes, in particular after 2015 (from 2011 to 2015 the share of universities slightly decreased).

Figure 5. Share of students enrolled by institutional type



*Note: Until 2013 the official translation for Ammattikorkeakoulut was Polytechnics institutions instead of Universities of Applied Sciences*



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