

[Home](#) > ... > [Training, Judicial Networks and Agencies](#) > [Training of Justice Professionals](#) > [National Training Systems](#) > [Initial Training of Lawyers In The European Union](#) > Finland

# Initial training of lawyers in the European Union

Content provided by:  
Finland



Finland

## General description

The Finnish legal system does not include a monopoly on attorneys-at-law. The term lawyer refers to a person who holds the degree “Master of Laws” or equivalent studies that are recognised by the Finnish National Agency for Education. All lawyers can work as legal professionals giving advice on general legal matters. The three different types of legal professionals (attorney-at-law, public legal aid lawyer, and licensed legal counsel) are capable to represent their clients at court.

Attorney-at-law or attorney (in Finnish *asianajaja*, in Swedish *advokat*) is a lawyer who is a member of the Finnish Bar Association. The member prerequisites include four years of overall experience working as a lawyer, of which two years has to be experience related to the work of attorney-at-law, passing a bar examination and overall suitability for the profession. Attorneys-at-law are capable of representing their clients in all matters in Finland. Attorneys-at-law are constantly supervised in all their actions.

Public legal aid lawyers (in Finnish *julkinen oikeusavustaja*, in Swedish *offentligt rättsbiträde*) are government officials working under the so-called six legal aid and guardianship districts in Finland. Public legal lawyers have the responsibility to represent their clients in all matters they are assigned via their district. A contingent of public legal aid lawyers are also attorneys-at-law. Public legal lawyers are bound to exercise the same code of conduct when acting on their job as government officials (and so forth working with their client assignments). However, the obligation is limited to their role as a public legal lawyer and working on a client assignment by the legal aid and guardianship districts.

Licensed legal counsels (in Finnish *luvan saanut oikeudenkäyntiavustaja*, in Swedish *rättegångsbiträde med tillstånd*) are lawyers who are not members of the Finnish Bar, but who have obtained a license to practice law in front of the Courts (and therefore are capable of representing their clients in all matters). This license is admitted by a governmental agency operating under the ministry of justice. Licensed legal counsels are obliged to similar (but not the same) ethical standards, which are directly written to the law (Licenced Legal Counsel Act 715/2011). It is worth noticing that licensed legal counsels are only bound by these standards when they are acting as counsel on an assignment that is related to a “legal dispute” as it is further specified in the law. The supervision of all three categories is assigned by law to the Disciplinary board operating under the Finnish Bar Association.

Attorneys-at-law have an obligation to maintain their professional competence: they are *obligated to obtain continuing education* for 18 hours each year.

Is initial training offered, if yes is it compulsory?

Yes, there is. It is compulsory (University degree - lawyer -> Bar Exam - Attorney-at-law).

In order to become an Attorney-at-law and a member of the Bar you have to take part in and pass all three parts of the Bar Examination - one of them is a written exam. The Finnish Bar Association is responsible for organising

the Bar Examination and the initial training that comes with it for graduated lawyers (University degree).

Does initial training differentiate between categories of trainees, e.g. for in-house lawyers and advocates?

There are no different categories based on the background of applicants attending the Bar Exam or the Ethical part. In the trial part of the Bar examination groups of the registered trainees are created based on the experience (years) of the trainees.

Which entities are responsible for organising initial training?

Universities are responsible for the education and training for the bachelors and master's degree on the field of jurisprudence (lawyer).

The main responsibility for the initial training related to the bar examination is with the Bar Examination Committee that is operating under the Board of the Finnish Bar Association (FBA). The FBA coordinates and executes all three parts of the Examination at least twice a year. There are over 100 experts taking part in renewing and digitizing (mainly) the Finnish examination into practise. The FBA has a lawyer, who works as the secretary for the committee, a training specialist, who coordinates the practical execution of the Bar Examination and an Examination coordinator.

What is the statutory basis for initial training?

For the Bar examination: [The Finnish act on advocates, 3 § 2.](#)

The amount of trainees taking part in the Finnish Bar Examination:

2019: 1011

2020: 1109

2021: 1158

## Access to the initial training

Are there conditions for accessing the training?

The bar examination: Must have completed the Finnish bachelor's degree on Law (or equivalent).

What is the main recruitment procedure? If it is competitive - who runs it?

Not competitive, because the FBA is the only one running it

- [Web page](#) (Finnish and Swedish), [in English](#)
- [An event & training calendar](#) (Finnish, registration forms in Finnish and Swedish)

A Training specialist with a Training & Examination coordinator and a communication specialist run this together under a Communications director.

Are there alternative access routes to the training?

N/A.

## Format and content of the initial training

What is the duration and time frames of the training?

[The Bar examination](#): The duration differs for different parts of the examination:

[The ethical part \(Finnish & Swedish\)](#): 2 weeks online.

**The trial part (Finnish & Swedish):** The tasks given to the trainees are divided over a three-month period online. In addition there are two training dates for each participant: 1 day trial training in groups led by lawyers and judges taking place through online meeting and 1 day all together in a training center in Helsinki.

**The Bar exam (Finnish & Swedish):** 3,5 hours online.

**How is the training organised?**

Bar Examination: The FBA coordinates this. Over 100 professionals take part in delivering The Bar Examination training & exam for hundreds of trainees.

**Who are the trainers?**

Full time professionals in their field, mainly lawyers but also judges and professors. Usually they have experience in the training of lawyers and/or are specialised experts in the matters they are providing training for.

**What is the content and objectives of the initial training?**

The Bar examination: Training content and objectives are set differently for each subsection of the training and are predefined by the Bar Examination Committee. [Read more online.](#)

**Who designs the initial training programmes?**

The Bar Exam: The examination committee and the staff of the Finnish Bar in cooperation with the trainers.

**What methodology is used for the training?**

Written examination, lectures, essays, discussions, group work, pair work, interactive videos, panels, plays, workshops and voting.

**What practical elements of the training are applicable to the trainees?**

Bar examination: The trainees go through a “mock-trial” and have to simulate many other practical elements during their training in the trial part of the examination.

**How are trainees evaluated/assessed? How often and by whom?**

Bar examination: Subsections are evaluated and assessed by the secretariat of the Bar Examination Committee.

**Are there any training activities carried out in conjunction with other legal professionals? If yes: How does it work?**

Yes, with judges, prosecutors, professors and lawyers. These work really well and give deeper understanding of processes & possible challenges and views of trainees work.

**What are the specificities regarding, for example, EU law training and European components, participation in CCBE/others activities and linguistic training?**

Bar Examination: The EU law part is included as a lecture and interactive test through lecture.

Linguistic view: The Finnish Examination parts and all of their content & communications are in Swedish too. While studying in Finnish the trainees will also acknowledge the linguistic reality and deepen their Swedish skills on the legal terminology and vice versa.

**How many trainees are accepted for training? Are the numbers of trainees adjusted annually and by who?**

Bar examination: All registered trainees that meet the criteria are accepted, no limitations. The amount of registered trainees and trainees who get their Bar Examination certificate (all three parts passed) has risen every year for the last 2 years. (2019: 285, 2021: 347)

## Termination of the initial training and qualification process

Does the initial training conclude with a final exam? How is it organised? Who is responsible for the exam?

Yes, one part of the Bar Examination is the written test. You need to pass the test and two other parts of the Bar Examination in order to get the certificate. The written test is organised online (3,5hrs) and the material for the test has to be available for the participants at least 2 months before the test online ([Current material](#)). The Bar exam is organised in Finnish and in Swedish by the Finnish Bar Association and the FBA is solely responsible for it.

Is there a further recruitment procedure to become a lawyer upon completion of the initial training?

Regarding the trainees taking part in the Bar Examination, there is a strong incentive to become an attorney-at-law as they are usually employed by the Law firms that highly value members of the bar.

The FBA as an organisation doesn't perform any specific recruitment procedures after the initial training related to the bar examination is completed. However the branding (Bar Examination, communication, social media visibility, magazine Advokaatti, Journal Defensor Legis etc) of the FBA plays important role in the image of attorneys-at-law & recruitment to becoming a member of the Bar.

---

■ Last update: 04/03/2025

The national language version of this page is maintained by the respective Member State. The translations have been done by the European Commission service. Possible changes introduced in the original by the competent national authority may not be yet reflected in the translations. The European Commission accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to any information or data contained or referred to in this document. Please refer to the legal notice to see copyright rules for the Member State responsible for this page.