

## Talentia Union of Professional Social Workers' educational policy program

Talentia Union of Professional Social Workers promotes and protects the professional and wage interests of over 26,000 highly educated professionals in the field of social work, social welfare and early childhood education in Finland.

Talentia Union of Professional Social Workers has released its first official educational policy program. The Finnish higher education system consists of both universities and universities of applied sciences, and social welfare professionals graduate from both institutions. The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira) grants the right to practice social welfare as a licensed social welfare professional upon application and in accordance with the Finnish Act on Social Welfare Professionals.

In its new policy program Talentia demands, for instance, that the professional titles of Finnish social welfare professionals are clearly defined and used in the field and that all specialists in the field have the opportunity for continuous learning.

The main goals of Talentia's educational policy:

- High quality higher education requires sufficient core funding. In Finland, the Parliament decides on the amount of core funding allocated by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the two types of higher education institutions in Finland: universities and universities of applied sciences.
- A national research project is required to develop higher education for social welfare in Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences.
- The number of students accepted to study social work in Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences must correspond with the need for social welfare professionals in the field.
- Education must support proper career development in the social welfare field.
- At the moment, social welfare professionals have various job titles. These job titles should be standardized as professional titles.
- Employers must allocate more funds for the development of employees' competence in the field.
- Professionals who have completed professional specialization education must be better recognized in the field.
- Well-being at work and occupational safety must be included in all social welfare degree education.
- Employers must invest in their employees' possibility to conduct social welfare research alongside work.

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