1. National laws, regulations and policies establishing norms and standards for quality of education

- Basic Education Act (628/1998)
- Basic Education Decree (852/1998)
- General Upper Secondary Act (629/1998)
- General Upper Secondary Decree (810/1998)
- Government Decree on the General National Objectives Distribution of Lesson Hours in Basic Education (referred to in the Basic Education Act)
- National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004
- National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Education 2003
- Quality Criteria in Basic Education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010)
- Government Programme, 22 June 2011
- Development plan for Education and Research 2007 – 2012

2. Norms and standards and minimal requirements, with regard to the following:

a) **School infrastructure**

The Basic Education Act (628/1998) states that a pupil participating in education shall be entitled to a safe learning environment. The principle of the neighborhood school is applied in Finland, meaning that the municipality indicates the closest school to the pupil. The parents can, however, choose another school for their child, not indicated by the municipality. The National Board of Education gives recommendations in matters concerning the construction of school buildings.

b) **Class size and pupil-teacher ratio**

Class size and pupil-teacher ratio is not provided for by law in Finland. In the quality criteria drawn up by the Ministry for Education and Culture there is a recommendation on class size for grades 1-6 (20-25 pupils). The average class size in 2010 was 20 pupils. In grades 7-9, the typical class size is about 17 pupils.

c) **Teacher qualification**

Teacher competencies are provided for in the Decree on the qualification requirements for educational staff (1998/986). The minimum qualification requirement for all teachers is a Master's degree.

d) **Working conditions for teachers and their professional development**

The majority of the working conditions are decided on in a working condition agreement between the employer and the employee (KVTES - The general municipal collective bargaining contract and agreement). In the agreement the responsibility for professional development on the part of the employer is also agreed upon. The Ministry of Education and Culture allocates in its budget a sum of money for teachers’ professional development. The National Board of Education and the Regional State Administrative Agencies distribute this allocated money. Each year the topical issues and objectives in professional development are also defined. Furthermore, subject teachers’ associations and other organisations organise in-service training.

e) **School curricula content and pedagogical materials**

The Government decides on the subjects to be taught and on the distribution of lesson hours (1435/2011). The National Board of Education draws up the National Core Curriculum. The education providers (for the most part, the municipalities) draw up local curricula based on the National Core Curriculum. It is the education providers that decide on the pedagogical materials used.

f) **Teaching-learning processes**

There is no separate legislation concerning the teaching-learning processes in Finland. The teachers are free to choose which teaching methods and practices they use, as long as the objectives and contents of teaching are based on the National Core Curriculum.

g) **School management, including student and parent participation**
The municipalities decide independently how the schools are managed. The schools have board of directors, who decide on the annual plan. The municipalities decide how issues concerning management are organised. Issues concerning student and parent participation are stated in the Basic Education Act and in the Upper Secondary Education Act.

h) Methods to evaluate student performance and assess learning outcomes
The education providers are obliged to carry out evaluations. The Ministry of Education and Culture has a national evaluation plan, where the subjects for evaluation are defined. These evaluations are based on samples. The teacher assesses the scholastic success of the pupils/students. To support the teachers, the evaluation criteria are drawn up by subject in the National Core Curriculum.

3. The institutional mechanism used to collect and process information and to assess adherence to norms and standards established to ensure quality of education

There is no school inspection system in Finland. The education provider is obliged to make sure that the regulations and the curriculum are being followed. The education providers answer to the Regional State Administrative Agencies. As a base for funding and costs, Statistics Finland gathers municipal and school information on a national level.

4. Other relevant initiatives and developments aiming to promote quality in education

There have been several initiatives and developments to promote quality in education in Finland during the recent years, like the organisation of Flexible Basic Education, further development of club activities, reducing class-size in basic education, KiVakoulu - an anti-bullying programme, development of instruction in foreign languages, quality criteria in basic education, developing guidance counselling in general upper secondary education, developing the use of IT in the matriculation examination, developing student welfare and developing intensified and special support in basic education.