

Summary: Review and Barometer 2025 of the Field of Education and Research

This publication consists of two parts: a barometer and an industry review. It has compiled some highlights from various statistics. The highlights are mainly compiled from statistics compiled by Statistics Finland (<http://www.stat.fi/>) and OECD (<https://stats.oecd.org/>).

THE KEY RESULTS OF THE BAROMETER

General overview

The barometer data was collected via a form from private education providers and early childhood education and care providers. Each organization received a unique link, and a representative was asked to assess past and future developments (positive, no change, negative) against specific criteria. The balance figure was calculated by subtracting the share of negative assessments from the share of positive ones, showing the percentage point difference between positive and negative responses. This time, responses were received from 122 organizations (about 26 percent) between October 17–29, 2025.

The general outlook for the sector has more often been perceived as deteriorating rather than improving over the past 12 months. The outlook for the next 12 months remains negative, though less so than in the previous period. The outlook is considered worsening across all forms of education except general education, where it is viewed as neutral.

Number of students

Organizations have more frequently experienced growth in student, pupil, or child numbers than declines during the past 12 months. For the next 12 months, student and child numbers are expected to grow in 39 percent of organizations and remain unchanged in 54 percent. The number of international children has decreased in early childhood education, while growth has occurred and is expected especially in universities of applied sciences.

Of all respondents, 36 percent report that the need for starting places or daycare spots has increased during the past 12 months, and 35 percent expect this need to grow in the next 12 months. About 50 percent believe the need has remained and will remain unchanged.

Funding

Among respondents, 44 percent estimate that total funding has remained unchanged, and 33 percent that it has grown. In vocational education, more respondents report that funding has decreased than increased. Fewer expect total funding to decline in the next 12 months, especially in vocational education and basic education in the arts.

Public funding has developed strongly than expected. However, vocational education has seen the anticipated decline. Except for higher education and general education, expectations for public funding are weakening, particularly in vocational education.

Number of employees

Of respondents, 34 percent report that their staff numbers have grown in the past 12 months, and 25 percent that they have declined. Growth has been more common in higher education, general education, and early childhood education. In liberal adult education and basic education in the arts, staff numbers appear to have continued declining, and in vocational education, they have generally turned downward.

Expectations for staff reductions over the next 12 months are not as common as a year ago, especially in liberal adult education and basic education in the arts. In vocational education, the decline is expected to continue. Universities expect staff numbers to keep growing.

The number of international staff has grown in all forms of education over the past 12 months except basic education in the arts, where it has remained unchanged. The number of international staff is expected to grow, especially in higher education.

Financial situation

Of respondents, 41 percent had a surplus in their latest financial statement, 24 percent broke even, and 35 percent had a deficit. Expectations are weaker than actual results, especially in vocational education and basic education in the arts. Early childhood education appears to struggle most clearly with profitability.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INDUSTRY REVIEW

In addition to the themes discussed above, the barometer also surveyed internal cooperation within the sector and with other industries, recruitment challenges, investments, and education exports.

The industry review highlights recent statistics on education providers, funding, and staff, students, access to studies, study progress, graduate employment, educational attainment, and R&D&I activities. At the end, four recent studies on education and research activities are presented.

At the end of 2024, 844 education providers were operating 3,104 institutions. Education employed 193,000 people, accounting for 7.4 percent of the workforce. Private education providers employ about one-third of education staff.

Currently, public investment in education is just over 5 percent of GDP and 9.9 percent of total public spending.

In 2024, more than 1.4 million students participated in degree-oriented education. The number of foreign students has been growing rapidly, reaching 133,500 in 2024 (9 percent of all students).

Based on statistics, about 2.5 million Finns participate annually in degree and adult education. Including other forms of training and informal learning, such as individual lectures, more than half of Finns engage in education each year.

In 2023, 0.7 percent of those completing basic education did not apply for further studies immediately. Seven percent did not continue with degree-oriented education. In spring 2023, 77 percent of new graduates applied for further studies. However, 65.5 percent did not continue in degree-oriented education in the same year they graduated. In the 2022/2023 academic year, 6 percent of students discontinued their studies and did not immediately continue in degree-oriented education.

At the end of 2024, 3,616,700 people aged 15 or older had completed a qualification beyond basic education, which represents 75 percent of the population. In 2022, 1.5 million people participated in adult education, nearly every second person aged 18–64.

University research expenditures have more than doubled since the early 2000s. Growth slowed between 2010–2016 but resumed in 2017. In 2024, university research spending exceeded €2.1 billion, with 45 percent from the state budget and 53 percent from other external funding.

Overall, R&D spending totaled €8.9 billion in 2024, representing 3.2 percent of GDP. Sixty-two percent of companies reported engaging in innovation activities during 2020–2022.