

Educational scientists and employment

Topical information about the employment
and pay of educational scientists
as well as support for job seeking and
development of expertise during studies



Experts and Managerial Professionals

Introduction

This handbook provides topical information about the employment and pay of educational scientists working as specialists as well as their opportunities for competence development during studies. The handbook also contains concrete advice for career planning and job seeking.

Specia wishes you success at work and in studies. We are here to help our members at different stages of study and work and encourage everyone to approach work with an open mind.

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Workplace competence of educational scientists

Educational scientists are well prepared for work, with their general academic skills and broad-based competence ensuring good employability in the continuously changing work environment. Educational scientists who are already active in the workplace emphasise their substance competence, including oral and written interaction skills, the ability to plan and carry out teaching and education as well as project management and information seeking skills. The competence of educational scientists is also apparent in team work and collaborative tasks and when confronted by unexpected problems. The goal of this handbook is to more concretely depict the field of work and duties of graduates who have majored in educational sciences as well as to highlight the strengths of educational scientists and discuss ways to put these strengths to full use in the workplace and in job seeking. While this handbook mainly targets students in specialist programmes, to keep it simple, we will use the term educational scientist throughout the text.

You do not need to learn everything during your studies – nor is it even possible. Learning is a life-long

process, with your own competence developing as you gain more experience. Your professional networks will expand and your ability to cope with uncertainty will increase as you proceed in your career. However, learning is not a given, since we often find it easier to repeat the same familiar operating models and follow our familiar thought patterns rather than reflect on our experiences and seek new perspectives. In the end, we can all greatly influence the scope of our own learning and development.

The ability to apply theory to practice, manage large amounts of information as well as process and analyse texts are often mentioned as important workplace skills for specialists. Planning and organisational skills as well as IT skills also play a key role. English-language proficiency and a certain degree of communication competence have become something of a default expectation. Business skills are also considered to be important, since the financial considerations often form the basis for planning. ↗



THE COMPETENCE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENTISTS BECOMES APPARENT IN TEAM-WORK AND COLLABORATIVE TASKS AND WHEN CONFRONTED BY UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS.

“Life-long learning skills are the strength of experts in education and adult education. Longer and better careers and the changes affecting work and workplaces call for reflective skills as well as the ability to preserve, nurture and develop one’s capacity for learning, studying and working.”

Educational scientist

“At university, [students] learn skills needed in many different types of duties, without these being specifically designated as employability skills.”

Visa Tuominen, Researcher

Job seeking

As regards educational scientists aiming for specialist duties, identifying one's own competence is one of the main factors influencing employment. To improve your employment opportunities you might consider developing your competence in line with your own interests and objectives. It is a good idea to determine and begin developing your own strengths during your studies in order to build as extensive a competence basis as possible for future employment.

You can begin working on your job-seeking skills when applying for university traineeships and summer jobs. There are specific principles at play when applying for specialist positions. Identifying and describing your own competence is fundamental in this respect. Especially in the private sector, LinkedIn plays a key role in recruitment, so you should also keep social media channels in mind as tools for job seeking. ➤

Key tips for job seeking

CURRICULUM VITAE

Your CV provides the key information about your competence in view of the position sought. The recommended length for a CV is 1–2 pages. List your main competence and strengths, tailored to the specific vacancy, on the first page. Competence can be built at work or, in the case of students, through organisational activities, studies or projects.

Describe your key strengths in a few sentences. Aim to tailor your CV to the job sought. In other words, first bring out your skills and competence that are most essential to the workplace. Also list your language skills, the level of your IT skills and any competence gained through positions of trust.

The CV layout can show personality and stand out from the rest, as long as it is clear and easy to read. This will make a more lasting impression on employers. ➤

“People often wonder whether their thesis is of any use after studies. I believe that the topic of my bachelor’s thesis helped me secure my present job.”

Educational scientist

MOTIVATION LETTER

Your motivation letter supplements and supports your CV. It should not run too long, but should briefly and concisely describe why you are interested in the vacancy and why you are the perfect choice. Bring out your own value and state how your competence, described in greater detail in your CV, can benefit the organisation. You can even provide a demonstration of your competence and motivation in your letter, for example by offering a proposal for development.

The purpose of your motivation letter is to show that you are a knowledgeable, interested and, most importantly, highly motivated applicant. The text demonstrates expertise and proves your familiarity with the field. Include your salary expectations at the end of the letter, but only if specifically requested to do so. ➤

“During a job interview, it is important to show your motivation for the job, to be active and to trust your own competence. Smile and make it clear that you are interested in the job.”

Educational scientist

INTERVIEW

Prepare for the job interview in advance. Read up on the employer, rehearse for the interview and be prepared for an aptitude test. Come up with a few of your own questions. You can take a notebook and pen with you for your own questions and as other support for your thoughts and ideas.

Typical interview questions deal with your strengths and weaknesses and your knowledge about the organisation. Employers are often looking for certain kinds of individuals to form part of the work community, and because of this, good interaction skills are also noted during the interview. ➤

“Keep in mind that the interviewers are not just looking for the most competent applicant but also for an individual who best fits the work community, a good co-worker.”

Educational scientist



Employment

Employability means an individual's ability to find work, remain employed and progress in their career. It doesn't end when you secure a job but is more of a life-long process. Specia's educational scientists see to their employability by participating in training to update their competence, by accumulating diverse work experience and by building networks. A Master of Arts in education is a good foundation for a number of duties, but employers nevertheless consider education to be only one aspect of an applicant's competence. A degree as such does not ensure employment.

In their own words, employers expect educational scientists to show good social skills and learning ability, a developmental approach and insight into human learning. They expect the degree to provide job applicants with the kind of theoretical knowledge that will also help them develop their competence at work. In other words, it pays to show your enthusiasm and ability for development when applying for a job.

Certain positions place emphasis on professional specialisation based on, for example, the applicant's minor studies. According to educational scientists, minors in work and organisational psychology, leadership and management or business are good options supporting employment. Don't forget the importance of IT and language skills in the job market! You can also sell your competence through your own business. Entrepreneurial activities offer many educational scientists the opportunity to apply their competence in the job market. ↗

“My studies provided a good foundation for work. Insight into pedagogy, learning and competence development has been fundamental in my duties. The critical approach gained through studies, as well as the ability to justify my own views and express myself in writing have all been very important skills.”

Educational scientist

Specia supports job seeking

- As a member of Specia, you get personal advice for your CV and LinkedIn profile as well as support for improving your job application.
- Ask about salary recommendations and help for determining your salary expectations.
- You can have Specia review your employment contract before signing it. Our legal services can verify the legality of the contract.

Common job interview questions

- Tell us about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What interests you in our organisation?
- Why are you applying for this job?
- What aspects motivate you in work and life?
- How do you work in teams?
- How can you contribute to these duties?
- What would you like to ask us?

Professions of educational scientists

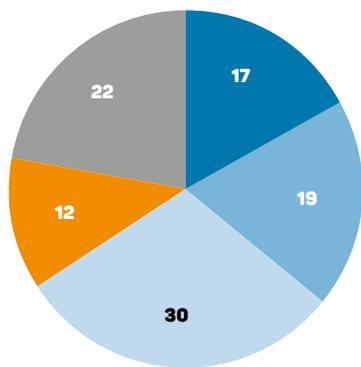
Specia's members find diverse employment in different duties, positions and sectors. Most educational scientists are of the opinion that their job matches their education and that they enjoy their work. ↗

“As a concept, networking may seem overused, but the ability to build contacts and maintain networks is of key importance in many duties.”

Educational scientist

Common professions among educational scientists

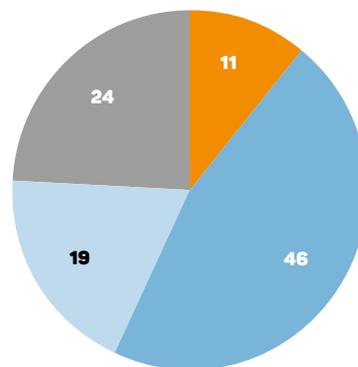
Department secretary | Specialist | Senior planning coordinator |
 Head of administration | Project coordinator | HR director |
 Development coordinator | Head of development | Trainer |
 Head of education | Education planning officer | Head of
 study affairs | Guidance counsellor | Student affairs secretary |
 Head of services | Project manager | Planning coordinator |
 Researcher | Coach |



%

- State
- Municipality
- Private
- Organisation
- University/University of applied sciences

Sectors employing educational scientists.
SOURCE: Puska 2019, 35.



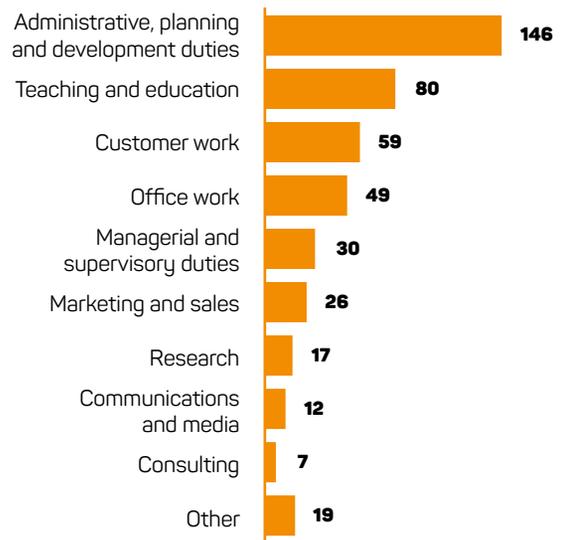
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- Senior salaried employee, managerial duties
- Senior salaried employee, other duties
- Salaried employee
- Employee

Professional status of educational scientists
SOURCE: Puska 2019, 35.

Most common employers of educational scientists

Universities | Universities of applied sciences | Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment | The Ministry of Education and Culture | The Finnish Defence Forces | The Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom | The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare | The Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA | Nokia Solutions and Networks Oy | National Police Board of Finland | Finnish Composers' Copyright Society Teosto | The Ministry for Foreign Affairs | Seure Henkilöstöpalvelut Oy | Finnish Institute of Occupational Health | Lionbridge Oy | Statistics Finland | Finnish Immigration Service | The Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa | The Finnish National Agency for Education | Stockmann plc |



Main duties of Specia's educational scientist members (n=219) SOURCE: Puska 2019, 37.

"EXPERTS ARE NEEDED!"

"Educational scientists create future work cultures. We need experts who support the interdependence and interaction of staff as well as the responsibility of individuals for both their own and their community's learning. Specialists in education and adult education know to ask how learning is supported in the workplace. They are familiar with the education system and the opportunities it offers and they understand administrative routines as well as development projects." **Educational scientist**

Salary

The salary for work must always match the complexity of duties performed. A fair and just salary level motivates employees and signals appreciation of their work. Salaries are based on collective agreements concluded between trade unions and employers. In addition, salary levels are influenced by work experience, the organisation's size and ability to pay wages, as well as the job grade.

Job applicants are often asked about their salary expectations during the job seeking process. This offers applicants the chance to show their familiarity with the field and job description as well as their appreciation of the work they do. If the complexity of duties increases, so must the level of salaries. You can consult your trade union to determine a realistic salary level.



Salary income of educational scientists, %
SOURCE: Puska 2019, 31

Specia has issued recommendations for minimum salaries in the private sector regarding employees with a Master of Arts in Education. The recommended minimum salary is based on the complexity of duties, which are grouped into expert duties, demanding expert duties and executive duties. The criteria used include the competence required for the duties, the scope of duties, the responsibility involved in the duties and the independence of decision-making. The higher cost of living in the Metropolitan Area has been taken into account in the recommendations. Salaries are based on monthly pay and a 37.5-hour working week. For employees with a Bachelor of Arts in Education, the salary is no less than 90 per cent of the minimum salary of those holding a Master of Arts in Education. ➤

Specia's minimum salary recommendations as of 1 May 2019

Helsinki Metropolitan Area (Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Kauniainen)	
• Expert positions	€2,847–€3,374
• Demanding expert positions	€3,245–€4,026
• Executive positions	€4,474–€5,116
Rest of Finland	
• Expert positions	€2,704–€3,206
• Demanding expert positions	€3,086–€3,825
• Executive positions	€4,255–€4,866

SOURCE: Salary recommendation of Akava Special Branches and Specia – The Experts and Managerial Professionals Association. Educational scientists. 2018.

“Five years after graduation, those who had completed a generalist degree had a stronger belief in their career progress and opportunities than those with a professional degree and they were often better paid than the latter – once their career got going.”

Visa Tuominen, Researcher

University traineeships

For many students, university traineeship offers the first work experience required for a university degree. It can also have an important impact on the later career. Traineeships help students create networks, agree on thesis cooperation and boost their future employment opportunities. A university traineeship allows you to identify and develop your own workplace competence. Specia underlines the importance of systematic planning when choosing a traineeship: before applying for a traineeship, first determine what you want to learn and what tasks you want to work with.

In Specia's view, students must always receive a salary for their traineeship. This means that they are in an employment relationship and clarifies their rights and responsibilities. Unpaid traineeships do not create an employment relationship, which means that the trainee is not protected by labour legislation or collective agreements. The employment contract must be drawn up in writing, and can be submitted to our legal services for review before signing.

The traineeship must match the student's education and be suitable for studies. Trainees have the right to receive adequate supervision and introduction to their duties. In turn, trainees must carry out the agreed duties assigned to them. Trainees may also ask for more responsibility: take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by your traineeship! ↗





“Not only do traineeships promote the transfer into the job market, they also help create networks of contacts, which play a big role in Finnish workplaces.”

Visa Tuominen, Researcher

ASK, CONNECT AND NETWORK!

“Activities in organisations open career paths and help plan the direction of studies. Positions of trust offer students with little work experience the opportunity to learn the communications and project skills needed in expert work. Organisational activities also help students weigh their own interests in the workplace. For example, do their strengths lie in social influencing or in the development work carried out in membership and other organisations?”

Educational scientist

“After your first job in your own field it is easier to secure another job. For many, a traineeship is their first job in their field.”

Visa Tuominen, Researcher

“It’s impossible to single out one best experience from my traineeship. There were so many of them. Perhaps the most important thing I gained was a stronger belief in my competence.”

Educational scientist

Support for career planning and job seeking

Specia offers personal help for changes at work and in the workplace. Members get free guidance related to, for example, job seeking, career planning and professional development. In addition, an occupational psychologist and the union's legal services provide support for workplace challenges. As a member of Specia, you are also entitled to the member benefits and training

offered by the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava) and Akava Special Branches. When in an employment relationship, you are covered by the benefits and services of the Unemployment Fund for Higher Educated Employees (Erko). Read more about member benefits and services at www.specia.fi. ↗



“Entrepreneurship is based on you and your calling. As an entrepreneur, you can put your whole personality to work!”

Educational scientist

“Many of Specia’s members are educational scientists, so I feel the union is the right choice for me.”

Educational scientist



Read more about member benefits and services at www.specia.fi

“Educational scientists have an endless range of opportunities as entrepreneurs, because the world always needs enthusiastic people who offer solutions to the learning and development of people and organisations. To become an entrepreneur, you only need a strong will, courage and the right kind of people around you. Everything else will sort itself out during your journey.”

Educational scientist

“Trade union membership has always seemed natural to me. I prefer belonging to a trade union with many other professionals from my field, good networks, knowledgeable service and useful benefits. Membership in a trade union offers security and information about topical issues related to my profession.”

Educational scientist

Specia offers you support for...

Job seeking

- Job seeking methods
- Job application
- CV
- LinkedIn
- Job interview
- Employment contract

Career planning

- Identifying your strengths
- Objectives
- Making choices
- Entrepreneurship
- Further studies
- Going abroad
- Well-being at work
- Work-life balance
- Mentoring

Professional development

- Career development discussion
- Grounds for a pay rise
- Changing duties at work
- Job enrichment
- Training, workshops and webinars
- Professional community and networking opportunities



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Join as a student member! | www.specia.fi

You can benefit from membership in Specia during your studies: get guidance and advice for your employment contract, career development, pay and other work-related questions. We also offer help with summer jobs and work placement.

What is more, you can begin accumulating your work requirement for the unemployment fund during your studies! Get in touch with us and have our experts review your employment contract before signing it or get advice for putting the finishing touches on your CV.

It is also important to build networks and get acquainted with professionals in your own field. Our free training and other events are ideal opportunities for this. Our wide range of member benefits, including leisure accident insurance and passenger insurance, is also available to students. Also take a look at the numerous handbooks and guides available on the membership pages of Akava Special Branches. They include, among other things, models for testimonials and employment contracts as well as information about rules and practices in the job market and salaries in different fields.

Specia has over 7,000 members. Over 1,400 of them are students. Specia represents the interests of people who work in specialist and supervisory positions as well as students studying for a master's degree in the Arts or Education. Specia is an affiliate of the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals AKAVA and the largest member organisation of Akava Special Branches.

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