

**DEVELOPING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF POTENTIAL  
INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS AND STUDENTS OF HÄME UNIVERSITY  
OF APPLIED SCIENCES**



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This research was conducted to develop the recruitment process of students of international degree programmes of Häme University of Applied Sciences, HAMK. The aim was to identify the phases of the application process, find out what are the strong and weak points of it and detect ways to improve the process. The goals of the improvements are to enhance the engagement of the applicants to the process and to increase the number of foreign students at HAMK. The commissioning party of the thesis is Strategic Communications of HAMK, and the set goals are based on the vision which was published along the HAMK 2030 strategy in 2019. According to the vision, HAMK will increase the number of foreign students by 76 % by 2030.

The recruitment process was inspected as a service process and the theory of Service design was used as the base of the study and development guide of the service. Service blueprint was used to identify and visualise the phases of the process and the activities and stakeholders involved. Two surveys, one for foreign first-year degree students and another for international education agents were conducted to collect information about customer experiences of the application process. Value Proposition Canvas was partly completed to recognise the applicants and students tasks and intentions, HAMK's services that make it possible for them to complete the tasks, challenges that applicants and students might face when carrying out the tasks and possible solutions and ways to prevent such situations.

The outcomes of the research are the visualisation of the recruitment process with applicants' and students' steps and tasks, employees', and other stakeholders' onstage and backstage actions as well as the technology involved. According to the student and agent survey, the recruiting process has many phases and services that the respondents are satisfied with, but there are also areas that need improvement such as instructing and supporting in residence permit and accommodation application and in registering to Finnish Population Information System.

According to the Value Proposition Canvas it is recommended for HAMK to ensure that all information needed in the application process is easy to find, clearly written and examples are available if needed.

Keywords Student recruitment, Process development, Service design, Service blueprint

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## Contents

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2	HÄME UNIVERISTY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND ITS DEGREE STUDENT APPLICATION PROCESSES FOR INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS .....	2
2.1	Häme University of Applied Sciences .....	2
2.2	Application process .....	4
2.2.1	Joint application .....	5
2.2.2	Separate application .....	9
3	PROCESS DEVELOPMENT WITH SERVICE DESIGN AND VALUE PROPOSITON CANVAS.....	11
3.1	Process and Process Management .....	11
3.1.1	Process .....	11
3.1.2	Process Management.....	13
3.2	Service design.....	14
3.2.1	Components of Service Design .....	15
3.2.2	The general principles of service design .....	17
3.2.3	Service design process .....	19
3.2.4	Double diamond structure .....	20
3.2.5	Divergent and convergent thinking and doing .....	21
3.2.6	Phases of the Design process .....	21
3.3	Value Proposition Canvas .....	25
3.3.1	Fitting the value proposition and customer profile .....	27
4	RESEARCH .....	27
4.1	Used research tools.....	29
4.1.1	Preparation research.....	29
4.1.2	Service blueprint .....	30
4.1.3	Surveys .....	32
4.1.4	Value proposition Canvas.....	34
5	RESULTS .....	35
5.1	The results of the student questionnaire .....	35
5.1.1	Respondents.....	36
5.1.2	Searching for information about HAMK .....	39
5.1.3	Application .....	46
5.1.4	Entrance examination .....	49

5.1.5	Acceptance information and confirming a study place .....	52
5.1.6	Tuition fee and residence permit matters .....	56
5.1.7	Getting started as a student .....	60
5.1.8	Accommodation and registration to the Finnish Population Information System.....	66
5.2	The results of the agent questionnaire.....	76
5.2.1	The sources of information and communication.....	77
5.2.2	Application .....	83
5.2.3	Information provided to accepted students.....	89
6	CONCLUSIONS .....	98
6.1	Replying to research questions.....	98
6.2	Suggestions for the future .....	103

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Service blueprint

Appendix 2 Questionnaire for students

Appendix 3 Questionnaire for agents

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The idea of this thesis is to study and improve the recruitment process of potential international degree applicants and students of Häme University of Applied Sciences, HAMK. The commissioning party, the Strategic Communications of HAMK, is hoping to find ways to increase the engagement of potential international applicants and students to the recruiting process of international degree programmes in order to increase the number of applicants taking a study place at HAMK. They also requested that the thesis would concentrate on customer perspective in the recruitment process. The goal of the commissioning party is based on the vision which was published along the HAMK 2030 strategy in 2019. According to the vision, HAMK will have nine English-taught bachelor-level degree programmes by the year 2026 and 2000 international students by 2030. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2019.) In the beginning of the academic year 2019 HAMK started its eighth English-taught degree programme and the number of foreign students is 477 (present in spring 2020) which means that the number of degree students recruited outside Finland should increase by 1523 students which makes 76 per cent. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2020-a)

The recruitment process is inspected as a service process and the theory of Service design is used as the base of the study and development guide of the service. Thus, the goal of the thesis is to study the recruitment process, identify the weak points of it and define ways to improve the process in order to engage the potential applicants and students to it and increase the amount of international degree students at HAMK. Besides looking for the frail points of the process, the thesis also studies what parts of the process the applicants are satisfied with.

The goals of the research and development activities are to get familiar with the student recruiting process, recognize the points or phases that the applicants and students are satisfied with or are not and get development suggestions to enhance the service. The research is conducted in the form of two quantitative virtual questionnaires: one targeted to the international students that have already gone through HAMK's recruiting process and have

started their studies at HAMK and another one to the education agents that HAMK is doing cooperation with.

The key research question of the research is How to improve the international student recruitment process of Häme University of Applied Sciences to increase the number of prospective students taking a study place at HAMK?

Besides the main research question, the aim of the research is to find answers to following questions:

- What are the phases of the student recruiting process of international degree students at the moment?
- What are the weak points of the process?
- To which phases or activities of the process the customers are satisfied with?
- How can the process be developed with Service Design theory?

The key concepts of the thesis are international degree student recruitment, service process, process development and service design.

## **2 HÄME UNIVERISTY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND ITS DEGREE STUDENT APPLICATION PROCESSES FOR INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS**

### **2.1 Häme University of Applied Sciences**

The target organisation of the study and the commissioner of the thesis is Häme University of Applied Sciences, HAMK. HAMK is described as a multidisciplinary, workplace-orientated higher education institution. It provides education in 27 bachelor's degree programmes, 10 master's degree programmes as well as in professional teacher education in its schools of bioeconomy, wellbeing, technology, entrepreneurship and business, and professional

teacher education. Eight (8) of the degree programmes are conducted in English. On top of that, HAMK offers continuing and further education as well as educational products for the global market. HAMK has around 7800 students and 670 employees and is the 8th largest university of applied sciences in Finland. Besides Finnish students, it has foreign students from around 65 different countries. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2020-b) In Spring 2020, there were 477 foreign students with a present status at HAMK. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2020-a)

HAMK became a limited liability company in the beginning of 2015 and the shareholder municipalities of HAMK Ltd include Hämeenlinna, Hattula, Forssa, Riihimäki, Valkeakoski and Tammela. HAMK also has two subsidiary companies: Häme Vocational Institute offering vocational upper secondary education and Häme Summer University providing open university-level education. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2020-b)

Internationalisation plays an essential role in education, research, and development activities in HAMK. According to HAMK's strategy 2030, internationalisation along with competence, knowledge, entrepreneurship and cooperation are the most important building blocks of the significant and influential university of applied sciences. HAMK has global networks and is committed to its partnerships. In the strategic alliances and networks HAMK implements joint research and renew education. HAMK is part of the international Beyond alliance with two other higher education institutions: Feevale University in Brazil and Via University College in Denmark. HAMK is also a member of the Regional University Network (RUN), which includes eight European universities of applied sciences. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2020-b)

HAMK has international degree students among Finnish students in its nine (9) English-taught degree programmes creating multicultural learning environments in seven campuses. The Bachelor's degree programmes conducted in English include Information and Communication Technology, Bioeconomy; Construction Engineering; International Business; Smart and Sustainable Design; Computer Applications; Electrical and Automation Engineering and Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-g) The ninth English-taught programme is a master-level degree

programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-a)

According to the vision, HAMK will have nine English-taught degree programmes by the year 2026 and 2000 international students by 2030. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2019.) At the moment (statistic from spring 2020), HAMK has 477 students with foreign nationality which means that the number of degree students recruited outside Finland should increase by 1523 students which makes 76 per cent. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2020-a)

Besides degree students, HAMK welcomes exchange students to all the degree programmes from its partner universities each semester. International approach is also induced in the pedagogical solutions of all study modules and each HAMK student will complete an international project during their studies. The international elements as well as competence-based curricula and the work-based projects in studies ensure that HAMK's graduating students have the needed competences and skills for the fast-changing society locally and internationally. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2020-b)

## **2.2 Application process**

The aim of the thesis is to study HAMK's recruitment process of international prospective students. In the student's point of view, the recruiting process is an application process. Because of that, the application processes shall be introduced. Instead of one process there are several application processes to HAMK: joint application, separate/ direct application, application based on open studies and transferring from another Finnish university of applied sciences. (Studyinfo.fi, n.d.-a; Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-b) However, as Joint application and Separate application are considered as the main ways to apply to HAMK, the commissioner of the thesis asked to concentrate on them. Because the entrance exam is conducted virtually in direct application, it is recommended for the prospective applicants living abroad (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-h).

### 2.2.1 Joint application

In joint application it is possible to apply to up to six (6) study programmes with one application. The degree programmes can be from one or several different higher education institutions. The joint application is arranged three times a year and two of them have study programmes in English: one in spring and one in autumn. The third one, arranged in spring, offer study programmes only in Finnish and Swedish. (Studyinfo.fi, n.d.-a)

According to Studyinfo.fi web page, in the joint application that was arranged for English-taught study programmes in spring 2020, applicants did not have place the degree programme options in order of preference and it was, thus, possible that the applicants were offered several study places from which they were able to choose the study programme they wished to confirm. On the contrary, in the joint application arranged in autumn 2020, the applicants had to arrange the study programmes in order of preference, and they were offered only one study place according to the order of preferences and the points. If all study places are not filled during the primary application round, a supplementary application round may be arranged. (Studyinfo.fi, n.d.-a)

The steps of joint application in spring 2020 are as follows. Application period starts in 8th of January and lasts until 3 pm (Finnish time) on 22<sup>nd</sup> of January. Application form is filled at Studyinfo.fi web page. Application instructions are available at HAMK's web pages and at studyinfo.fi web pages. (Studyinfo.fi, n.d.-a; Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-b)

Required enclosures must be downloaded to the application by 29<sup>th</sup> of January. Required documents include the copy of the certificate of previous studies and an official (with signature and stamp) Finnish, Swedish or English translation of the certificate in case the certificate is not written in one of these languages. An applicant is eligible for a bachelor's degree programme at a university of applied sciences if s/he has completed a Finnish general upper secondary school syllabus and/or the Matriculation Examination, International Baccalaureate, German Reifeprüfung or European Baccalaureate Diploma, a Finnish upper secondary vocational qualification (120 credit units) or an equivalent previous vocational qualification with minimum of 80 credit units, a Finnish post-secondary or higher vocational

level diploma, further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification or an equivalent previous qualification or foreign education that provides eligibility to apply for higher education in the country in question. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

If the applicant is a refugee or in a refugee-like situation and cannot prove his/her eligibility with a study certificate, HAMK can consider whether s/he can be invited to the entrance exam. The applicant must prove the refugee status by sending the copy of a document of the status decision provided by a competent authority to the admission services within seven (7) days after the application period has ended. In addition, if the student is not required to pay tuition fees because of being EU/EEA/Switzerland citizen, s/he has to proof the citizenship by enclosing a copy of a passport or an identity card to the application. The attachment must be added to the application within one week after the application period has ended. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

If the applicant has an EU Blue Card granted in Finland or a continuous residence permit card in Finland (type A permit), a permanent residence permit card in Finland (type P permit), an EU Family Member's Residence Card in Finland or an EU residence permit for third-country citizens with long-term residence permit card in Finland (Type P-EU), s/he will also be exempted from paying tuition fees if s/he attaches a copy of one of the mentioned documents to the application. This must be done within a week after the application period has ended. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

In case the applicant needs special arrangements in the entrance examination, s/he has to print, fill and deliver an application for special arrangements to the admissions office of each higher education institution s/he has applied to within seven (7) days after the application period has ended. To prove the need for special arrangements, applicant should add copies of certificates that validate his/her need for individual arrangements (e.g. a doctor's certificate or an equivalent statement on the type of disability/illness at hand or a statement of dyslexia or learning disability) to the application. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

The higher education institution which is responsible for the entrance examination will contact the applicant by e-mail or by post well before the exam date to inform her/him about the practical arrangements. If the offered arrangements are not satisfactory, applicant is guided to contact the higher education institution in question. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

Entrance examination invitations are sent in the end of February and the entrance examinations are informed to be arranged between 31<sup>st</sup> of March and 7<sup>th</sup> of April for different fields of study. Because of the Finnish government recommendations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entrance examinations were conducted online instead of at Hämeenlinna University Centre. The online exam was divided into two parts and the exam dates were different compared to the original plan. The first part, online exam with mathematics, physics/chemistry and motivation questions opened at 10 am (Finnish time) on 6<sup>th</sup> of April and closed at 2 pm (Finnish time). The second part with online interviews was arranged between 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of April. Applicants were invited to both exam parts via e-mail. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

According to the original plan, the exams were planned to arrange physically at the campuses. To reduce the number of exams the applicants have to take part in, many universities of applied sciences do cooperation in exams so that applicant that has applied to more than one degree programme might not have to complete more than one exam. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

Students are selected according to the points awarded in the entrance examination and student selection results are published by 5<sup>th</sup> of June in [studyinfo.fi](https://studyinfo.fi). Admitted applicants are also sent an e-mail about the results and the steps to be taken next. The study place has to be confirmed by 17<sup>th</sup> of July at 3 pm (Finnish time) by using the link included in the message or by logging in to My Studyinfo service (in [studyinfo.fi](https://studyinfo.fi) web page) with online banking credentials, mobile certificate or an electronic ID card. It is possible to confirm only one study place in education that begins during the same academic term. This also applies to study place offered in some direct/ separate application and consequently applicant that has accepted a study place in direct application cannot accept a study place from the joint

application if the study programme begins in the same academic term. When the applicant that is not exempted for paying tuition fee confirms the study place, s/he also to pay tuition fee. In normal situation, the fee must be paid at once and cannot be paid in instalments. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

Because of COVID-19, HAMK made it possible for students to pay their tuition fee in three instalments (10 July, 1 October, and 1 December) for their first year of study. Tuition fee can be paid in bigger instalments or covered fully at once. (Strategic Communications of HAMK, Newsletter, n.d., 2020)

After confirming a study place and paying tuition fee, a student must register him-/herself as present for an autumn semester and a spring semester at studyinfo.fi to keep the study place. It is possible to postpone the start of the studies due to legal grounds for your absence such as military service, parental leave or personal sickness or injury. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

Because of COVID-19, the Finnish government has accepted temporary changes to the legislations of universities of applied sciences and universities. One of the changes concerns the grounds for being absent for the studies. If a student is unable to start his/her studies due to official COVID-19 restrictions or other significant reason concerning, the student can postpone his/her studies. The change is valid until 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2021. (Valtioneuvosto, 2020)

After the student has enrolled for the academic year, s/he will be sent an automated message with instructions to activate a HAMK user account via self-service user registration. Once the account is active, the student can start her/his studies online with *Starter Kit of Digital Skills* course and *Introduction to HAMK Studies* module. The online studies have been developed to help new students to have a smooth start to their studies. (Admissions office of HAMK, Instructions for applications letter, n.d., 2020)

During the first day of studies (at the campus), the student must bring the original certificates along with a passport/an identity card and a residence permit card to proof the copies used in application valid. If the student doesn't show the original certificates by the given date, his/her study place will be cancelled. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-c)

### **2.2.2 Separate application**

In separate or direct application, an applicant applies directly to a certain study programme or a higher education institution and the amount of degree programmes applied is no limited. Depending on the institutions' application procedures, applicant may have to send separate applications for each study programme of an institution or only one application form with several study programmes in one institution. If the student applied for degree programmes of different institutions, separate applications must be submitted. The application periods and application method vary from study programme to another and this is why applicants are guided to check the application instructions of the study programme in question or contact the admissions services of the higher education institutions. Most of the separate applications, however, take place at studyinfo.fi. (Studyinfo.fi, n.d.-b)

The steps of direct application in autumn 2020 are following. The application period will start in 1<sup>st</sup> of October and lasts until 3 pm (Finnish time) on 15<sup>th</sup> of November. Like in the joint application, application form locates at studyinfo.fi web page. Also, the application instructions are available at studyinfo.fi web page and in the web pages of each degree programme at HAMK. (Studyinfo.fi, n.d.-b; Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-d)

Unlike in the joint application, the required documents which are the same ones as in the joint application, must be added by the end of the application period, by 15<sup>th</sup> of November. What is also different compared to the joint application, besides points awarded in entrance examination, students can also be selected by using SAT-test results (excluding the Degree programmes in International Business and Smart and Sustainable Design), school performance in Vietnamese high school or graduation certificate (Bằng Tốt Nghiệp Phổ Thông Trung Học) of all India senior school certificate (AISSC) or Indian school certificate

(ISC). Because of the possible delays in awarding the high school diplomas in Vietnam due to COVID-19, HAMK invites all applicants that are Vietnamese 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to the entrance exam. The applicants that have SAT-test results can choose whether they take the SAT-test or participate in the entrance examination. The English language skills of applicants will be tested in the entrance examinations/ interviews and in the SAT-tests. Thus, applicants applying with SAT-test results are the only ones that do not have to take part in the interview part of the entrance exam. The SAT Test is organized by the College Board and is arranged all around the world on simultaneous test dates. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-d)

Applicants that have submitted the online application and downloaded the required attachments to the application, will be invited to the entrance exams by e-mail approximately one week before the exam. Unlike in the joint application, there will be six entrance exams arranged: one in the autumn and five during the spring. The applicant is invited to the next possible exam after submitting the online application with required enclosures. An applicant cannot choose the exam date by him-/herself. On the contrary to the original plans of the entrance exam of the joint application, the entrance exams of the direct application are organized fully online. Also, the exams are divided into two parts that are arranged in different days: applicants that pass the written part of the exam will be invited to the interview part which is organized in one week after the written part of the entrance examination. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-d)

The steps of confirming study place (by 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, 3:00 pm), enrolling as present for the semester, paying for tuition fee, activating HAMK account, start orientating studies online and showing original certificates are same as in the joint application. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-d)

### **3 PROCESS DEVELOPMENT WITH SERVICE DESIGN AND VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS**

#### **3.1 Process and Process Management**

Because the journey from HAMK's prospective student to a degree student has several steps with activities, it can be defined and studied as a process. Besides multiple steps, it involves many people. Staff of Admissions services, Strategic Communications, Student services, degree programmes as well as guidance counsellors and student affairs secretaries are playing important role in this service path. In addition to the main process, there are also sets of activities or sub processes in which staff members are involved to provide needed information and support in the prospective's journey to a degree student. (T. Kosunen, V. Sciacca and K. Partanen, personal communication, September 9, 2020) In this chapter the principles of process management are discussed to shed light on the possibilities the possibilities to improve the student recruitment.

##### **3.1.1 Process**

Process is a coherent sequence of activities that alter input into output or results. More precise definitions have details of the technicalities of execution and describe a process as a mean to create value. (Lehmann, 2012, p. 83) The purpose of a process is to coordinate the behaviour of people, systems, information, and material to produce business outcomes with a guidance of a business strategy. Processes can have structure and be repeatable or be unstructured and fluctuating. (Integrify, n.d.) In practice processes are about how we do business with customers, partners, and suppliers; how we produce, serve and fix things and how we share knowledge to create new things, make decisions and solve problems. Simply put, processes provide the means to make money and get paid. Innovative leaders and managers see processes as value-adding assets and by differentiating different types of processes they pursue creating competitive advantage. (Lehmann, 2012, p. 83)

Processes that can be used in creating competitive advantage are directly related to the creation of value, support the value creation, help making decisions, control variance and solve problems. This kind of processes can be divided into three general classes: operating, support, and management processes. (Lehmann, 2012, p. 83)

### **Operating Processes**

Operating processes are processes that create, add, or deliver value for customers. The processes include developing, producing, selling, and delivering products and services and are thus designed to carry out the business strategy of an organization. Depending on a strategy, operating processes can include manufacturing products, refining raw material, processing sales orders, serving customers and repair and warranty services. (Lehmann, 2012, p. 83-84)

### **Support Processes**

Support processes include activities that facilitate and assist the execution of operating or management processes. The processes supporting operations could be, for instance, supply procurements, inventory replenishment and machine maintenance. The processes that support management processes are administrative and are usually related to finance, accounting, sales, and human resources. (Lehmann, 2012, p. 84)

### **Management Processes**

The purpose of management processes is to measure and control quality and make sure that the desired outcomes are reached. The management processes help in decision making, controlling variance, and solving problems. They also have an important role in guiding organizational behaviour needed for meeting a strategy. To be successful in maintaining quality and desired outcomes, management processes need to be able to recognize the risks impacting outcome, identify options, make decision and then response. To be able to do this reliably, anticipation, agility and structure are required. Industry leaders have prepared for

this by separating two types of management processes: decision-making and control processes. (Lehmann, 2012, p. 84)

Decision-making processes are management processes that concentrate on defining objectives, comparing alternatives, analysing findings, and reflecting the data on intuitive beliefs. They interpret findings and alternatives to form a conclusion or make a choice of the actions to be taken. The decision-making processes can include, for instance, strategic planning, selecting new suppliers and organizational changes such as acquiring or merging with another organization. (Lehmann, 2012, p. 84)

Control processes are management processes that focus on corrective actions and resolving problems. They monitor performance outcomes by using dynamic sense-and-respond techniques that enable organizations to prepare predetermined responses. Well-designed control processes as well as rules of engagement and policies enable personnel to recognize and compare options, make decisions, and solve problems quickly. (Lehmann, 2012, p. 84)

### **3.1.2 Process Management**

Process Management or Business Process Management (BPM) is a discipline that uses varied methods to determine, analyse, design, measure, improve and optimise business processes (Integrify, n.d.). It is about designing and implementing process structures, building process measurement systems that are reflected by organizational goals as well as managing and supporting managers so that they will success in managing processes (Appian, n.d.). Business Process Management, BPM can also refer to different automation software tools, such as workflow systems, XML Business Process languages and combined ERP systems. With the help of these, the management can control process flows, measure processes, and educate and organize managers so that they can manage processes effectively. Nowadays there are business process management software that have various of tools to automate the whole process management. (Appian, n.d.)

### 3.2 Service design

The commissioners of the thesis expressed a wish that the recruitment process from HAMK's prospective student to degree student would be studied from customers' (applicants' and students') point of view and developed according to the results. The aim is to develop the process to enhance the service experience and engage customers to the process. Because of the customer-orientation and the variety of people involved in the process, service design was selected as the process studying and developing method.

Service design term was created by Lynn Shostack in 1982. Shostack suggested organisations to create better understanding on how the behind-the-scenes processes interact with each other because instead of concentrating on an individual talent and managing only parts of the service, focusing on the process as a whole decreases the vulnerability and increases the reaction time for market needs and opportunities. Sarah Gibbons continues in her Service Design 101 article published in the articles page of Nielsen Norman Group that this is still accurate after twenty years, but nowadays the organisation as a whole is responsible for practicing service design instead of only management and operations. (Gibbons, 2017)

Service design is a process in which the service is studied with a holistic approach including all stakeholders, interactions between them and the material and infrastructure involved. The aim of the service design to study the service and develop the process to create optimal service experience. (Interaction Design Foundation, n.d.) It is also defined as an activity in which the business resources such as people, props (= physical or digital artefacts) and processes of a business are planned and arranged to improve both employee's and customer's experience. Gibbons explains her definition with a restaurant example in her article Service Design 101. The restaurant has a range of employees including hosts, servers, busboys and chefs. Service design observes how the restaurant manages to deliver the ordered food from sourcing to a customer's plate. In between there are activities such as receiving the needed ingredients, processing them by chefs and communication between chefs, servers and chefs and servers and a customer. Each process and player have a role in the process of providing the promise to the customer. (Gibbons, 2017)

Service design offers an approach, method, and set of tools to help an organization to realise its aspirations as well as tools to handle both internal and external challenges. It also offers a perspective to deal with strategic goals as well as operational challenges. The main objective of service design is to solve customer-related challenges, but it also takes the business drivers and the capabilities of an organizations in account. (Reason, Løvlie & Flu, 2015, p. 12) The goal of service design is to make the service meet the user's and customer's needs (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020). The improvement process by service design includes designing, organising, and optimising operations of an organisation to better support customer journeys (Gibbons, 2017).

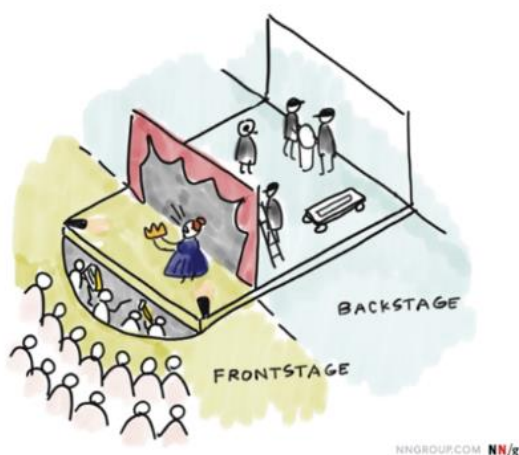
In service design, the development work of services and business operation is human-centric, and the users of the services are actively involved in the process. Service design also utilises creative methods, different visualisation methods as well as quick experiments. Service design processes also include anticipatory planning and it is comprehensive and diversified. Service design can be used in any fields of business and it can be applied anywhere where a service and a human are interacting in a physical or a digital environment. (Palvelumuotoilu Palo, n.d.) It can be used in improving an existing service or creating a whole new service (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020).

### **3.2.1 Components of Service Design**

When creating service design, multiple components must be taken in account in designing process. Besides designing components correctly, they also must be integrated to create a total user experience. Gibbons has defined three main components of service design: people, props, and processes. The first component "People" includes all the stakeholders involved in the service: the ones creating or using the service or the ones that may be affected indirectly to the service. The stakeholders include, for example, employees, customers, fellow customers, and partners. The second component, props, refers to all the artifacts -both physical and digital- that are used in performing the successful service. The Props include, for instance, physical space such as a storefront, a teller window, or a meeting room. Also, digital environments where the service is delivered like web pages, blogs and

social media sites are considered as props. The props also consist of objects such as digital files and physical products. The third component is processes which refers to all workflows, procedures, and rituals that an employee or a user performs throughout a service. This could be withdrawing money from an ATM, getting a problem solved by support, interviewing a new employee, or sharing a file. When using the restaurant as an example, people would include farmers growing ingredients and the managers, chefs, hosts, and servers of the restaurant. The Props could be, for example, the kitchen facilities and tools, ingredients, POS software (system for sales, cashier register, inventory, and customer information) and uniforms. The processes would include activities such as employees clocking in, servers entering orders, cleaning dishes, and storing food. Besides people, props and processes, service components can be grouped into frontstage and backstage components. The service components that can be seen by customers are considered as frontstage and the ones that are not visible for them are backstage components. Gibbon uses theatre performance as an example. The customers or the audience sees everything that is front of the curtain such as actors, costumes and set. What audience doesn't see is that there is a whole lot happening by director, stagehands, lighting coordinators and set designers. (Gibbons, 2017)

Figure 1 Front stage and Back stage (Nielsen Norman Group 2017).



### **3.2.2 The general principles of service design**

The general principles of service design are reflecting the basic requirements of services. The aim of them is to support the development of services which leads to the possibility of delivering high quality experiences to users and customers. When creating services, the service provider should have the comprehension of the purpose and the demand of the service as well as its ability to deliver the service. It is important to keep in mind that the service design should be based on the customer needs, not the internal needs of an organization. Services should also be observed and designed as a unified system instead of separate service components to ensure a satisfying overall performance. To success in this, cooperation of both external and internal stakeholders in service design and delivering is required. An ideal service creates value for its users and customers and is as efficient as possible. To be able to succeed in value creation, it is wise to design and develop services together with the users and customers of the service. Collecting and studying user and customer feedback of a service is also vital. It is also worthwhile prototyping the service before developing it in full. The general principles of service design can be supplemented with the principles concentrating on process design, organisational design, information design and technology design. (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020)

#### **Process Design Principles for Service Design**

When observing and designing service process, it is important to recognise the activities that are failing in adding value for customers. Such activities should be eliminated or at least minimized. Processes should be based on customer needs and if customers have different needs, it is reasonable to have multiple versions of a process. It is however wise to keep the process variation as low as possible. Processes should also be as simple as possible. Process dependencies, for example, process in parallel should be kept to a minimum. The amount of process steps, hand overs, rules and controls should also be kept as low as possible. However, the owner of the process should have control over how the process is delivered. It is important, for example, to prevent process breaks and delays. The Key Performance Indicators for processes should, however, only measure things that matter. Work should be structured around processes, not around internal constructs such as functions, products, or

geography. Work should also not be fragmented unless it is truly necessary. This facilitates accountability and responsibility of an individual and reduces delays and extra work. It also increases creativity, innovation, and ownership of work. It is better to help employees to internalise the process by training instead of offering lists of detailed instructions. It is also recommended to keep controlling and inspecting the process in a low level. (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020)

### **Organisational Design Principles for Service Design**

People have the most important role in service delivery and with some basic principles, organisations can assist them to use their full potential. Work teams should be arranged and placed so that they match the processes and the competencies required. Individual employees should also be given enough freedom to make decisions to enhance the process. Work should be done in a location where it can be completed with the most efficiency. (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020)

### **Information Design Principles for Service Design**

Information flow has also a vital role in delivering high quality services. If people do not receive the information they are supposed to and they are lacking information they need, service suffers. Data should be normalised between the organisation and its customers as well as inside the organization. It should be easy to transfer data inside the organization and between the partners and it should be reusable. It should also be easy to find and when possible, data entry should be replaced by data lookup, selection and confirmation sources instead. (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020)

### **Technology Design Principles for Service Design**

Design principles of technology are used in supporting the service delivery. It is important to realise that technology is used to enable a service instead of being the driver of one. Technology should be adjusted to the service design instead of pushing it into it. The design

of technology should also be sufficiently flexible and agile allowing the fast modifications related to changed customer requirements. (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020)

### **3.2.3 Service design process**

The most successful design processes adapt the problems that are desired to be solved. Selecting and designing the process as well as choosing the right methods and tools for a project can be considered as core skills in service design. There are many process charts and agendas available, but simply copying them is not enough. It is important to select and modify the process according to the people, culture, challenge, the complexity of the challenge and goals of the project. It is also important to take available budget, time, and other resources in account. Because new innovations are launched in rapid phase, industries are continuously facing disturbing changes. Today's business world can be described as VUCA, which is an abbreviation of volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. To survive in the market with continuously changing challenges, a business and its processes must be flexible and the problem solving, innovation, and design skills needed. (Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence & Schneider 2018, p. 82-83)

The service design process is never a linear process. Instead, to be successful, it needs to be adaptive, explorative, and iterative. It consists of a series of continuous, deepening, and explorative loops called iterations. The nature of service design makes it to visualise. Circles have been used to illustrate iterations, but circle demonstrates a linear process as well as after the last phase, the first step is in turn. Consequently, design processes do not proceed in circles in real life. Instead, they continuously move forward and adapt. That is why linear process and tools like checkboxes, task lists or exact and inflexible guides are not useful in design work. As an example, one starts by basic research, then move to ideation based on the earlier findings and continue with prototyping activities. During prototyping s/he finds out that s/he needs more ideas or information and jump back to ideation or research. Meanwhile s/he keeps on iterating through different mix of service design core activities towards prototype point and then into implementation. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p. 89)

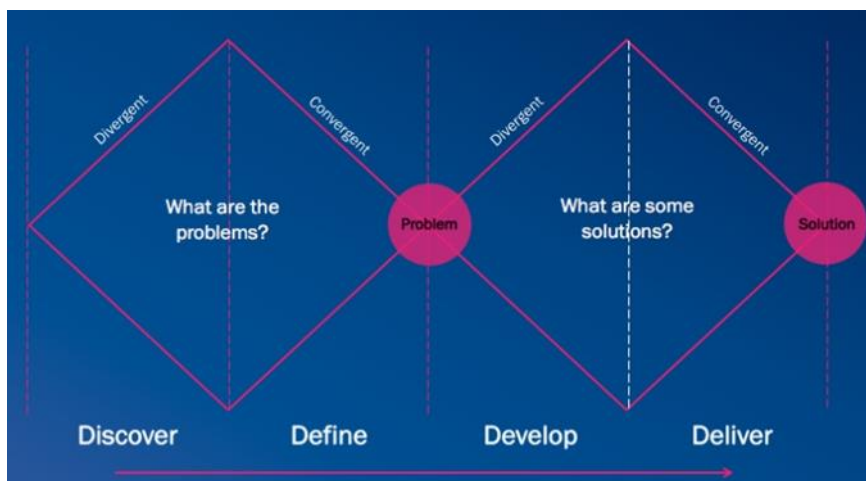
Regardless the designing target, it is always important to understand user needs and have a

repetitive working pattern which include both diverging and converging phases. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p. 87)

### 3.2.4 Double diamond structure

Double Diamond is a design model which was invented by the British Design Council in 2005. It is based on a long study that involved corporates such as Microsoft, Starbucks, Sony, and LEGO. The Double Diamond design model is a system which helps to follow a creative design process. The model is a framework that can be used in a variety of industries. It is a simple tool for designers, and it can be used solving any kinds of problems. (Costa, 2018) The module's structure is used to visualize the approach in which the designing process starts from discovering and defining the problems of a customer and continues with developing ways to solve them and delivering solutions in the end. Double diamond also shows an approach in which problems and solutions are dealt with two types of thinking: divergent and convergent. (Heffernan, 2017)

Figure 2 The Double Diamond (Medium 2017).



### 3.2.5 Divergent and convergent thinking and doing

The base of a design process is the repeating pattern of creating and reducing options. Research activities generate plenty of knowledge which needs to be studied and organised and the key insights shall be selected. In ideation activities many opportunities are created and then the most promising ideas are filtered out of them. In prototyping and implementation phases, potential solutions are being explored and built and then lead through the evaluation and decision-making process. Consequently, the design process is a coaction between divergent phases (searching for opportunities) and convergent phases (making decisions and selecting). Divergent and convergent thinking and doing are considered as the most important patterns within a design process. Divergent and convergent thinking require different skills and even different mindsets. An ideal team for diverging love to create and explore new ideas. The people on the other side, doing converging recognises risks and potential problems. Their task is to estimate, for instance, if the idea is implementable, profitable, legal, and suitable for the values of the company. The team or two sides are called “Yes, and...” (searching and creating new solutions) and Yes, but ...” modes (challenging and reality checking ideas). These two modes and skillsets are equally important and needed in service design. There need to be people with divergent skills creating good deal of base material to have great results and modern and innovative concepts and the team with convergent skills to ensure that the ideas selected are legal, stay within the budget and not too risky. (Reason et al., 2015, p. 84-85)

### 3.2.6 Phases of the Design process

The variety of different design processes have been introduced over the past two decades. Different wordings and number of phases are used, but they share the same mindset and principles of service design. In Double diamond structure, the activities are compressed to four phases: discover, define, develop, and deliver. (Heffernan, 2017). There are also different sets of tools and methods in service design (i.e. customer journeys, service blueprinting, service prototyping) but in the core design process, there are only few differences. (Reason et al., 2015, p. 87)

## **Discover**

In the discovering phase, the aim is to gather information and learn more about the different factors that may have impact on the problem and the possible solutions. At this point it is also important to identify the actual problem or opportunity. Often companies start by introducing their problem, presenting their hypothesis, and defining ways to learn more. (Costa, 2018) In this phase, divergent thinking is practiced. Mind should be kept open and customers should be heard and studied in various ways such as by interviewing, watching them while they are using products and listening. (Heffernan, 2017) According to the study conducted by British Design Council, in the research processes of successful companies, designer teams were closely involved in the research process and had face-to-face contact with the users of the service in question. Starbucks is a great example as their designers must spend a month working as a barista in their venue before designing anything. (Costa, 2018). Being present for customers also helps to build empathy. Empathy maps and customer journeys can be used for documenting what has been learned during this phase. (Heffernan, 2017) In this phase a lot of information is gathered and managing and organizing it well is crucial. (Costa, 2018)

## **Define**

After gathering data in the discovering phase of the double diamond model, it is time for the definition stage. This stage includes filtering and elaborating all the information collected during the first stage. (Costa, 2018) Now the convergent thinking approach steps in again. The activities of this stage could be identifying bottlenecks, resource waste or opportunities. It could also be selecting key areas to be focused on, such as specific experiences in the customer journey, for example, points that dissatisfies customers or phases that delight them. (Heffernan, 2017) It is also important to make sure that everyone involved understand the context of the project and the capabilities of the company: designers must take the finances, resources, logistics and market situation of the company in account before designing anything. Thus, the realism of the potential activities and the suitability of a project to the brand of the organization needs to be assessed. In the end of definition stage, the top management of a company receives the plans and either discards the project or

approves it and gives the budget and resources needed to continue. (Costa, 2018) The first diamond helps to create understanding of what the problem is. It requires speaking and spending time with people who are involved in the service and impacted by the issues. (Design Council, n.d.)

One important goal of design processes is to identify the right problems before starting to solve them. This is to avoid wasting time and other resources and to recognise a problem behind a symptom. Instead of jumping right in, it is recommended to take a step back and make sure the right problem has been identified and understood. It is wise to challenge initial assumptions and find proof for or against them by research. According to the research conducted by British Design Council in 2005 and 2007 on how successful design teams across many industries work, this very approach was followed. The successful teams divide the project into two parts. During the first part they conduct a market, user or design research and study the problem and define the scope for the project. After that, during the second part they start concentrating on solution with multidisciplinary approaches, visual management, prototyping and testing. Once the needed information is gathered and plans made, the new service or product is implemented and launched to the market. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p. 85-86).

## **Develop**

When starting the developing phase, there should be defined problems that need to be solved (Heffernan, 2017). This is the stage where the actual design process starts: creating the solution to the problem defined in phases one and two (Costa, 2018) and where divergent thinking is practiced again. In practice this is ideation with open mind and creating all kinds of ideas without restrictions (Heffernan, 2017). It is recommended to seek inspiration from different sources and involve range of people to do co-designing (Design Council, n.d.). In practice this means putting designers together with different employees of an organization, such as engineers, developers or other departments having expertise and understanding needed in the project. Working in multidisciplinary team, speeds up the problem-solving. As an example, a designer team creates a new product and it has been put into production. At this point the manufacturing plant of the company realises that they

cannot optimally make the new product while working on the older items in the production line. If anyone from manufacturing side would have been involved in the development phase, this would have been noticed. The methods used can be, for example, brainstorming, visualisation and making of different scenarios. No matter the method is used, the goal is to create a prototype and bring the solution for implementation. According to the study conducted by the British Design Council, the continuous testing and feedback are common throughout the development stage in the Double Diamond model. In Microsoft, for instance, the designers are required to use their own creations in their work, so they can be in the shoes of users and get the same experiences as them (Costa, 2018)

### **Deliver**

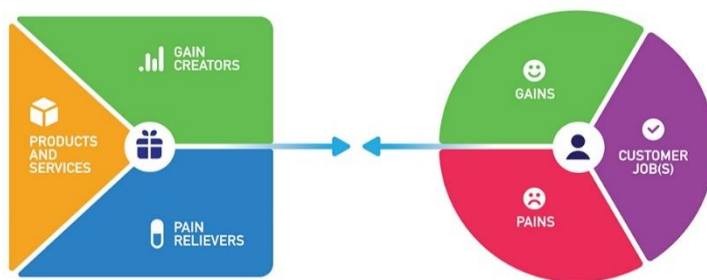
The last phase of the double diamond model, delivering, requires convergent thinking (Heffernan, 2017) and comprises final testing of the design, official endorsement for production as well as launching. The final testing means that product is checked once more to ensure that everything is fine with it. In practice, this usually includes damage and/or compatibility testing as well as making sure that the product obeys regulations and legal standards. (Costa, 2018) This step also involves testing out different solutions at small-scale, then leaving out those ideas that are not working and improving the ones that have potential (Design Council, n.d.).

In this phase the goal is also to find out which ideas for solution can be delivered and most importantly, which of them will solve the needs of the users and customers (Heffernan, 2017). In this stage companies can also assess the impact of the new design on customer satisfaction to measure the value of the new design for the brand. According to the British Design Council's study, all the participating companies found that creating feedback system is very important. This is seen as a vital tool for constant improvement on the product. This also means that designer's job is not completed when the product is launched. Once the product is in use, the designer needs to listen the users and make sure their thoughts and opinions are taken in count when creating an updated version of the design. (Costa, 2018)

### 3.3 Value Proposition Canvas

Value proposition canvas, originally created by Alexander Osterwalder, is a tool which combines the customer segment canvas and value proposition template (Korolev, 2018; B2B International, n.d.). The aim of the canvas is to convey the features and functions that a product should have to meet the requirements of a certain group of customers (Korolev, 2018). Consequently, value proposition canvas is a tool which helps companies to develop products and services to fulfil the needs and values of the potential customers. It can be used in refining an existing product or service or when new ones are created. (B2B International, n.d.)

Figure 3 Value proposition canvas (Railsware 2018).



Value proposition canvas is a sheet with a square on the left side and a circle on the right side. The circle represents the customer profile with tasks and expectations the customers are about to fulfil, and positive and negative experiences related to the process.

Consequently, it deals with the end user's challenges. The circle is divided into three parts: customer job(s), pains, and gains. (Korolev, 2018)

#### Jobs

The customer jobs include tasks, challenges, or aspirations the customers are intending to complete, solve or fulfil. By defining these, the customer segment is observed and defined by emotional, social, and functional perspective. (Korolev, 2018)

## **Pains**

Pains represents negative outcomes and experiences that may occur when trying to get the job done. Because there are different perceptions of negative experiences in a customer segment, it is wise to define as many pains as possible. (Korolev, 2018)

## **Gains**

Gains are things that make customers satisfied and happy and like in pains, there are many different perceptions of experiences that make one satisfied or even happy. Gains are not solutions for pains but the matters that provide positive experiences and delight customers.

The aim of the customer profile is to create understanding of why customers want to complete particular tasks, what causes negative experiences on the way and how to exceed expectations and create positive experiences. (Korolev, 2018) It is advisable to create customer profile for every customer segment as each of them has own gains, pains and jobs. (B2B International, n.d.)

The square represents the value proposition map and deals with a product. It is also cut into three sections that correspond to the customer profile. The focus is in features, functionality, and benefits that the product can offer to attract customers and meet their requirements. The three sections are products and services, pain relievers and gain creators. (Korolev, 2018)

## **Products and services**

The products and services section focuses on what can be offered to get the customer jobs done. The product or service as well as possible versions such as premium and standard should be mentioned in this field. This is, however, not a right place for the list of a product features. (Korolev, 2018)

### **Pain relievers**

The pain relievers section is defining the ability of a product to solve the identified pains on the customer profile. There is no need to write a detailed description on how the pain is relieved. Instead, a statement of the facts decreasing or eliminating the frustration in the process of getting the job done is enough. (Korolev, 2018)

### **Gain creators**

The gain creators' section should include information on extra value that a product or a service provides to customers. The section should be filled with the ideas that offer something new and unique to satisfy and delight customers. (Korolev, 2018)

#### **3.3.1 Fitting the value proposition and customer profile**

After completing the value proposition sections, listed points can be ranked from nice to have to essential in relation to the value offered to the customer. Thus, it is important to get validation of what is important to customers and it is recommended to collect feedback of the value proposition from the customers. The insights can then be used in refining the value proposition. A fit is found when the products and services offered in the value proposition fulfils the most remarkable pains and gains from the customer profile. It is also important to identify the areas where the product or service has competitive advantage and ensure that the value proposition is unique. (B2B International, n.d.)

With this theory base and tools introduced, the process will be studied and developed.

## **4 RESEARCH**

To get understanding of the motives and behaviour of people related to a service or product, research is used. In service design, design team concentrates on the service users and collects information of them to get understanding of their practices and routines. Research is also carried out to find out how customers experience a certain physical or digital product,

service, or brand. Besides inspecting the customers, research is also used to study the experiences and behaviour of employees and other stakeholders involved. Because of this, it is advisable to involve different service users in the research phase as well as into ideation and prototyping later in the process. Design research also provides the team information about unfamiliar area: it enables them to get a picture of an environment in which a service or product is in relation with such as other players, places, processes, platforms and stakeholders and to see how they are in connection. It also makes the team to step away from routines and assumptions and puts them to observe a certain topic with fresh eyes. Research is usually the first activities done in a service design project, but it is also common to jump back from ideation, prototyping or implementation phases to research if new questions appear and require answers. In the beginning it is common to use research in identifying user needs and discovering the gaps in experiences and other problems. In ideation the research methods are used when the ideas are systematically gathered. Research is also used when prototypes are tested and implemented solutions are implemented. Basically, research is used to support decision making in all stages of the design process as it provides real data and insights. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p. 90-91 and 96-97)

Research can be divided into quantitative and qualitative methods. In service design both methods are useful. Quantitative research is usually used for getting insights of experiences by asking questions starting with “what” and “how”, while qualitative research provides insights into motivations and needs of the respondents and the questions often start by “why”. In service research methods and vocabulary are often not defined and might feel vague. People who are used to well-defined quantitative research in a business context might find this type of qualitative research unsafe. Despite this, such approach usually turns out to be very valuable. Insights gained from qualitative research are often more actionable than bare quantitative data as the answers received are to the “why” questions. As a result, new perspectives and nuances arise. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p. 96-97)

There are many data collection methods and often the same method has several different names. The research methods can be divided into five categories: desk research, self-ethnographic approaches, participant approaches, non-participant approaches and co-

creative workshops. The categories are not standardised because, as mentioned earlier, there are many variations and names for each method. Also, the boundaries between the categories are relatively flexible or vague. It is, however, suggested to use at least one method from each category in a research to ensure a good method triangulation. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p. 106-107)

#### **4.1 Used research tools**

Preparation research, Service blueprint, two surveys and Value Proposition Canvas were selected as the research tools of the thesis. The purpose of the preparation research was to get familiar with HAMK's application process for its English-taught degree programmes. The information was collected from the web pages of HAMK and Stuyinfo.fi. The latter web page is where the application form is submitted. Besides studying the process, the researcher got familiar with the application instructions and was able to use the experience when creating questions to the surveys.

##### **4.1.1 Preparation research**

Preparation research is part of desk research and is completed before the actual research starts. Preparation research could include, for example, getting familiar with an industry, an organization, competitors, or similar products. Finding out customer's opinion on what the research problem is also useful in this stage. The purpose of the preparation research is to find the right questions to ask in the actual research. The research activities can contain reading, conducting an internal interview, going through social media, listening podcasts, online videos, and conference talks. The results can be a summation of pieces of texts, mood board or the collection of photos, screenshots, or videos. (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p. 118-119)

#### **4.1.2 Service blueprint**

After getting familiar with the process by the application instructions in the web pages, the application process was moved to a Service blueprint template as a customer journey to create a visual map of the process.

The Service blueprint is a diagram that visualises the connections between different service components and processes that are involved in a specific customer journey (Gibbons, 2017). The customer journey map focus on what customers experience when interacting with a service or business, including specific actions and pain points. With the Service blueprint, it is possible to go deeper and combine the customer's experience with all employee actions and support processes that may or may not be visible to the customer. Because service is such a complex process with several layers and involves number of people and technologies working together, the Service blueprint is a useful tool to visualise it. (Pugh, n.d.)

The Service blueprint template was copied from Lucidchart's blueprint examples to which some modifications were made. The journey was modified and completed with the contact persons of the Strategic Communications (the commissioner of the thesis). The identified phases of the students' customer journey are listed on the table below.

Table 1 Phases of the customer journey

1. looking for information
2. submitting an application at studyinfo.fi
3. downloading required enclosures to an application at studyinfo.fi (if not attached before submitting an application)
4. registering to HAMK's entrance exam platform completing written parts of the examination and taking part of an interview virtually (if not applying with SAT results, International Baccalaureate, Vietnamese High School Graduation Certificate, Chinese High School Graduation Certificate from one the following provinces: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Sichuan, All India Senior School Certificate or Indian School Certificate)
5. confirming a study place at studyinfo.fi
6. paying for tuition fee if not an EU/EEA citizen
7. enrolling as present/absent for an academic year at studyinfo.fi
8. applying for residence permit from the Finnish Immigration Service if not an EU/EEA citizen (activity outside HAMK),
9. visiting at a Finnish mission (embassy or consulate) or a service point of the Finnish Immigration Service (if in Finland) if not an EU/EEA citizen (activity outside HAMK)
10. activating HAMK's user account
11. completing HAMK's orientating modules at Moodle (It is compulsory for engineering students to complete Finnish 1 course before/ in the beginning of their studies, the rest are voluntary for everyone.)
12. applying accommodation (activity outside HAMK)
13. accepting accommodation offer, signing rental contract and paying for a deposit fee (activity outside HAMK)
14. arrival to the campus city/town (activity outside HAMK)
15. taking part in an orientation and showing original school certificates and official translations of them
16. registering to the Finnish Population Information System (Digital and Population Data Services Agency) to receive a personal identity code (activity outside HAMK)
17. starting studies

After the phases of the customer journey had found their places (customer actions), the other stakeholders of the process were added on the map to illustrate the role of HAMK's staff and external players in the journey. This was done with the help of the contact persons of the Strategic Communications as well as the staff of Admissions Services. Due to the

restrictions made due to COVID-19, the meetings and communication were conducted virtually.

On the Service blueprint, the stakeholders are divided into two groups according to the visibility or the directness of the communication with an applicant. The first group is onstage actions, also called visible contact employee actions. The actions are something customers can see or interact with. The actions could, for example, include greeting a customer in a physical location or discussing via chat or e-mail. (Pugh, n.d.)

The second group includes backstage actions or invisible contact employee actions. This row of the template is filled with employee actions and responsibilities which customers cannot see but are needed in the service. These actions could be, for instance, writing content to a website or an e-mail, doing preparations, completing a review, or packaging an order. (Pugh, n.d.)

Besides the customer and employee actions, the template has also rows for physical evidence and support processes. Physical evidence includes locations such as a physical store or a website but also signages, receipts as well as notification and confirmation e-mails. This row is usually filled as the last element in the template. Support processes includes internal or additional activities that support employees in offering the service. These processes include, for example, equipment and software, delivery and payment systems and a carrier service as well as third-party vendors delivering supplies. (Pugh, n.d.)

#### **4.1.3 Surveys**

Once the rows of the Service blueprint template got filled and checked, it was used as an information source for creating questions for surveys for HAMK's non-Finnish first year student's studying in English-taught degree programmes and educational agents helping its customers to apply to HAMK. The purpose of the surveys is to collect experiences and feedback of the different phases of the application process. The surveys are providing quantitative data, but the open questions give the respondents possibility to answer freely and provides some qualitative data as well.

In the service design approach, quantitative research is complemented with qualitative methods. This enables companies to combine understanding of the human experience with predictable patterns that apply to majority of customers. With this combination it is possible to create services that fulfil the needs of customers but also delight and inspire them. (Reason et al., 2015, p. 15)

Market research is commonly quantitative which is based on large number of respondents and the results are statistical “truths” whereas qualitative research concentrates on a small number of respondents yielding deeper insight of the target group. Combining statistical facts with insights about the humans using your service better your chances to achieve success in the market. (Reason et al., 2015, p. 15)

### **Student survey**

After the student survey questions were created and finalised with the contact persons of the Strategic Communications and the final thesis supervisor, an application for permission to conduct research was filled and submitted. The permission was given and list of e-mail addresses of the first-year non-Finnish students in English-taught degree programmes was provided.

When the preparations were ready, a link to the questionnaire with 66 questions (including open questions after certain replies) was e-mailed to 157 students via Webropol survey and reporting tool on 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2020. Reminding messages were sent on 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of December and the questionnaire was closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> of December. The number of respondents is 41 which is 26% of the target group.

The questions of the survey are divided into nine (9) subtopic areas: basic information of the respondent, application instructions and support, application, entrance exam, acceptance information and confirming the study place, tuition fee and residence permit matters, getting started as a student, accommodation and registration to the Finnish Population Information System and arrival to Finland. If a certain set of questions did not apply to a

respondent, for example the one related to tuition fee and residence permit matters, they were asked to jump it over. In the end of the survey it was possible to leave any feedback.

### **Agent survey**

After checking and finalising the questions with the contact persons of the Strategic Communications and the thesis supervisor and receiving the list of e-mails of the agents from the Strategic Communications, the link to the questionnaire with 34 questions (including open questions after particular replies) was sent via Webropol to 118 agents' e-mail addresses on 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2020. Reminding messages were sent on 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of December and the questionnaire was closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> of December. The number of respondents is 18 which is 15% of the contacts receiving the link.

The first question of the survey is about area where the agent represents HAMK. After the first question, the questions are divided into three (3) subtopic areas: sources of information and communication, application, and information provided to accepted students. In the end of the survey the agent is asked to evaluate how their customers' studies have started at HAMK. In the very end it was possible to leave any feedback.

#### **4.1.4 Value proposition Canvas**

Service blueprint was used to identify the phases of the customer journey and people involved in it, whereas Value Proposition Canvas was used to recognise the services offered during the process and challenges customers may face during the steps and possible solutions for them.

With Value Proposition Canvas the customer jobs and pains and their counterparts –products and services and pain relievers were identified. To be able to create gains and gain creators, customer profiles should be available. That could be the next study to be completed in the development work of the recruitment process of foreign degree students.

The phases of the customer journey that were visualised on the Service blueprint can be considered as the customer jobs, also listed to Table 1. Phases of the customer journey. The products and services are the information and support HAMK staff and external service providers offer for the applicants and students so that they can complete the tasks in each step of the journey. As the pains are the challenges that customers may face when completing their jobs, possible challenges in each phase are defined. Besides imagined situations, also open answers of the student and agent surveys were copied to the pains section. As the pain relievers are possible solutions to the challenges, each possible problem should be created cure or preferably a way to prevent the problem. The parts of the value proposition canvas were added to an Excel sheet. The sheet was presented to and modified with the commissioners of the thesis.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 The results of the student questionnaire**

The questionnaire link was sent to 157 non-Finnish students that have started their studies in HAMK's English-taught degree programmes in Autumn 2020 on 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2020. In two-weeks' time, the questionnaire was completed by 41 respondents which is 26 per cent of the students that received the link.

### 5.1.1 Respondents

n=40

Table 2 Home country

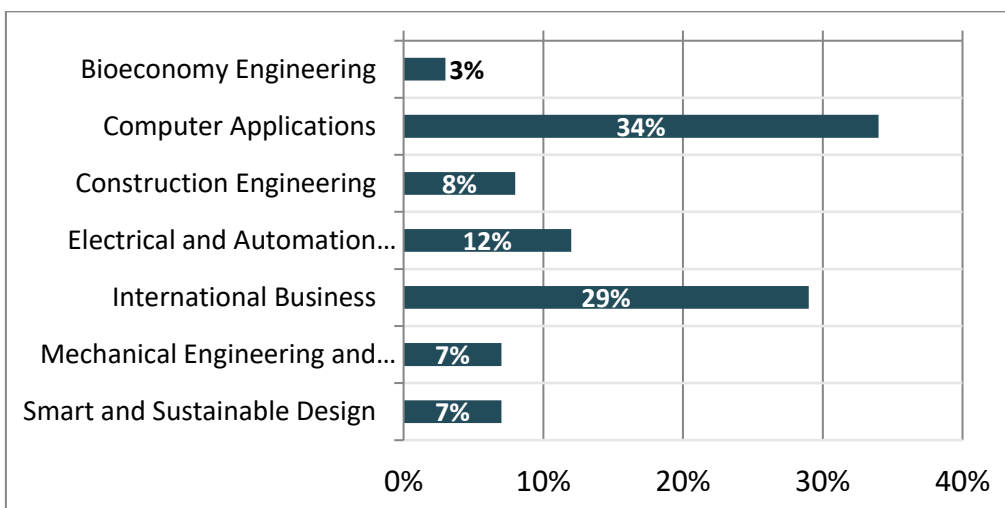
Home country	n	Per cent
Morocco	4	10 %
Estonia	3	7,50 %
Iran, Islamic Republic	3	7.50 %
Slovakia	3	7.50 %
India	2	5 %
Nigeria	2	5 %
Poland	2	5 %
Russian Federation	2	5 %
Sri Lanka	2	5 %
Angola	1	2,50 %
Brazil	1	2,50 %
China	1	2,50 %
Greece	1	2,50 %
Hungary	1	2,50 %
Iceland	1	2,50 %
Jamaica	1	2,50 %
Kenya	1	2,50 %
Kosovo	1	2,50 %
Latvia	1	2,50 %
Mexico	1	2,50 %
Moldova, Republic of	1	2,50 %

Nepal	1	2,50 %
Pakistan	1	2,50 %
Ukraine	1	2,50 %
Uzbekistan	1	2,50 %
Yemen	1	2,50 %

The first group of questions is related to the respondents of the questionnaire. The respondents of the survey (40 responses) are from 26 different countries. The sample of students is diverse and can be considered successful. Four respondents have selected Morocco as their home country. That makes 10 per cent of all the respondents and is the biggest group from one home country in this survey. Slovakia, Estonia and Iran, Islamic Republic have the second most common home countries each with three (3) respondents which is 7.5 per cent of the respondents.

n=41

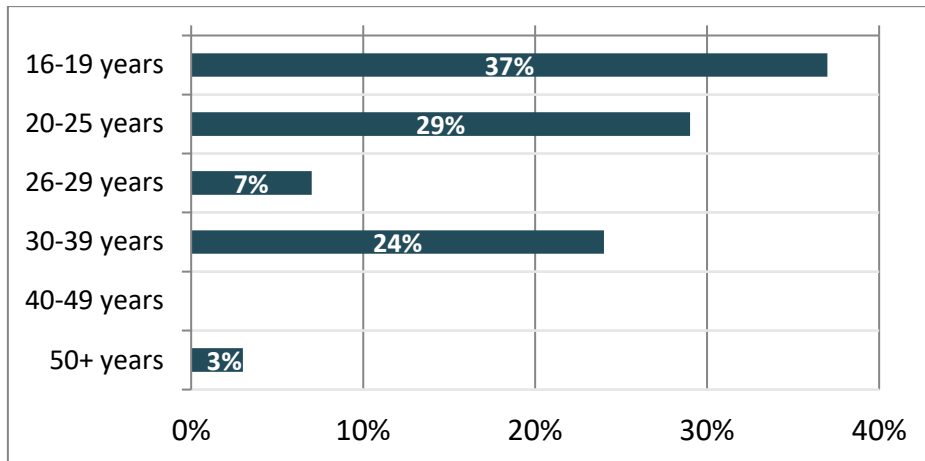
Table 3. Degree programme



The division of respondents according to the degree programme is diversified as majority of the respondents are from two (2) degree programmes, Computer application (14 respondents) and International Business (12 respondents).

n=41

Table 4. Age group

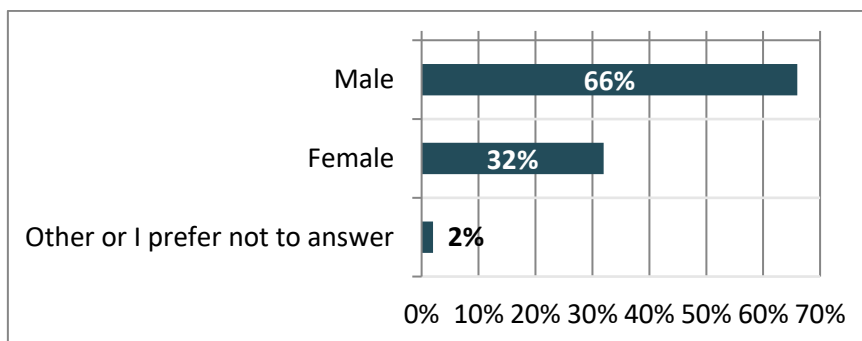


Almost 40 per cent of the respondents of the survey are 16-17 years old. The second biggest age groups are 20-25 years old and 30-39 years old people. Interestingly only seven (7) per cent of the respondents are 26-29 years old.

Almost 70 per cent of the respondents of the survey are male. The reason for that is that majority of students in engineering degree programmes are male and five (5) out of seven (7) English-taught degree programmes are Engineering programmes.

n=41

Table 5. Gender

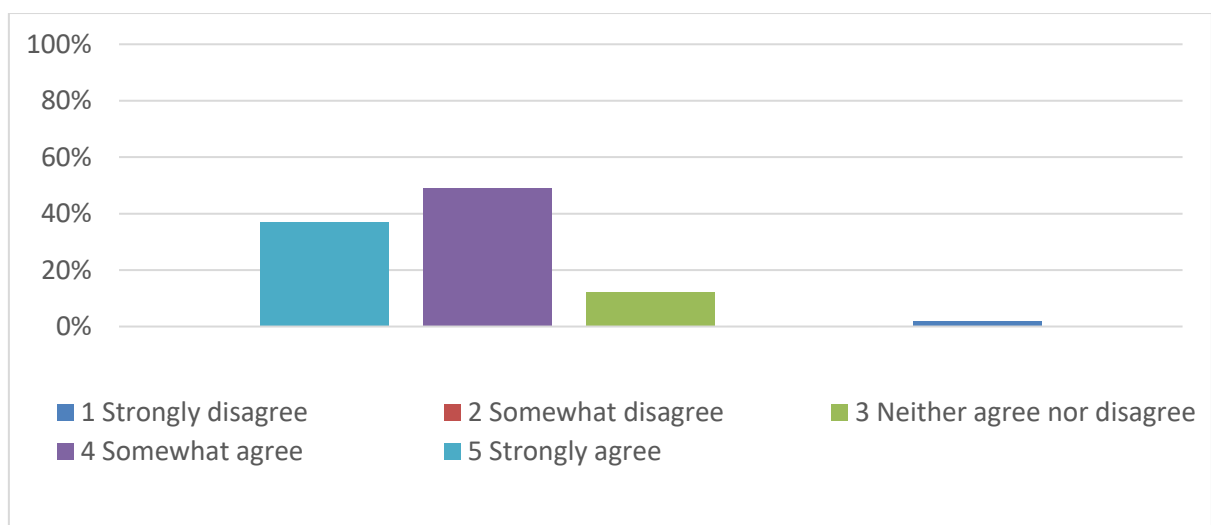


### 5.1.2 Searching for information about HAMK

The second group of questions and results is related to searching for information about HAMK.

n=41

Figure 4. It was easy to find HAMK's application instructions



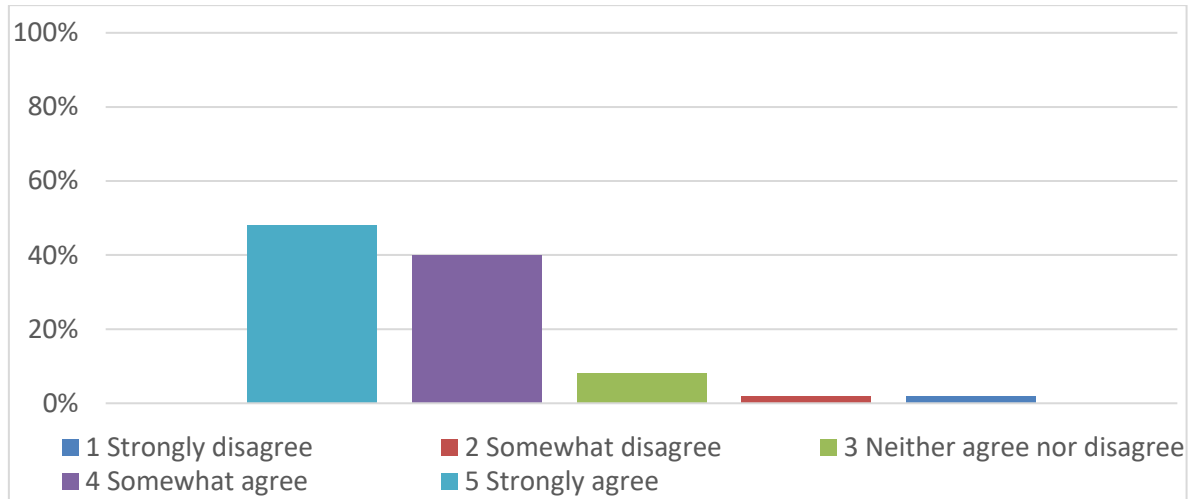
**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to find HAMK's application instructions.

Around 37 per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and almost half of the respondents somewhat agrees on the statement. A bit over 12 per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and only one respondent strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents disagreeing the statement did not leave any explanations to the point *If you disagree, please explain why.*

Average of the results being 4.17 and median 4, it is fairly easy to find HAMK's application instructions, yet there is place for improvement.

n=40

Figure 5. It was easy to understand HAMK's application instructions



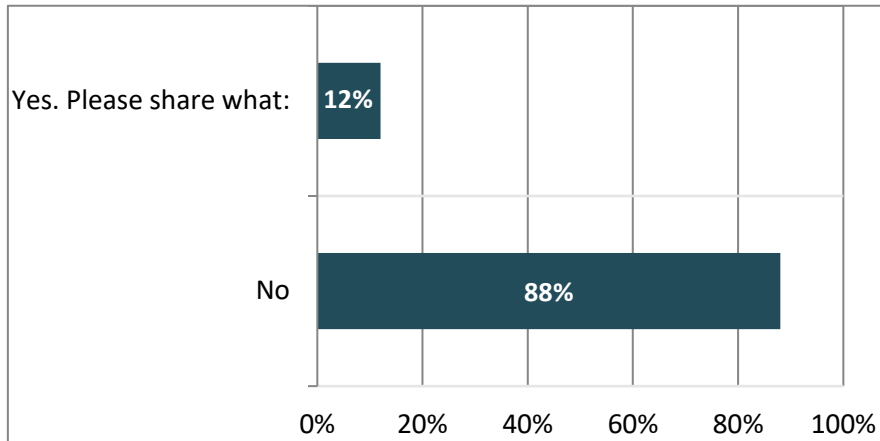
**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to understand HAMK's application instructions.

Majority of the respondents either strongly agrees (47.5%) or somewhat agrees on (40%) that it was easy to understand HAMK's application instructions. The respondents disagreeing on the statement did not answer to the open question *If you disagree, please explain why.*

With average result of 4.28 and median being 4, HAMK's application instructions are easy to understand but there is room for improvement.

n=41

Figure 6. Is there some information concerning application process that you would have needed?



Question: Is there some information concerning application process that you would have needed?

Clear majority of the respondents (88%) replied “No” to the question. Thus, most respondents are found that they had needed information about application process. Twelve (12) per cent of the respondents replied Yes and left following open answers:

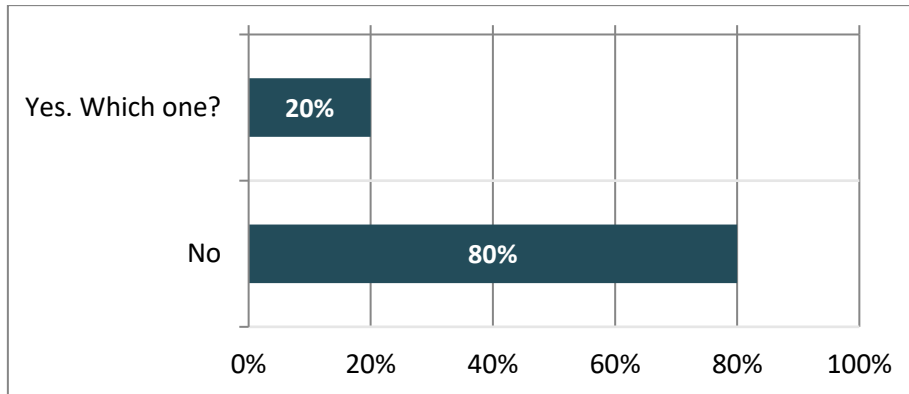
***The mean SAT score I would need to join at HAMK.***

***More detailed information about ability to get financial aid***

***More clear instructions about deadlines and when the studies can be started***

n=41

Figure 7. Were you helped by an international agent?



**Question:** Were you helped by an international agent? (searching for information and in application process)

Fifth of the respondents was helped by an international agent. The names of agents used were given as an open answer:

***Nordic School***

***Bellnor***

***Youssef Hammouch***

***Edunation***

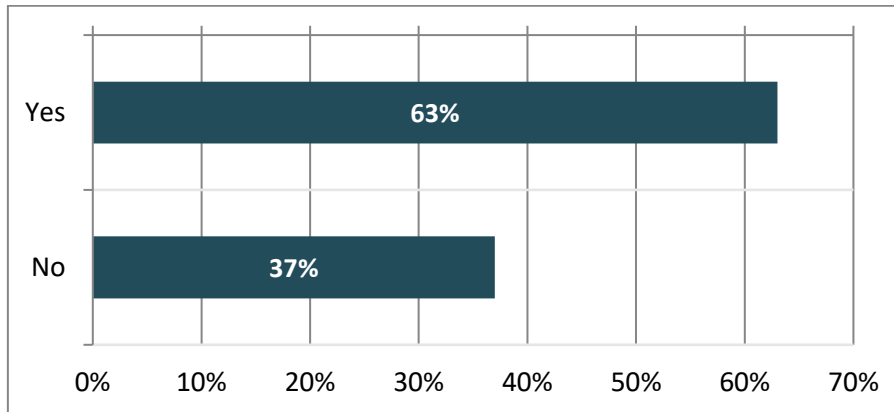
***Interstudy***

***Kastu International***

***Scandinavian scholastic center***

n=41

Figure 8. Did you contact HAMK staff to get more information or help during the application process?

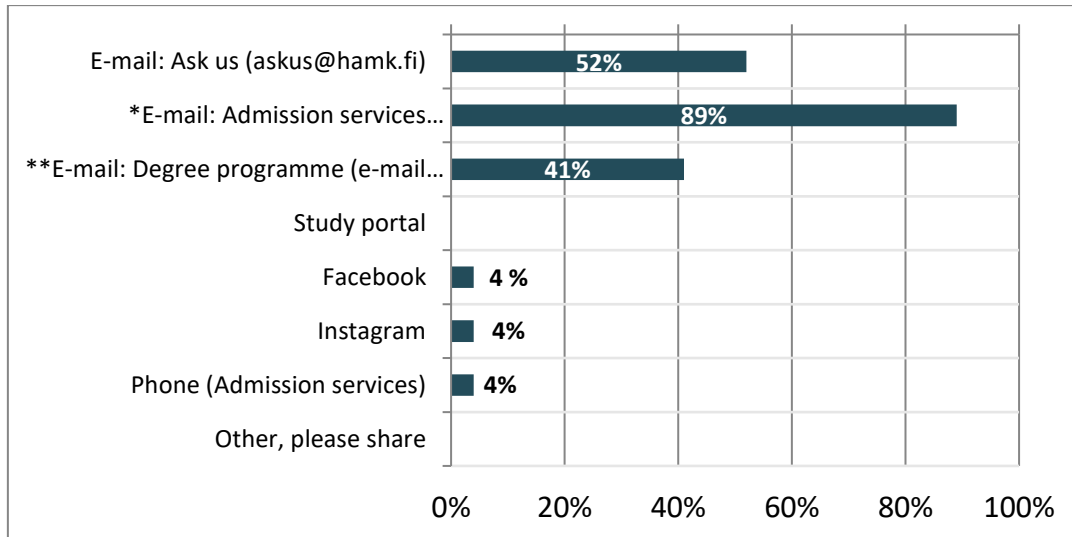


**Question:** Did you contact HAMK staff to get more information or help during the application process?

Over 60 per cent of the respondents contacted HAMK staff during their application process.

Number of respondents: 27, selected answers: 52

Figure 9. Which communication channel(s) did you use?



\*E-mail: Admission services (admissions@hamk.fi)

\*\*E-mail: Degree programme (e-mail address of the degree programme)

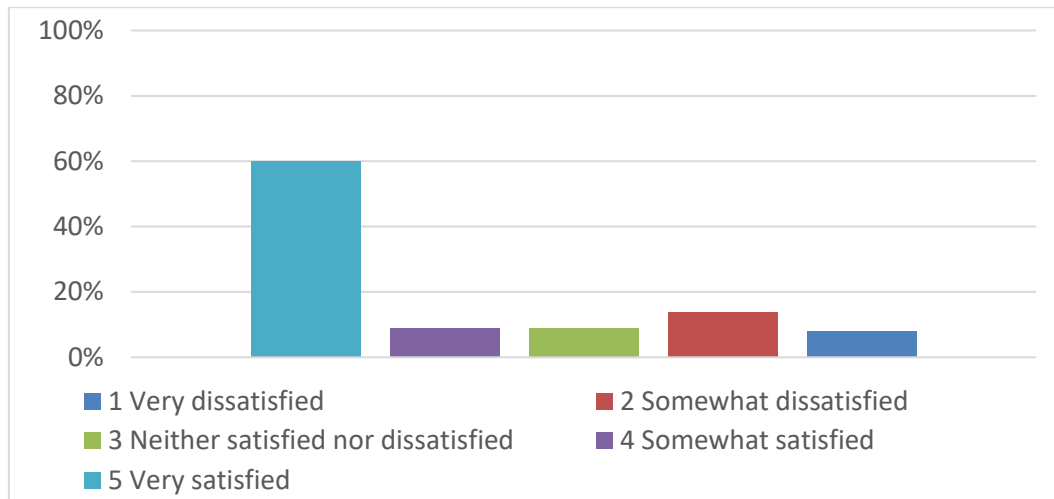
The respondents who were in touch with HAMK staff during their application process were asked to select from the list which communication channels did they use. Respondents could select more than one option.

**Question:** If yes, which communication channel(s) did you use? (choose as many as you like)

Clear majority (89%) of the respondents contacted HAMK's Admissions services by e-mail during their application process. Four (4) per cent of the respondents contacted them by phone. Around half of the respondents were in touch to HAMK staff via HAMK's Ask us e-mail address and a bit over 40 per cent used degree programmes' own e-mail addresses. Facebook and Instagram were both used by four (4) per cent of the respondents. None of the respondents contacted HAMK staff via study portals.

n=35

Figure 10. If you contacted HAMK staff, how satisfied you are with the service you received?



**Question:** If you contacted HAMK staff, how satisfied you are with the service you received?  
(speed of response and content)

Sixty (60) per cent of the respondents are very satisfied and nine (9) per cent somewhat satisfied with the service they received from HAMK's staff. A bit over fourteen (14) per cent of the respondents were somewhat dissatisfied and nine (9) per cent very dissatisfied with the received service. The respondents that are dissatisfied with the service were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. Two answers were given:

***Really late reply and respond.***

***The fees department is very late with the replies and the given email of the fees department is no more working***

### 5.1.3 Application

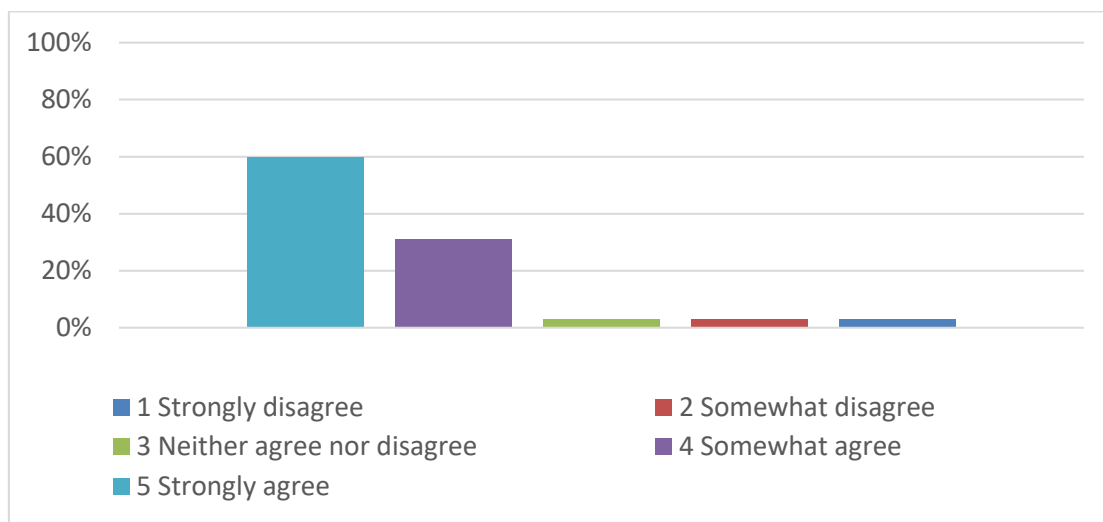
The third group of questions and results is related to application. The first question of this group was accidentally the same as the second question of the previous question group. The question is: What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to understand HAMK's application instructions.

When comparing the results of the two questions, the average stayed almost the same 4.28 -> 4.24 and median remained same (4). The number of respondents is 40 in the first question and 38 in the second one. The latter question got one open answer to the section If you disagree, please explain why:

***It was not clear. it is not explained.***

n=41

Figure 11. It was easy to fill the online application form to HAMK's degree programmes



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to fill the online application form to HAMK's degree programmes.

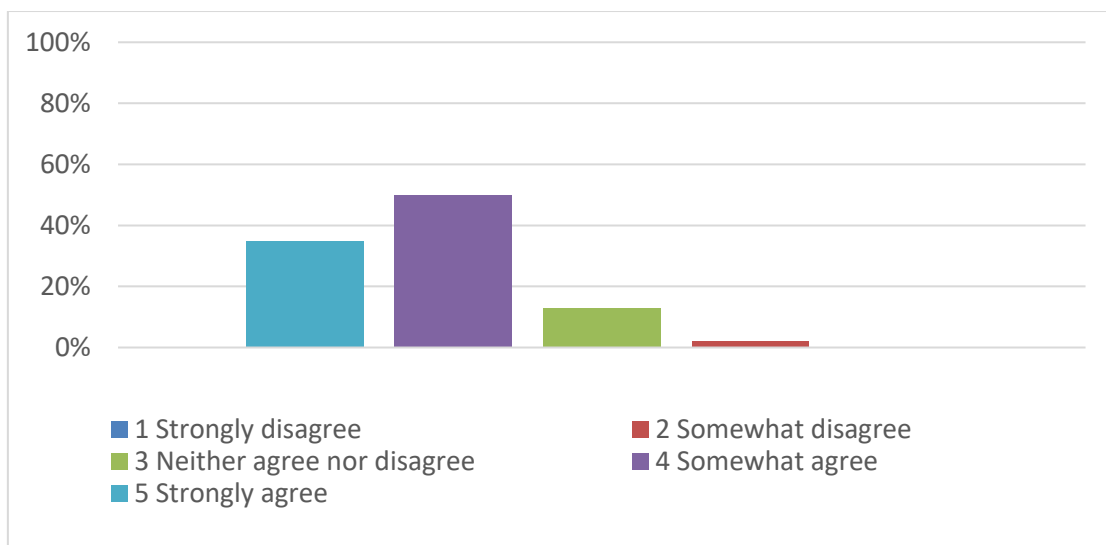
Majority of the respondents either agrees strongly (60%) or somewhat agrees (32%) on the statement. In other words, most of the respondents found it easy to fill the online

application to HAMK's degree programmes. However, some respondents did have challenges with it and gave following open answer:

*i needed to make more than 40 calls to get help on how to open the system*

n=40

Figure 12. It was easy to understand what HAMK's different student selection methods are

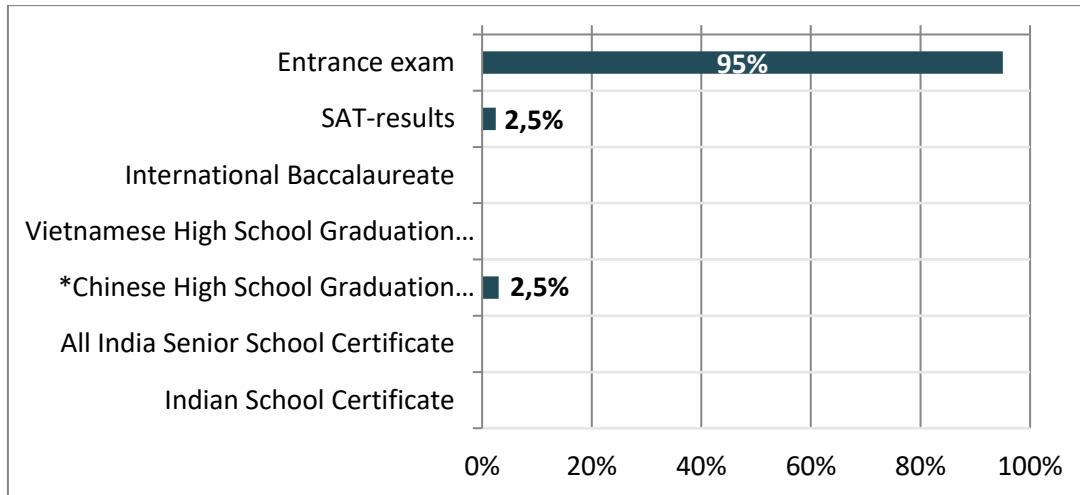


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to understand what HAMK's different student selection methods (points awarded for entrance examinations, SAT-results, defined study certificates+ school performance) are.

Half of the respondents somewhat agrees and 35 per cent strongly agrees on the statement. Twelve (12) per cent neither agrees nor disagrees and only one respondent somewhat disagrees on the statement. Thus, most respondents found it easy to understand what HAMK's different student selection methods are. No open answers were given related to this question.

n=40

Figure 13. Which of the following application method did you use?



\* Chinese High School Graduation Certificate from one the following provinces: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Sichuan

**Question:** Which of the following application method did you use?

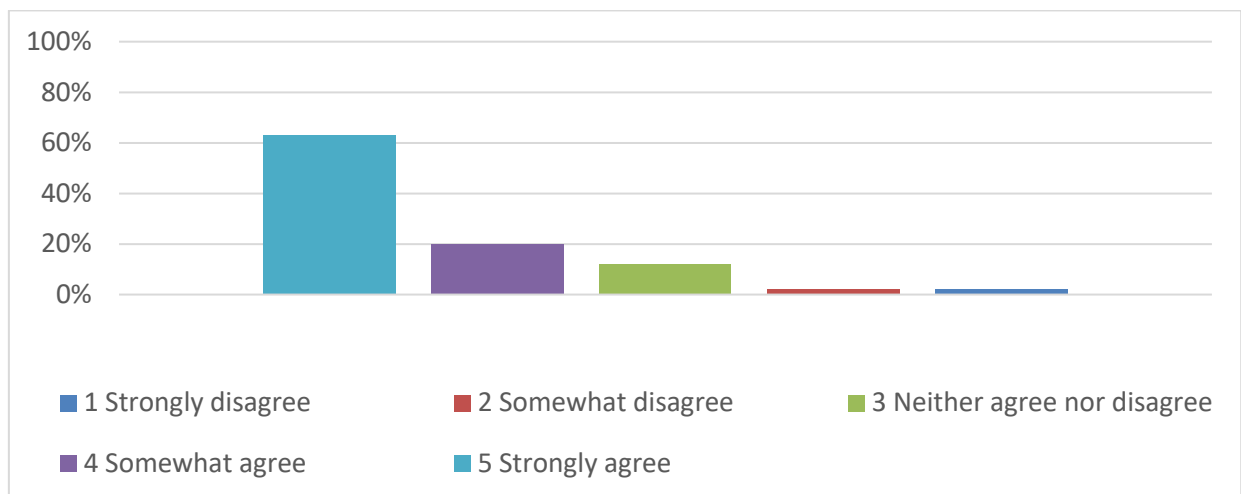
Almost all the respondents (95%) used Entrance exam as an application method. Among the respondents there was one person who applied with SAT-results and one who applied with Chinese High School Graduation Certificate (from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong or Sichuan).

#### 5.1.4 Entrance examination

The fourth group of questions and results is related to the entrance examination.

n=41

Figure 14. I am satisfied with the instructions provided about entrance exam



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I am satisfied with the instructions provided about entrance exam.

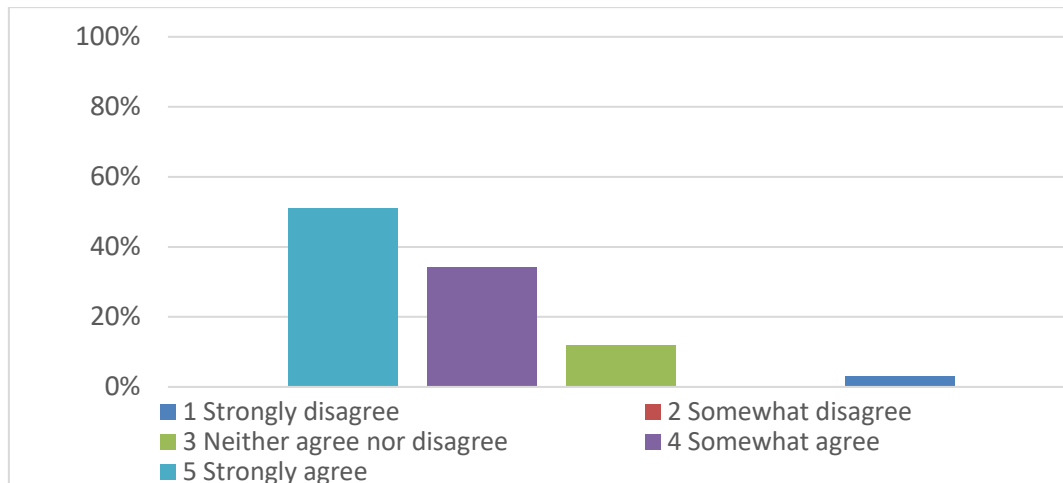
Over 60 per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and almost 20 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Consequently, clear majority are satisfied with the instructions provided about entrance exam. Twelve (12) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees, one person (2.44%) somewhat disagrees and one person (2.44%) strongly disagrees on the statement and following open answers were given:

***I was very confused as it wasn't very clear. The website, pakki and everything was a bit messy as I wasn't aware or familiarised with it. No one care to tell what things I must be aware of before, during and after the application.***

***it was not specified what type of math is it math 1 or 2 or 3 or 4, geometry and so on also physics***

n=41

Figure 15. It was easy to register to HAMK's entrance exam platform

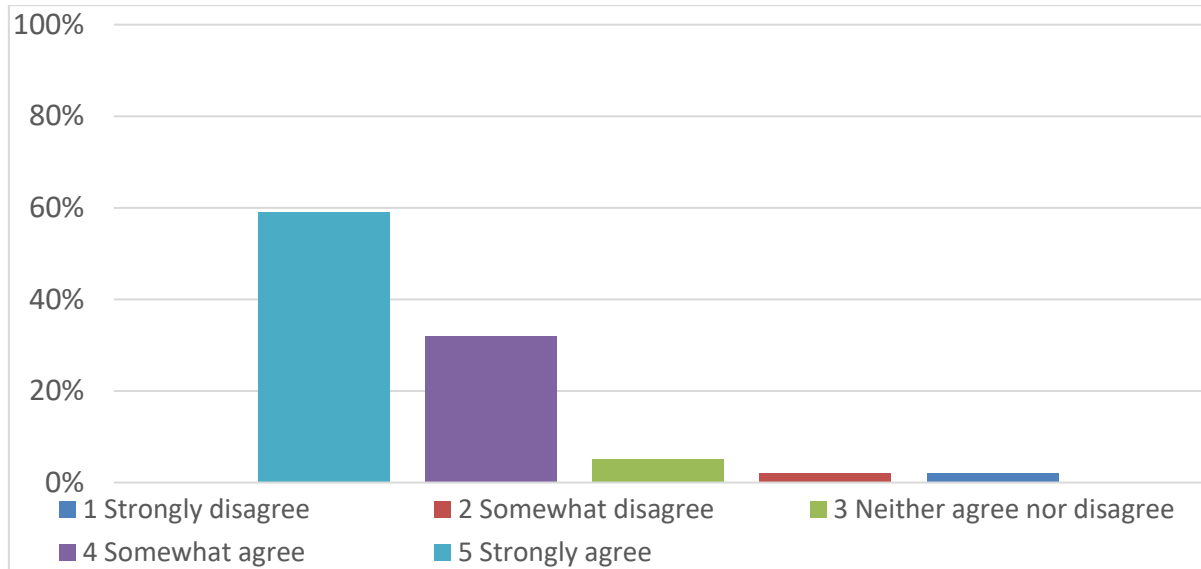


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to register to HAMK's entrance exam platform.

More than half of the respondents strongly agrees and 34 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents found it fairly easy to register to HAMK's entrance exam platform. A bit over 12 per cent neither agrees nor disagrees and only 2.44% (=one respondent) strongly disagrees on the statement. Open answers related to this question were not left.

n=41

Figure 16. I am satisfied with the arrangements of the interview part of HAMK's entrance exam

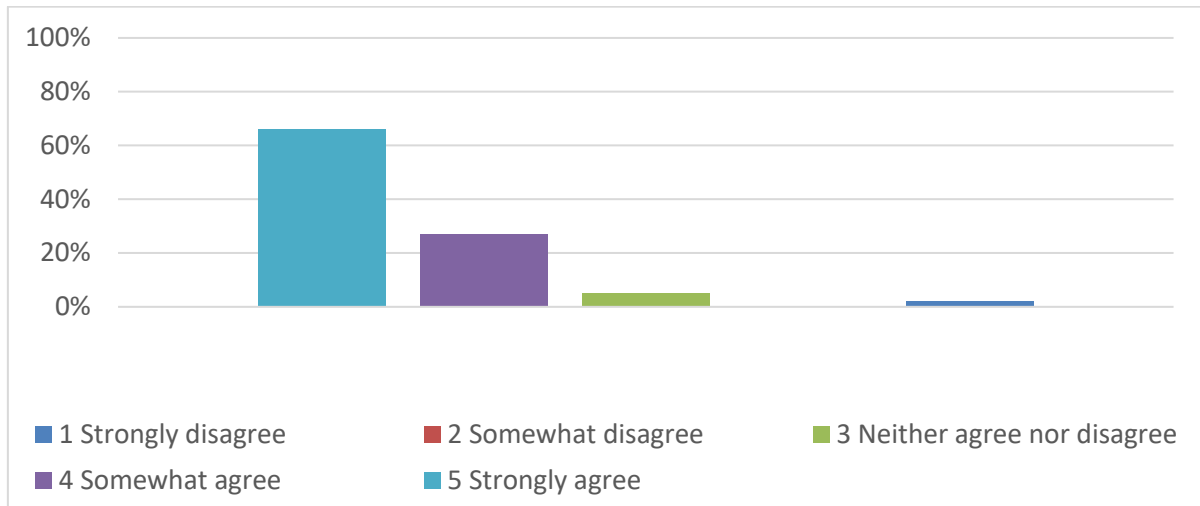


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I am satisfied with the arrangements of the interview part of HAMK's entrance exam.

Almost 60 per cent of the respondents agreed strongly and more than 30 per cent somewhat agreed on the statement. Around five (5) per cent of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, 2.5 per cent (=one respondent) somewhat disagreed and another 2.5 per cent strongly disagreed on the statement.

n=41

Figure 17. I am satisfied with the arrangements of the written part of HAMK's entrance exam



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I am satisfied with the arrangements of the written part of HAMK's entrance exam.

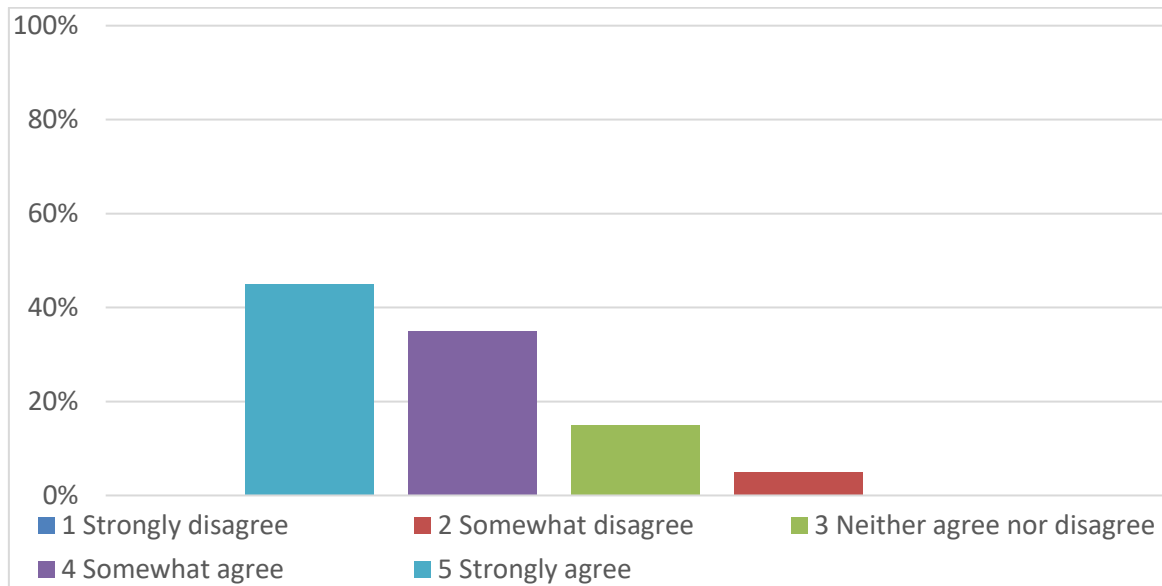
Over 65) of the respondents strongly agrees and around 27 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. About five (5) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and only one respondent (=2.44%) strongly disagrees on the statement.

### 5.1.5 Acceptance information and confirming a study place

The fifth group of questions and results is related to acceptance information and confirming a study place.

n=40

Figure 18. The acceptance letter had all the information I needed to get prepared for studies at HAMK



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? The acceptance letter with Instructions how to start your studies attachment had all the information I needed to get prepared for studies at HAMK.

Forty-five (45) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 35 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Fifteen (15) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and five (5) per cent somewhat disagrees on the statement.

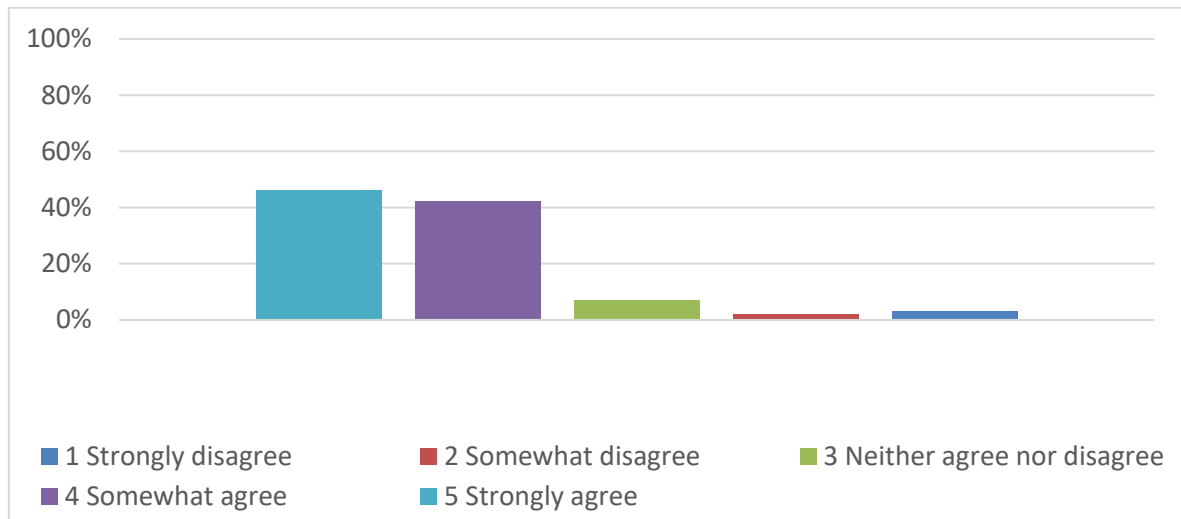
The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. Two answers were given:

***More information about tutors would be good.***

***I would've liked if I had known what tools and equipment I would need for the studies before they started. (for example for the fashion programme - sewing tools)***

n=41

Figure 19. It was easy to understand what actions I should take after receiving acceptance information



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to understand what actions I should take after receiving acceptance information.

Forty-six (46) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 41 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Seven (7) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees, 2.5 per cent (=one respondent) somewhat disagrees and 2.5 per cent strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. Three answers were given:

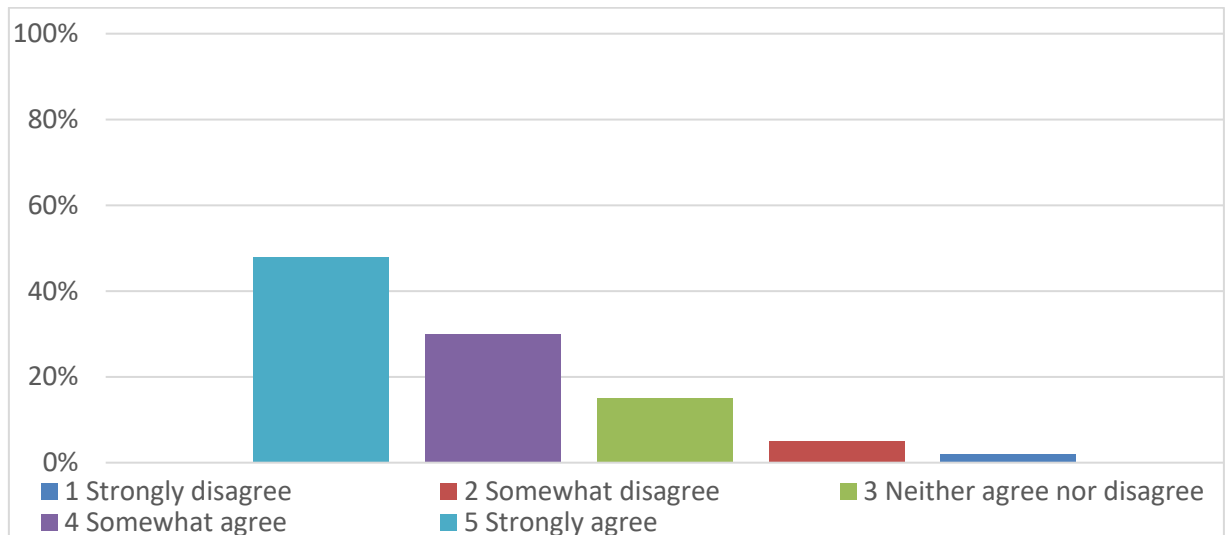
***It was a bit confusing and not so clear. Specially when you are a foreigner and this system is new to you.***

***I had a problem with my moodle account when I asked my tutors they didn't respond early so I was absent for the 3 days class***

***I wasn't informed that I can start the introduction studies earlier so I had very little time to complete them.***

n=40

Figure 20. I am satisfied with the instructions provided on HAMK's Information for new students' web pages



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I am satisfied with the instructions provided on HAMK's Information for new students' web pages.

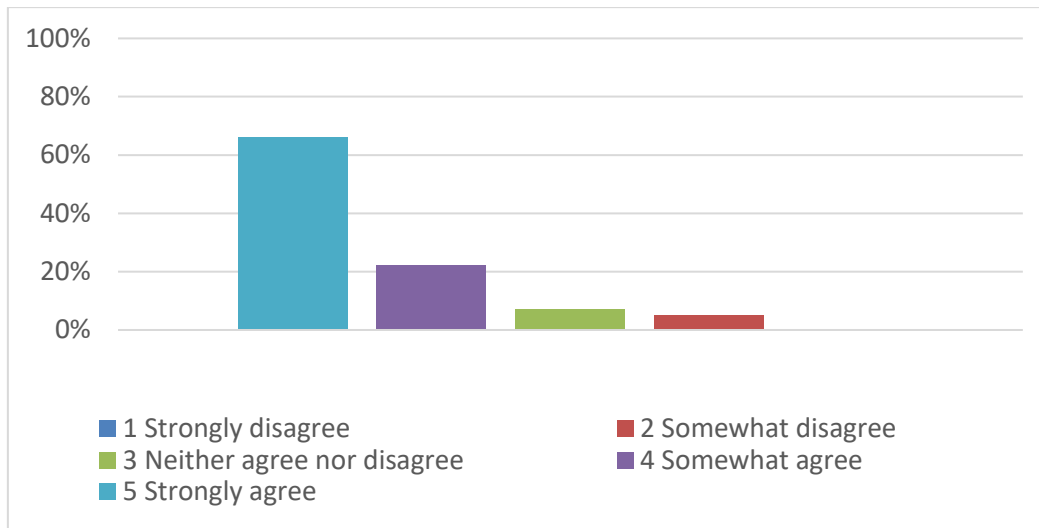
Forty-five (45) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and thirty 30 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Fifteen (15) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees, five (5) per cent somewhat disagrees and 2.5 per cent (=one respondent) strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. Two answers were given:

***It was a bit confusing and not so clear. Specially when you are a foreigner and this system is new to you.***

***Nothing useful is written on the website about the online teaching process for the new students***

n=41

Figure 21. It was easy to confirm the study place at HAMK



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to confirm the study place at HAMK.

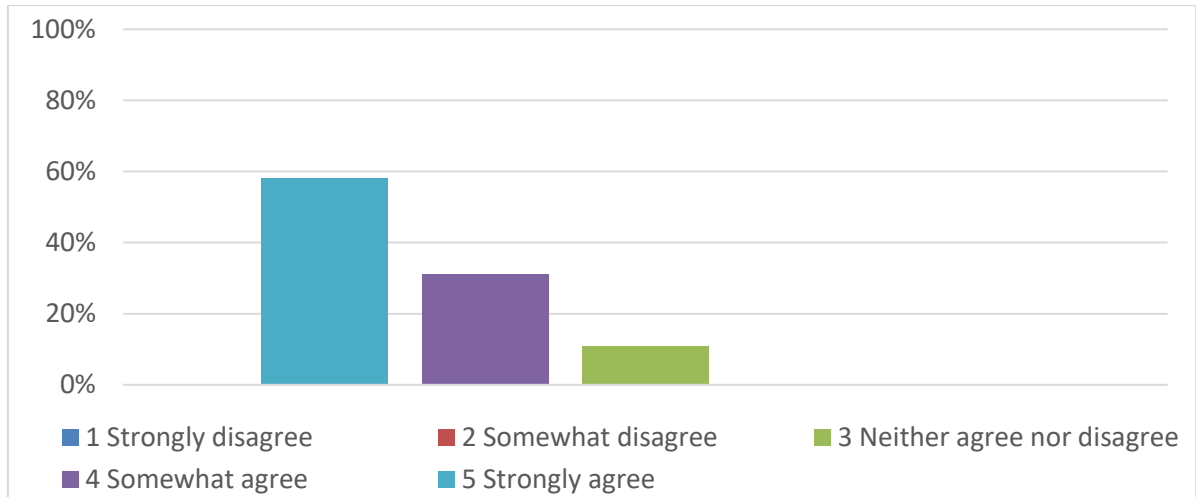
Sixty-six (66) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 22 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Seven (7) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and five per cent somewhat disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer, but no answers were given.

### 5.1.6 Tuition fee and residence permit matters

The sixth group of questions and results is related concerning tuition fee and residence permit matters. The questions were targeted only for non-EU/EEA citizens. The EU/EEA citizens were asked to skip them.

n=36

Figure 22. The Instructions for paying tuition fee



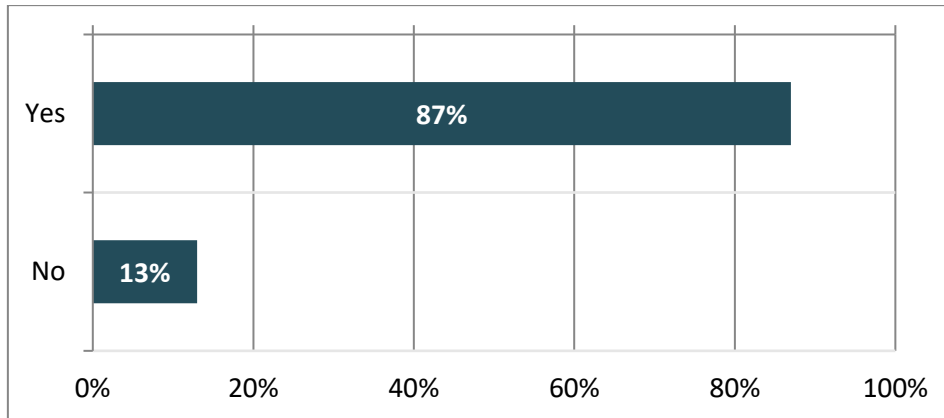
**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? The Instructions for paying tuition fee attachment sent along with the acceptance letter had all the needed information for me to make the tuition fee payment.

Almost 60 per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 31 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Eleven (11) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees. None disagreed on the statement, yet one open answer was given:

***The Bank name in the details and actually in our servers was different.***

n=32

Figure 23. Effects of the possibility to pay for the tuition fee in three installments

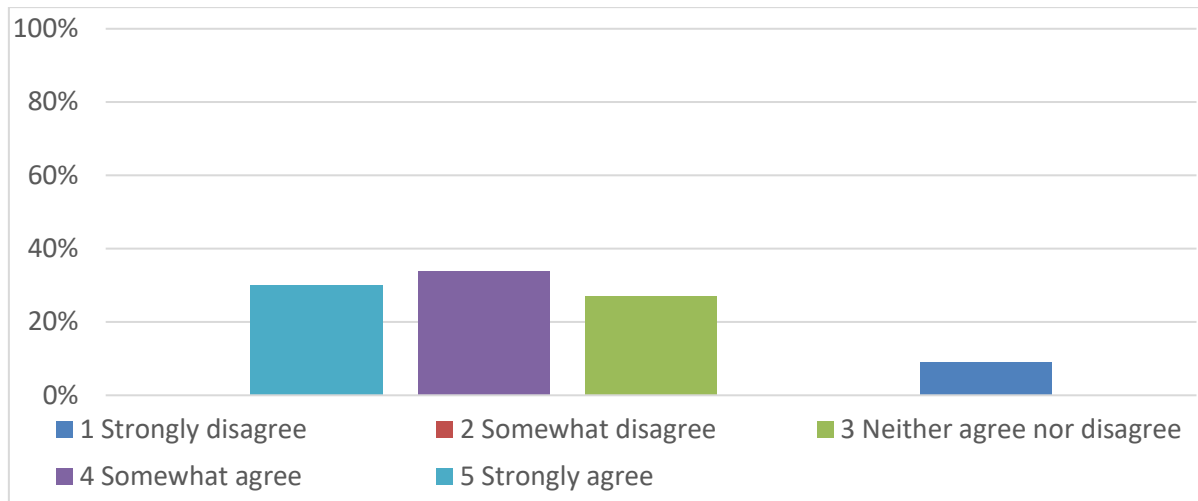


**Question:** Did HAMK's decision (due to COVID-19) to let students to pay their tuition fee in three installments for their first year of study help or make it possible for you to start your studies at HAMK?

Clear majority of the respondents (87%) replied “yes” to the question. Thus, the possibility to pay the tuition fee in three installments for the first year of study helped or made it possible for most of the respondents to start their studies at HAMK.

n=33

Figure 24. It was easy to find instructions for applying residence permit to Finland



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to find instructions for applying residence permit to Finland.

Thirty (30) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 33 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Twenty-seven (27) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and nine (9) per cent somewhat disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagree on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. Following answers were given:

***It was very confusing***

***No first we didn't know how to take an appointment and then it took too much time to take one and so long to get the residence permit (it took me over 6 months)***

***Nothing is given on the website about the process had to do research on my own for applying and the official website is also really confusing***

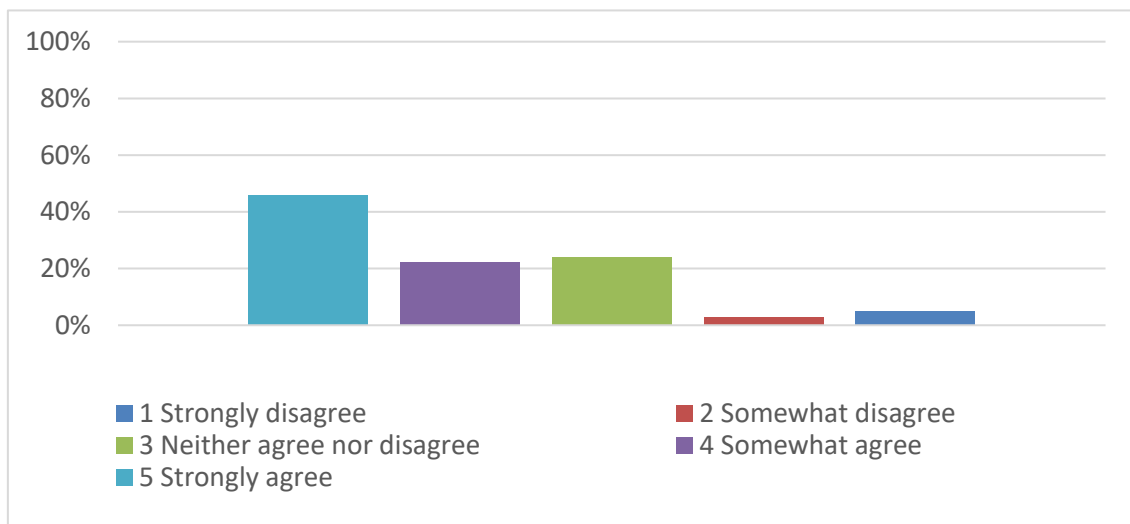
***The process has a ridiculous amount of loopholes for those coming from the EU. It's also very hard to get an actual straight answer.***

### 5.1.7 Getting started as a student

The seventh group of questions and results is related to getting started as a student.

n=41

Figure 25. It was easy to enroll as present/absent for an academic year at HAMK



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to enroll as present/absent for an academic year at HAMK.

Forty-six (46) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 22 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Twenty-four (24) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees, 2.5 per cent (=one respondent) somewhat disagrees and five (5) per cent strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees with the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. Following answers were given:

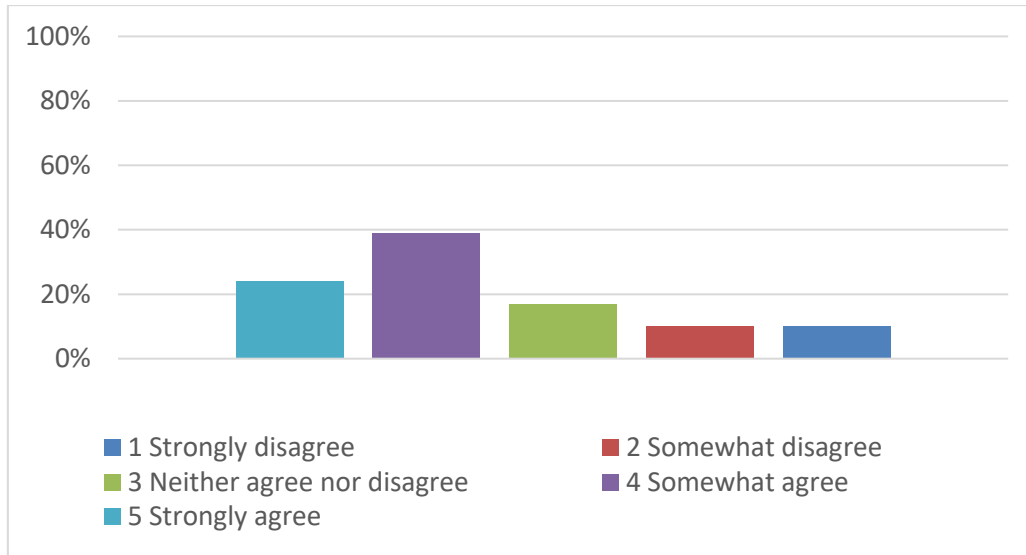
***I had a problem I didn't know how to enroll in the past few days***

***I had doubts about present/absent student enrollment considering online learning, but I sent an email to admissions and everything was explained to me clearly***

***it was complicated i missed many things***

n=41

Figure 26. It was easy to activate HAMK's user account



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to activate the HAMK user account (username and password)?

Twenty-four (24) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 39 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Seventeen (17) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees, ten (10) per cent somewhat disagrees and ten (10) per cent strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as open answers. Following answers were given:

***It was a bit confusing and not so clear. Specially when you are a foreigner and this system is new to you.***

***It did not work with me because a staff member helped me by creating it himself***

***There were problems with my account, but i contacted the IT support and they fixed it.***

***At the beginning I could not change anything in my profile in Pakki because the academic period had not started yet, and I did not know that was because of that, so I was***

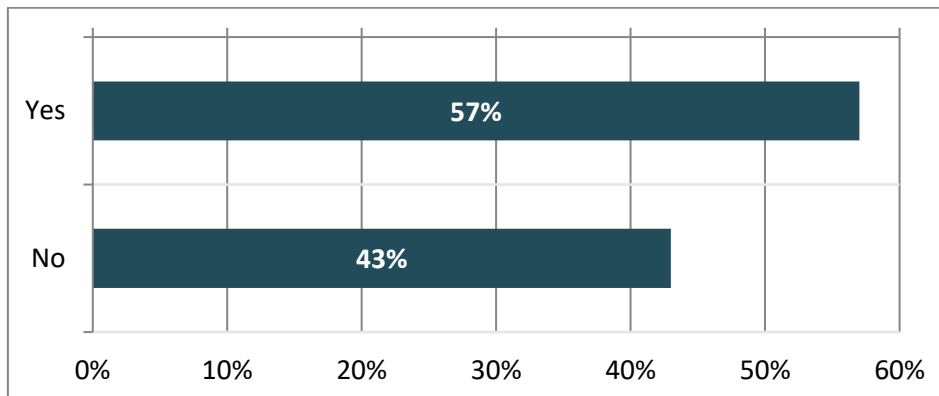
*apprehensive thinking that I was doing something wrong. Also, the period for being accepted in the first module was very long. Day by day I was watching the numbers of enrolled people on the first course rising; then I was accepted one day before the classes started.*

*I had issues with the email address but it was the problem with Kastu's arrangements.*

*it did not work for me for almost 1 month*

n=40

Figure 27. Did you complete HAMK's virtual orientation studies before or in the beginning of your studies?

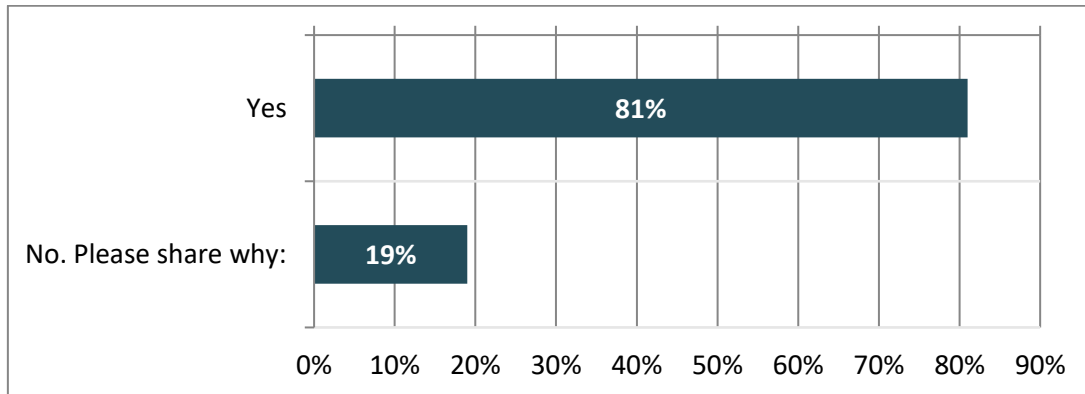


**Question:** Did you complete HAMK's virtual orientation studies before or in the beginning of your studies?

More than half of the respondents completed HAMK's virtual orientation studies before or in the beginning of their studies.

n=32

Figure 28. If you completed HAMK's virtual orientation studies, was it easy to start working on them?



**Question:** If you completed HAMK's virtual orientation studies, was it easy to start working on them?

Clear majority (81%) found it easy to start working on HAMK's virtual orientation studies. The respondents that did not complete the virtual orientation studies were asked why. The answers are as follows:

***I did not (know?) we had it***

***I missed the course due to quarantine in Russia (RP process) and in Finland***

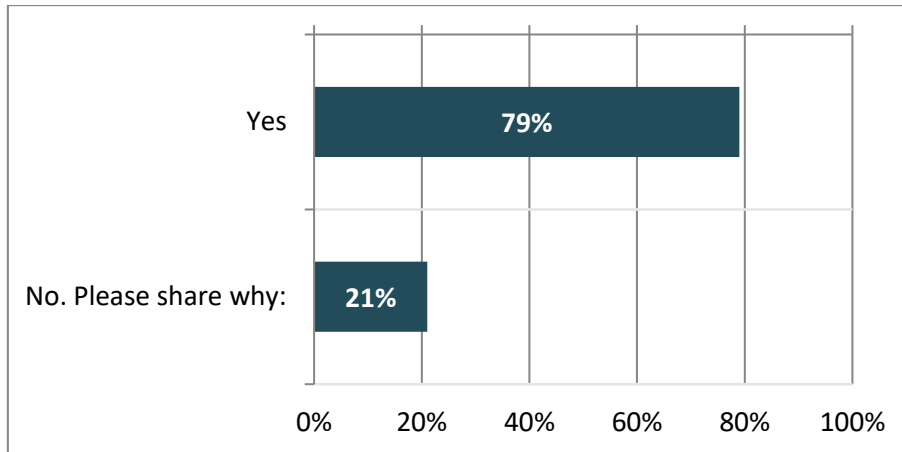
***There was a lot of tools and some of them was not working very well, or was outdated.***

***it was difficult for me as a new thing***

***I was sick***

n=34

Figure 29. If you completed HAMK's virtual orientation studies, were they useful?



**Question:** If you completed HAMK's virtual orientation studies, were they useful?

Clear majority (79%) found HAMK's virtual orientation studies useful. The respondents that did not find them useful were asked to explain why. The answers are as follows:

***They were (not?) useful to me. I knew the stuff***

***I do not know about it (Did not complete the orientation studies?)***

***Not explained properly***

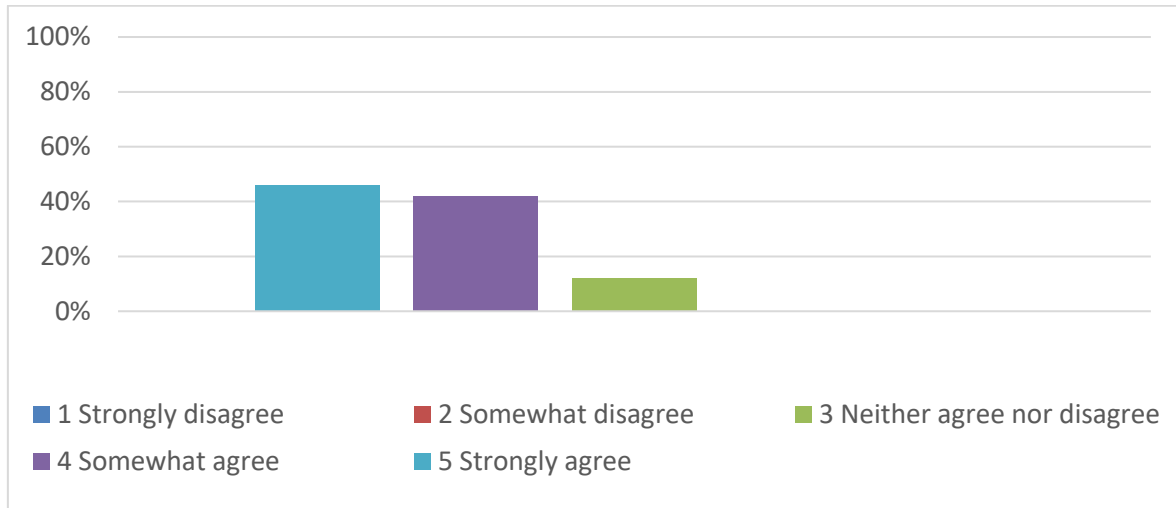
***Just it wasn't needed for me***

***because i am not using it at all***

***I have been missing (Did not complete the orientation studies?)***

n=41

Figure 30. I am satisfied with the information and instructions provided by HAMK to get started with my studies

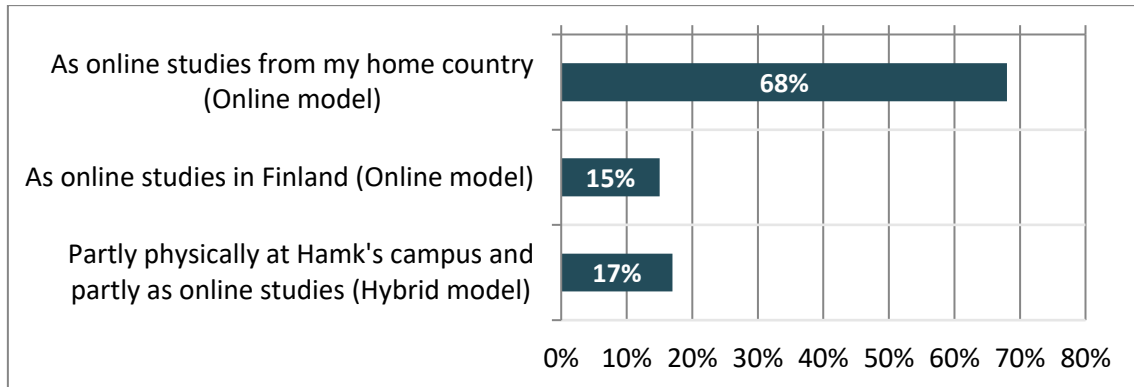


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I am satisfied with the information and instructions provided by HAMK to get started with my studies.

Forty-six (46) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 42 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Twelve (12) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and none disagrees on the statement.

n=41

Figure 31. How did you start your studies at HAMK?



**Question:** How did you start your studies at HAMK?

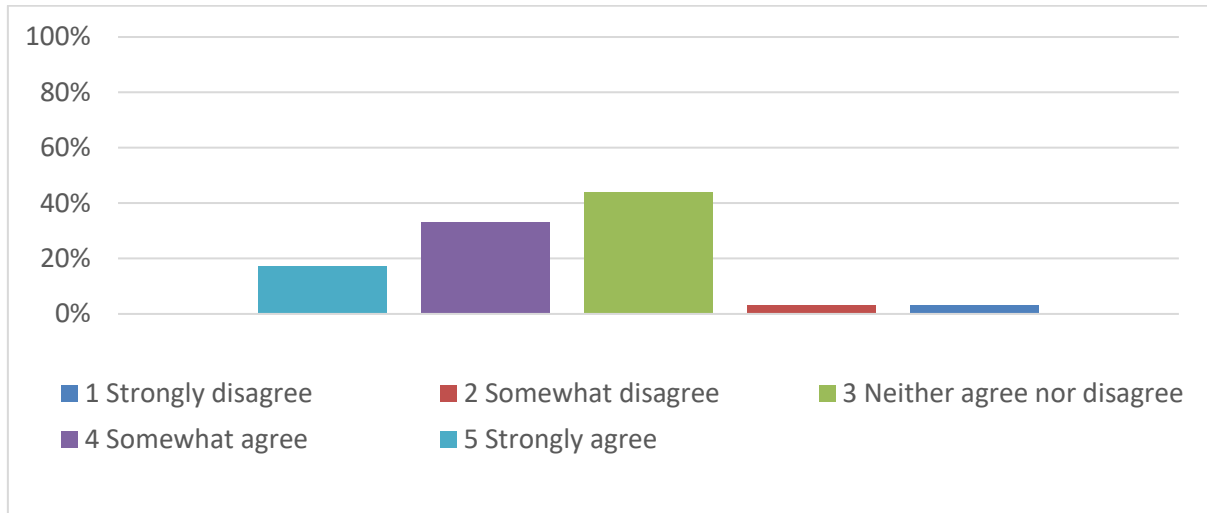
Sixty-eight (68) per cent of the respondents started their studies as online studies from home country, 15 per cent as online studies in Finland and 17 per cent partly physically at HAMK's campus and partly as online studies.

### 5.1.8 Accommodation and registration to the Finnish Population Information System

The eight group of questions and results is related to accommodation and registration to the Finnish Population Information System. The questions were targeted to the students that have arrived at Finland. Thus, the students that hadn't arrived at Finland were asked to skip the questions.

n=30

Figure 32. I got enough information about accommodation options in my study town from HAMK



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I got enough information about accommodation options in my study town from HAMK.

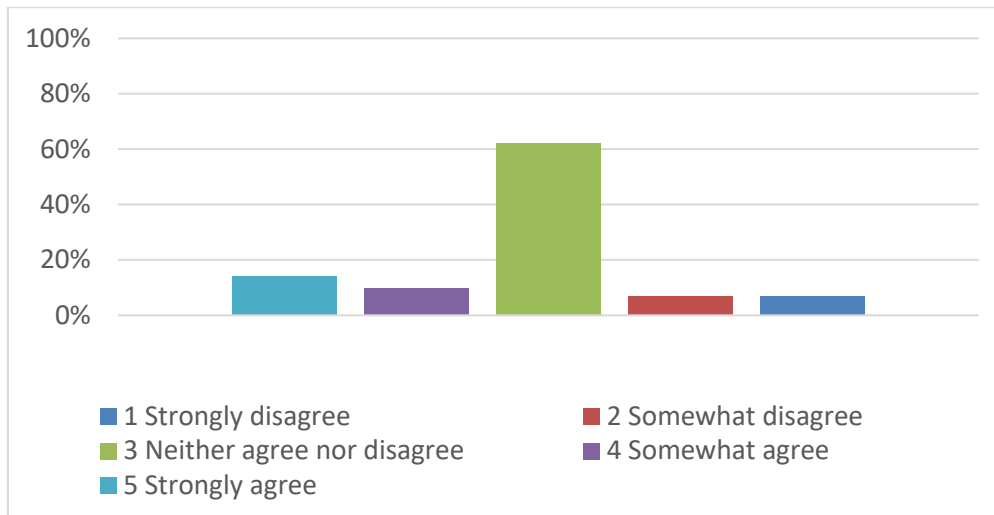
Seventeen (17) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 33 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Forty-three (43) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees, 3.3 per cent (=one respondent) somewhat disagrees and 3.3 per cent strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as open answers. Following answers were given:

***We didn't get any help***

***I looked for 3 months early for housing in Finland, then I found from private housing sector***

n=29

Figure 33. It was easy to apply for accommodation



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to apply for accommodation.

Fourteen (14) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and ten (10) per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Sixty-two (62) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees, 6.9 per cent somewhat disagrees and 6.9 per cent strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as open answers. Following answers were given:

***We found a little apartment but it's kind of old and we didn't find any other apartment with a student price.***

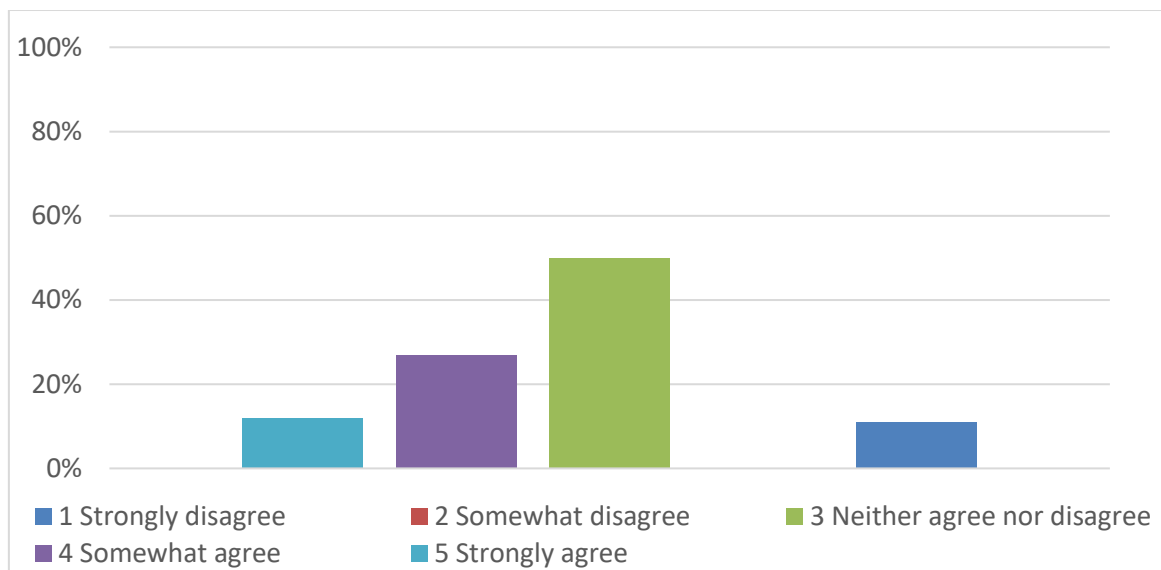
***It was easy to apply but hard to find and expensive as well.***

***HOPS has an application system very precarious; they ask about information that does not make sense to ask. They delay too much to answer me by email. There was not any confirmation when I paid the rent.***

***It was easy to apply but it took a long time to get an offer for the student housing. I had to send additional emails. But after that it was quick.***

n=26

Figure 34. I am satisfied with the accommodation rental process of the organization/ private landlord I rented my apartment from



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I am satisfied with the accommodation rental process of the organization/ private landlord I rented my apartment from.

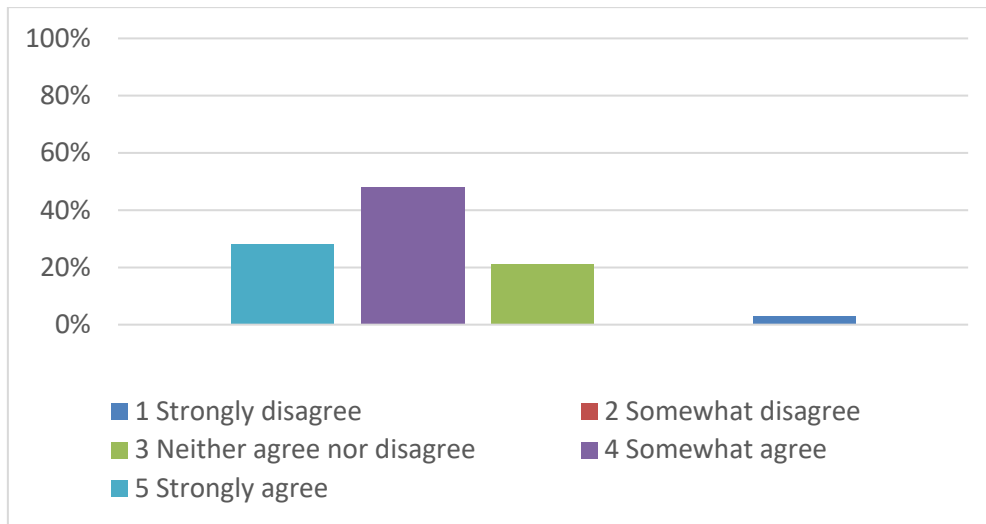
Only 11 per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 26 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Half of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and 11 per cent strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as open answers. Following answers were given:

***You cannot get flat for living, if you do not have working contract, and most of private housing company will offer housing who is working in Finland***

***Their email communication is very poor. Short answered questions just raise more questions.***

n=29

Figure 35. I found enough information for my arrival arrangements at HAMK's web pages



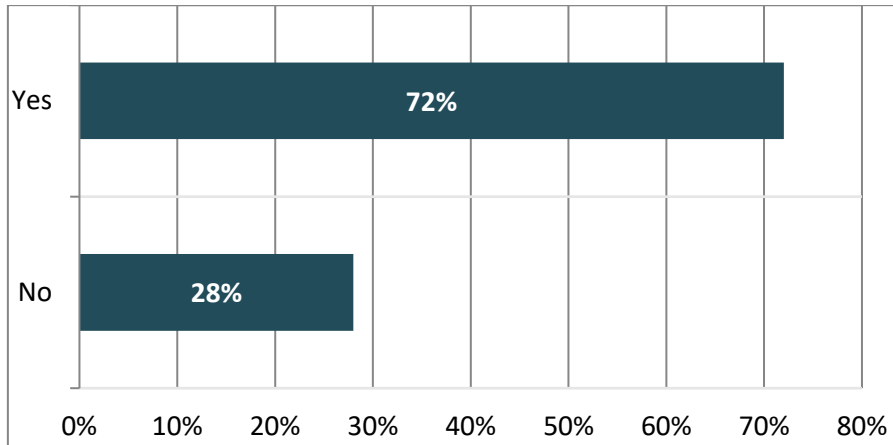
**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I found enough information for my arrival arrangements at HAMK's web pages.

Twenty-eight (28) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 48 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Twenty-one (21) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and 3.5 per cent (=one respondent) strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. One answer was given:

***I did not find anything when I searched for, but Marianne contacted me and gave all information.***

n=29

Figure 36. Were you contacted by a student tutor before your arrival to Finland?

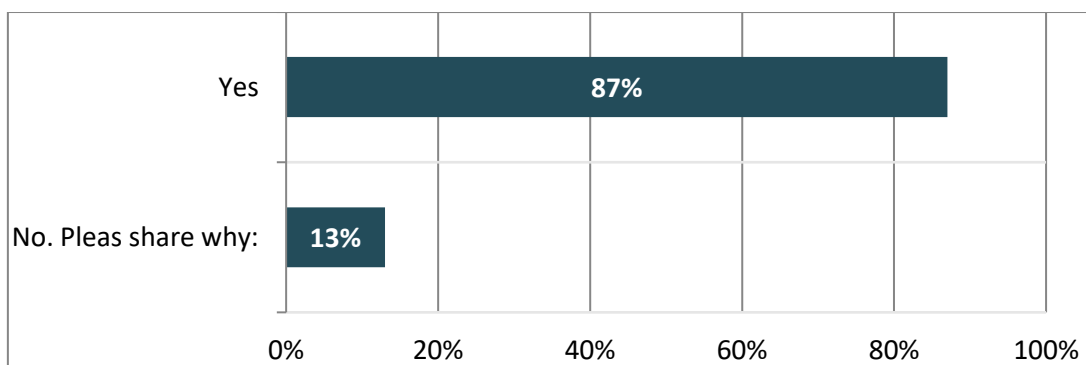


**Question:** Were you contacted by a student tutor before your arrival to Finland?

Majority (72%) of the respondents were contacted by a student tutor before their arrival to Finland.

n=24

Figure 37. If you were contacted by a student tutor, did you find it useful?



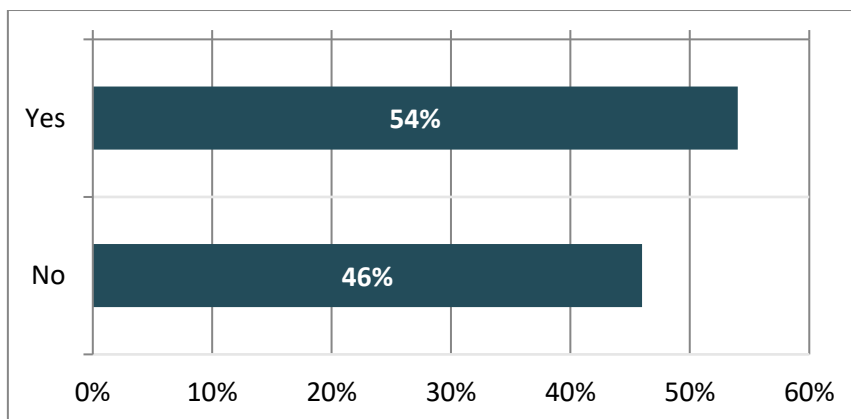
**Question:** If you were contacted by a student tutor, did you find it useful?

Clear majority (87%) of the respondents found it useful to be contacted by a student tutor. The respondents that did not find it useful to be contacted by a tutor were asked to share why. Following answers were given:

*They were busy and told me to ask Melanie and she gave me all the information the first tutor which i was assigned was not helpful but the second one was*

n=28

Figure 38. Were you instructed by HAMK to get registered to the Finnish Population Information System?

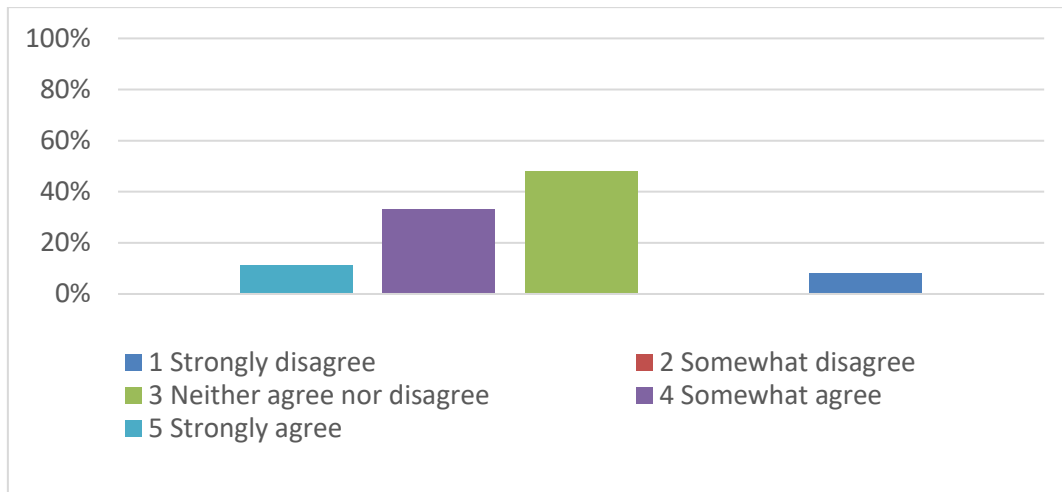


**Question:** Were you instructed by HAMK to get registered to the Finnish Population Information System to receive a personal identity code and Finnish home municipality?

A bit more than half (54%) of the respondents were instructed by HAMK to get registered to the Finnish Population Information System to receive a personal identity code and Finnish home municipality.

n=27

Figure 39. It was easy to register to the Finnish Population Information System



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? It was easy to register to the Finnish Population Information System to receive a personal identity code and Finnish home municipality.

Eleven (11) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 33 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Forty-eight (48) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and seven (7) per cent strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. The following answers were given:

***I still didn't receive it***

***Very long process***

***Haven't made it that far yet and the information is unclear***

The last question of the questionnaire is an open question for any feedback.

**Question:** Is there something else you would like to share with us?

**Answers:**

*Online studying is depressive :(*

*I just want to share something I don't think it is fair to pay all this tuition fees and we studied almost all the year in online studies and we didn't have the best conditions especially in morocco because we don't have a good connection and all the Moroccan had their salary reduced because of the covid-19 so it's really hard for parents who have more than two children. And we didn't do any activities or met personally So I really hope if there is a reduction or scholarship for this year*

*Tuition fee is expensive there should be early bid discount in first year students.*

*the online teaching is already hard for students due to different time zones but also the workload on the student is a lot and there are too many problems in the subgroups. The way exams are being held there is no proper information given prior exams.*

*I want to say a lot of things.... my course consists of less theoretical and more practical syllabus. Visa processing is so slow and I am worried about my practicals. Teachers are very supportive and cooperative. they will surely help me to complete my practical tasks. my only worry is the low processing of visa otherwise I am satisfied with my course and studies at hamk. Thanks to Hamk for designing an Artistic based and creative syllabus for me.*

*since I'm almost at the end of the first semester, almost all my colleges have already been able to obtain resident permits. since we are to get our resident permit through the embassy of Finland in India and our borders are yet to be open with a lot of restrictions. I'm afraid that I might miss being there in Finland for face to face learnings. if there is anything which can be done through the university, we really appreciate it.*

*I think HAMK can somehow decrease the tuition fee during this covid situation and online learning because, online process could be less costly for this institute and also students could not able to completely use the amazing facilities of HAMK university for example library, physical classes and etc.*

*The journey has been great so far but only getting to adapt to the mode of studying is a bit of clause for me and also my issue is not on the application but after starting my studies as some of the courses are thought in a more advance way which should have some beginners learning mode as some do not have full or hands-on knowledge but willing to learn. So courses should have some beginners knowledge method of coaching. This is pertaining to programming, even though most of us in class do not have the background, i think we should have a proper beginner class than an advance class.*

*I will like to request that our grades are visible in time, and if some of our lecturer can possibly make it a point of duty making sure beginners with no prior knowledge are catching up and understanding what we are been taught. Overall, I am satisfied with every other thing. Thank you.*

*enrollment updates to students to make sure all students don't miss out to enroll or late rush enrolling*

*Asunnot Only was the worst experience in Finland*

*This is the first time to use online course and i always miss lectures because it is placed in different places and we did not get any simple course about. it was not clear enough (This answer was moved from the open answers of question 5)*

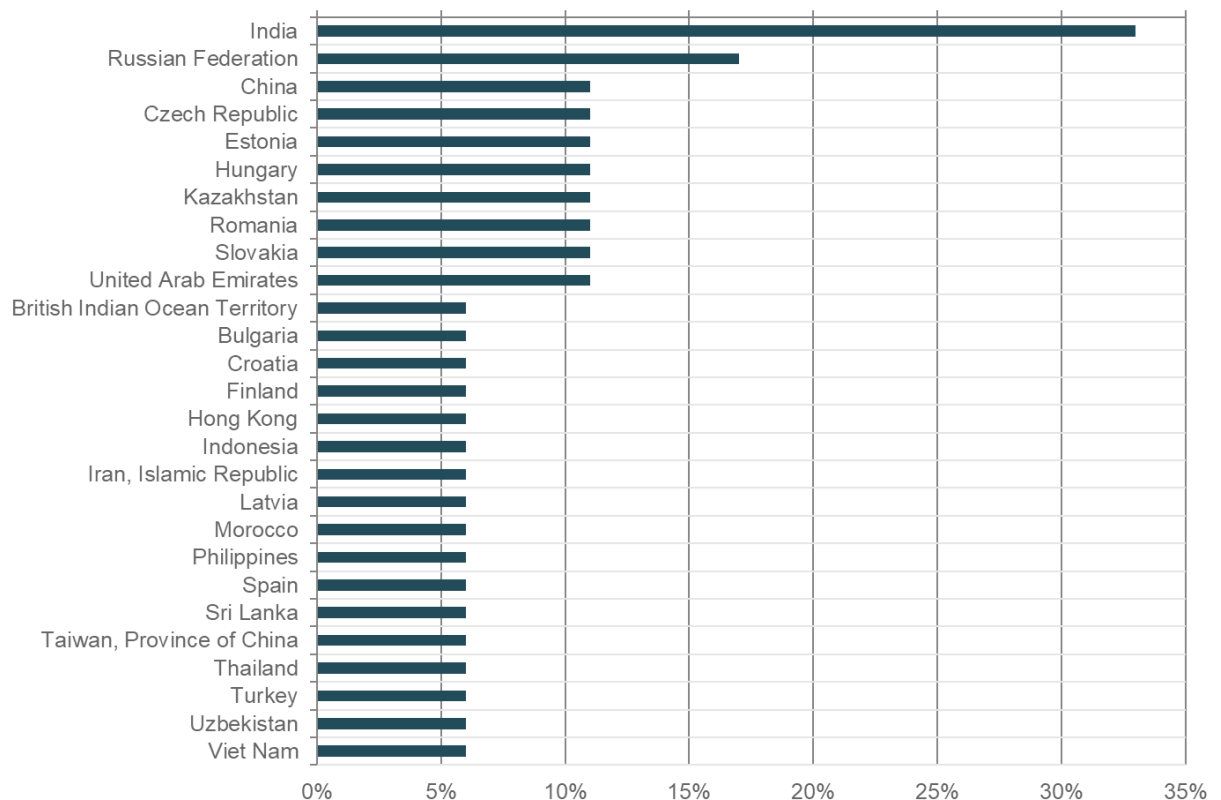
*The learn mode and methods in HAMK can be more explained to new student. (This answer was moved from the open answers of question 7)*

## 5.2 The results of the agent questionnaire

The link to the questionnaire was sent via Webropol to 118 HAMK's agents on 8 December 2020. The questionnaire was closed after two weeks on 22 December and by then, the questionnaire was completed by 18 respondents. Thus, the respondent rate is 15 per cent. Excluding the first question about the area the agent represents HAMK, the questions are divided into three groups: Sources of information and communication, Application and Information provided to accepted students. The first question is about the area the respondent represents HAMK.

n=18, selected answers=42

Figure 40. In which countries do you represent HAMK?



**Question:** In which countries do you represent HAMK? (you can choose several countries)

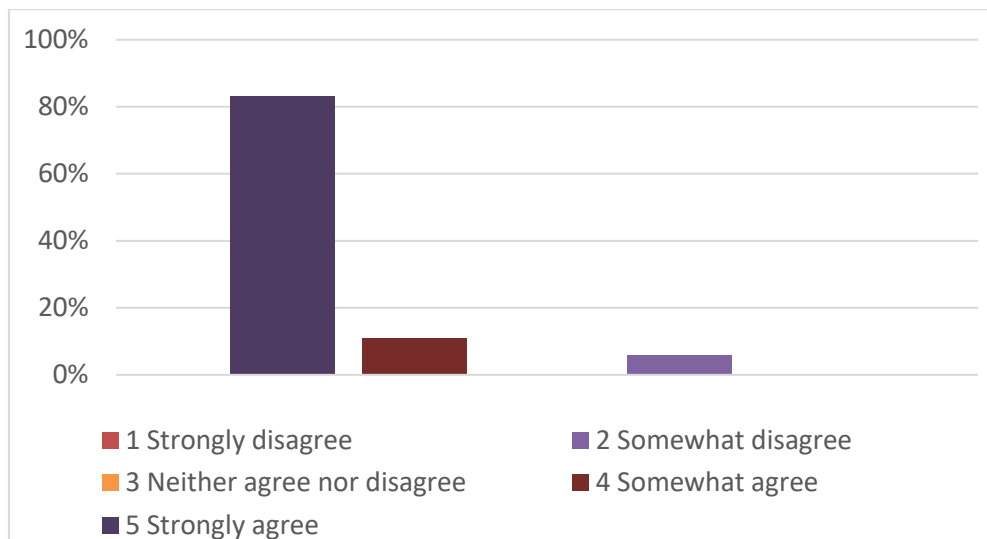
Eighteen (18) respondents selected 42 countries in total. More than thirty (30) per cent of the respondents represents HAMK in India. That equals to six (6) respondents. The second most represented country by the respondents is Russian Federation with the share of 17 per cent. China, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Romania, Slovakia and United Arab Emirates are represented by two (2) respondents each, which makes eleven (11) per cent. British Indian Ocean Territory, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Islamic Republic, Latvia, Morocco, Philippines, Spain, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Province of China, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam are all represented by one (1) respondent which equals to six (6) per cent of the respondents.

### 5.2.1 The sources of information and communication

The first group of questions and results is related to the sources of information and communication.

n=18

Figure 41. I have received all the needed information from HAMK's representative



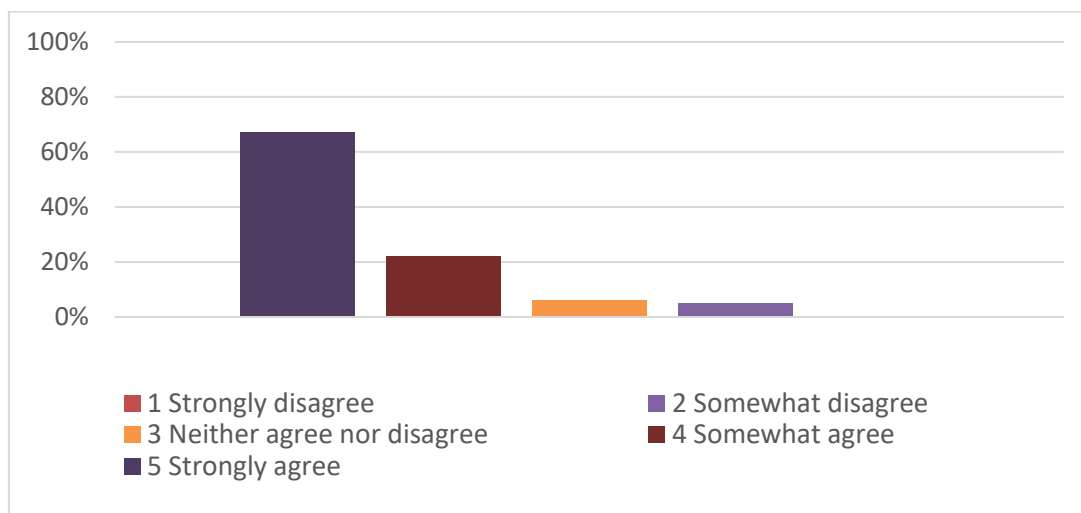
**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I have received all the needed information from HAMK's representative.

Majority (83%) of the respondents strongly agrees, 11 per cent somewhat agrees and six (6) per cent somewhat disagrees on the statement. The respondents disagreeing on the statement were asked to share what information they would have needed. One answer was left:

***For last intake September 2020, it was really hard to communicate with HAMK and emails were answered really later. We had to remind often to our contact person to reply to us.***

n=18

Figure 42. When I have contacted HAMK's staff, I have been satisfied with the speed and content of response(s)



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? When I have contacted HAMK's staff, I have been satisfied with the speed and content of response(s).

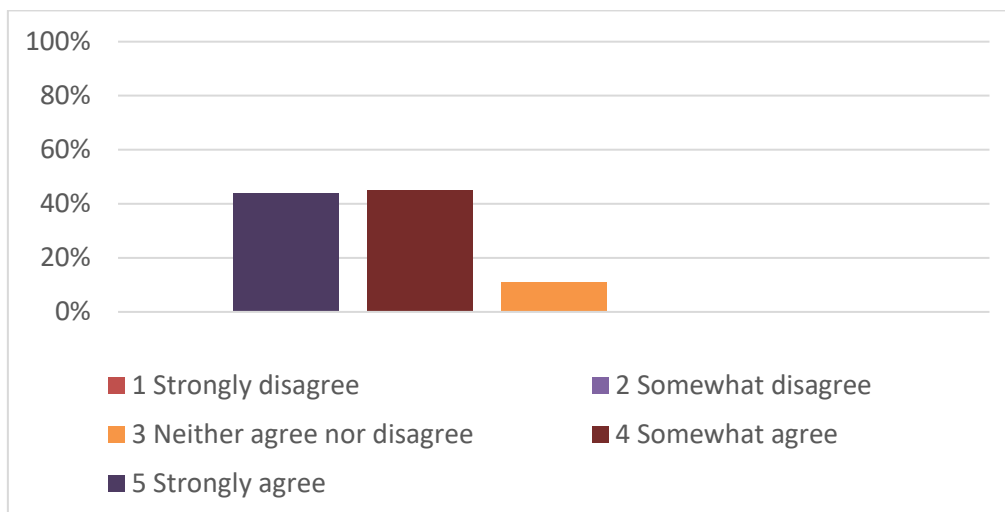
Sixty-seven (67) per cent of the respondents strongly agree and 22 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Six (6) per cent of the respondents (= one respondent) neither agrees nor disagrees and six (6) per cent somewhat disagrees on the statement. The respondents disagreeing on the statement were asked to explain their reply. Two open answers were given:

**Same as stated above. Very slow.**

**some emails are not replied**

n=18

Figure 43. I have been able to find needed information from HAMK's web pages

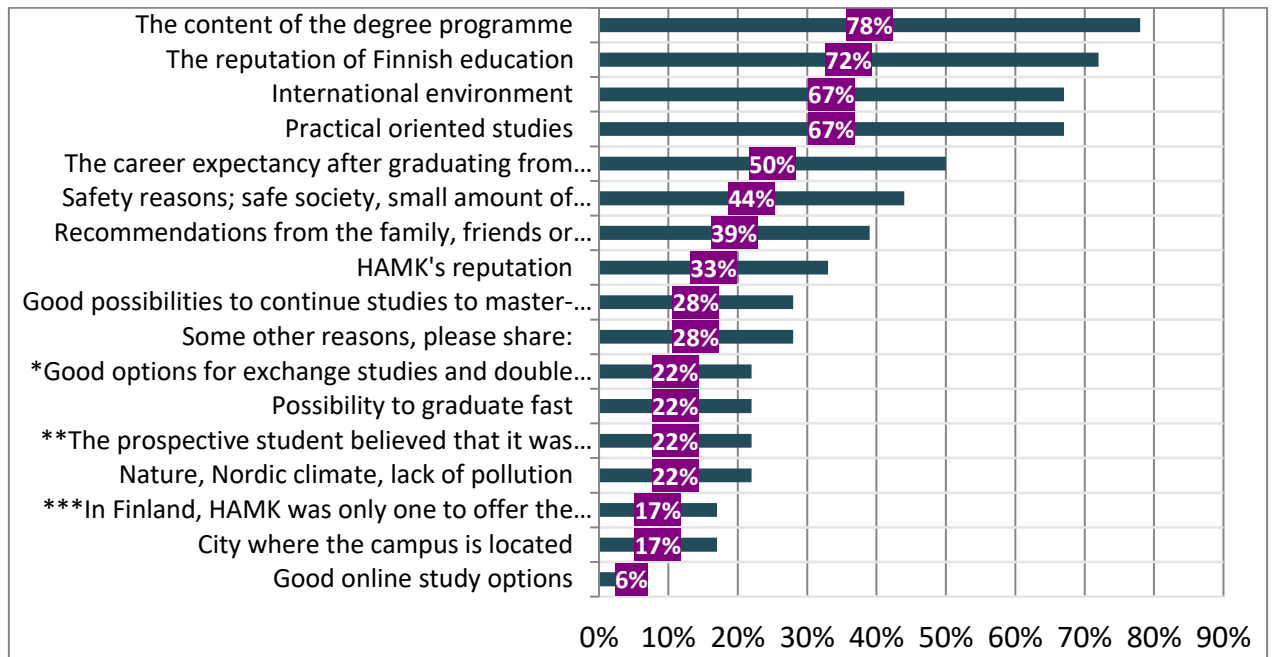


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? I have been able to find needed information from HAMK's web pages.

Forty-four (44) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and similarly 44 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Eleven (11) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees on the statement. None disagrees on the statement.

n=18, selected answers=114

Figure 44 What are the most important aspects that have affected your customers' decision to apply to HAMK?



\* Good options for exchange studies and double degrees

\*\* The prospective student believed that it was easier to get into HAMK than some other higher education institute

\*\*\* In Finland, HAMK was only one to offer the degree the prospective student was interested in.

**Question:** According to your experience, what are the most important aspects that have affected your customers' decision to apply to HAMK? (choose as many as you like)

The five (5) most selected aspects that have affected the respondents' customers' decision to apply to HAMK are the content of the degree programme (78%), the reputation of Finnish education (72%), International environment (67%), Practical oriented studies (67 %) and the career expectancy after graduating from HAMK (50%). After that the five most selected aspects (forming the second half of a top ten list) are safety reasons; safe society, small amount of people (44%), recommendations from the family, friends or others (39%), HAMK's reputation (33%), Good possibilities to continue studies to master-level (28%) and some

other reasons (28%). The respondents that selected “Some other reasons” were asked to share them and following replies were given:

***Flexible admission criteria***

***programmes in English***

***We have been promoting HAMK/Finland as a high quality and attractive study destination***

***similar environment and closer to Estonia***

***lack of tuition fees for EU students***

Around 20 per cent of the respondents selected following aspects that they believe have impacted their customers’ decision to apply to HAMK: good options for exchange studies and double degrees (22%), possibility to graduate fast (22%), the prospective student believed that it was easier to get into HAMK than some other higher education institute (22%), nature, Nordic climate, lack of pollution (22%), In Finland, HAMK was only one to offer the degree the prospective student (17%) and city where the campus is located (17%). Only six (6) per cent (=one respondent) selected good online study options as an aspect fostering their customers’ decision to apply to HAMK.

**Question:** According to your experience what are the most important aspects that has affected your customers' decision NOT to apply to HAMK? This question is an open question where the respondents replied in their own words.

**Answers:**

***Nordic climate- not so much knowledge and information about Finland, lack of friends studying in the country***

***Tuition fee and not located in Helsinki.***

*Tuition fees, Finnish Weather, Hard to get residence permit.*

*International students first consider the annual tuition fee and a city where they can find a part-time job.*

*the university rank or reputation*

*Difficult admission test*

*Master programs (Full Time) are not available for International Students*

*Generally, the cancellation rate has been lower for HAMK than for other institutions in our portfolio. Those who have cancelled decided to go to another country - Denmark.*

*Practical oriented studies*

*the brand is still not widely recognised amongst secondary school students*

*Master Full-Time courses not available for International students*

*Visa decisions take a long time*

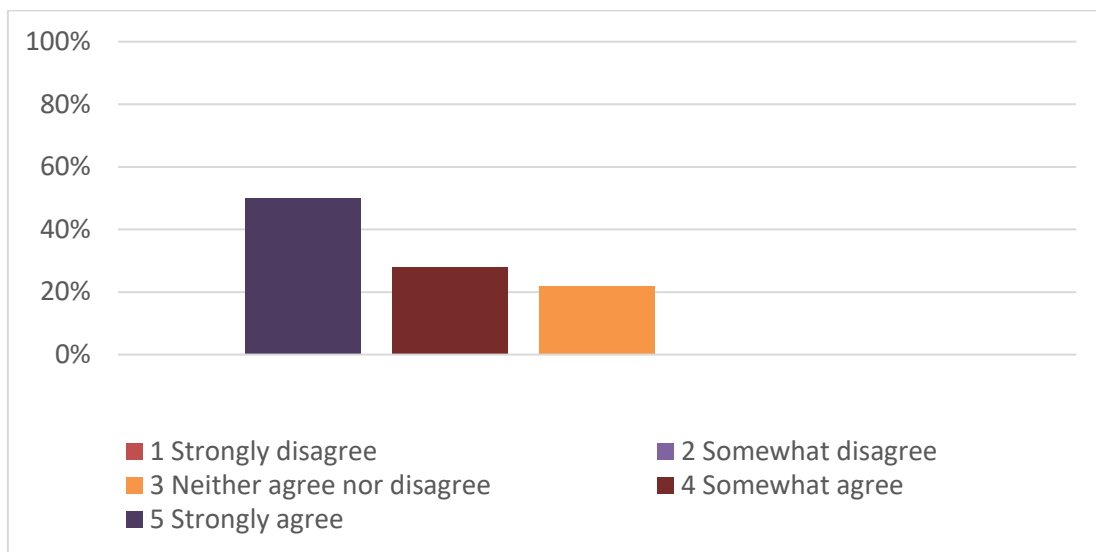
*Lack of full time Master programs*

### 5.2.2 Application

The second group of questions and results is related to application.

n=18

Figure 45. According to my experience, it is easy to find HAMK's online application form



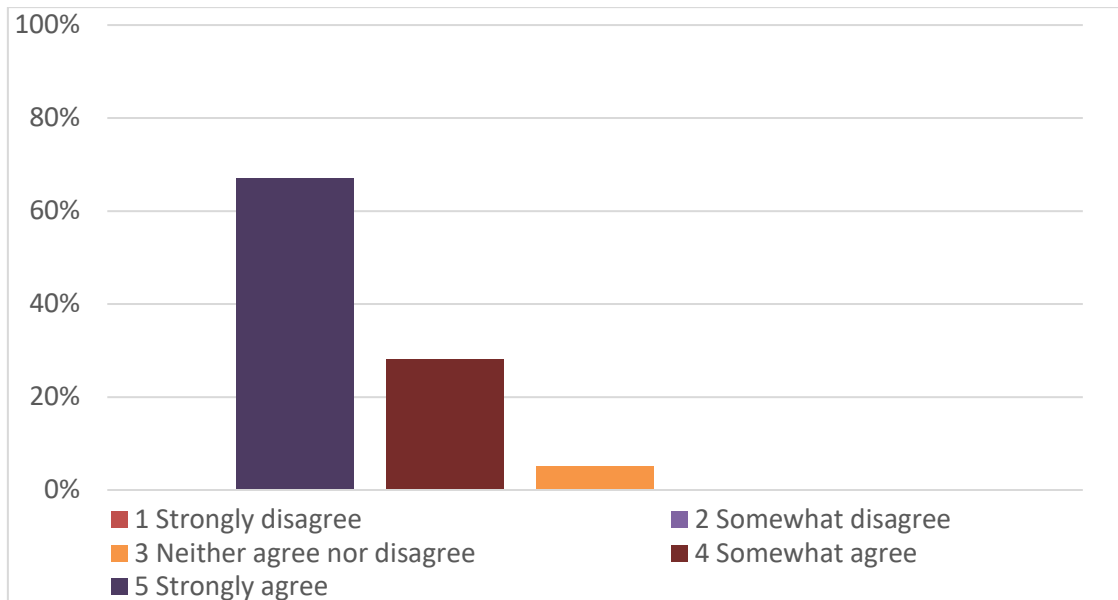
**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? According to my experience, it is easy to find HAMK's online application form.

Half of the respondents (50%) strongly agrees, 28 per cent somewhat agrees and 22 per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees on the statement. None disagrees on the statement, but one open answer was given:

***For us as an agent it is very easy, since we have done it before. If an applicant would try to do it themselves, it might take some time to locate the correct form***

n=18

Figure 46. According to my experience, it is easy to fill the online application form to HAMK

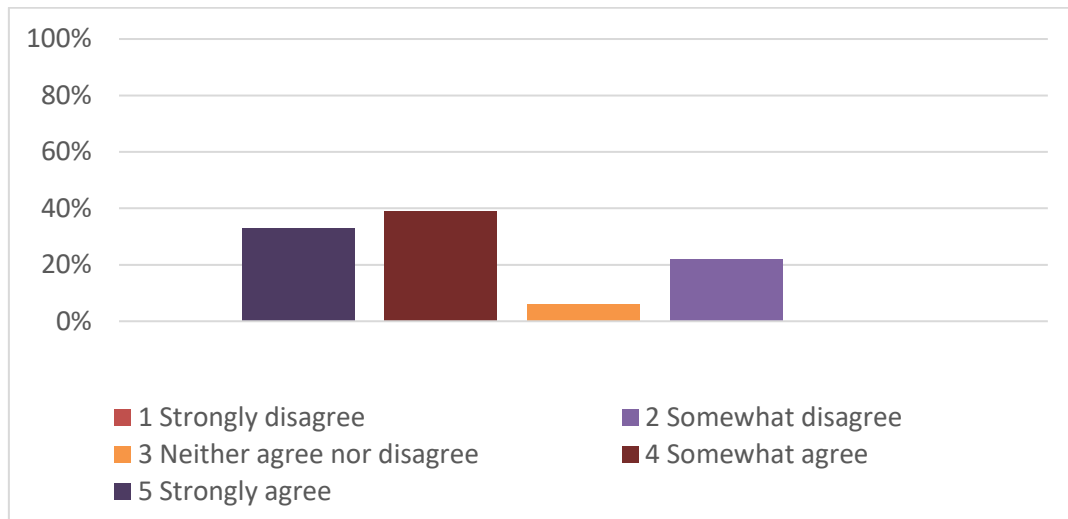


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? According to my experience, it is easy to fill the online application form to HAMK.

Sixty-seven (67) respondents strongly agrees, 28 per cent somewhat agrees and six (6) per cent of the respondents (=one respondent) neither agrees nor disagrees on the statement. None disagreed on the statement.

n=18

Figure 47. According to my experience, it easy to understand what HAMK's different student selection methods are



**Question:** According to my experience, it easy to understand what HAMK's different student selection methods (points awarded for entrance examinations, SAT-results, defined study certificates and school performance) are.

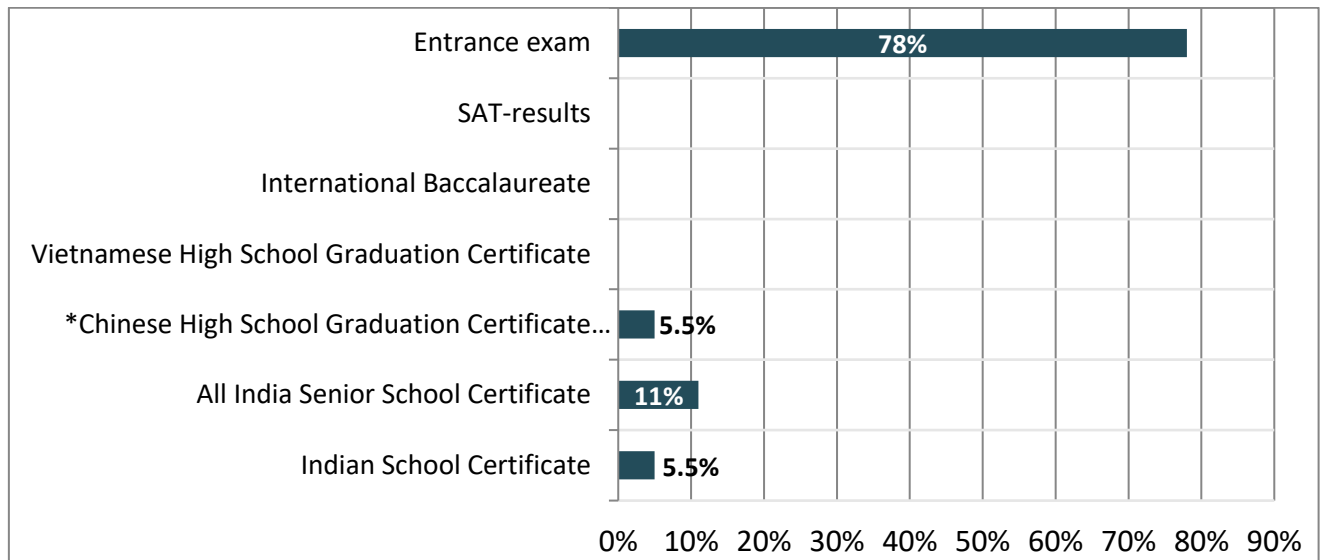
Thirty-three (33) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 39 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Six (6) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and 22 per cent somewhat disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagree on the statement were asked to explain their selection as open answers. Following answers were given:

***I think if you provide sample of the entrance exam students would become more ready for taking the exam.***

***it is better to put some description and then click the link to the related application***

n=18

Figure 48. Which of the following application methods would your customers most likely use?



\*Chinese High School Graduation Certificate from the following provinces: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Sichuan

**Question:** Which of the following application methods would your customers most likely use?

Clear majority (78%) of the respondents selected entrance exam as the application method their customers would most likely use. Eleven (11) per cent of the respondents selected *All India Senior School Certificate*, six (6) per cent (=one respondent) *Indian School Certificate* and six (6) per cent *Chinese High School Graduation Certificate*. None selected SAT-results, International Baccalaureate or Vietnamese High School Graduation Certificate as the application method their customers would most likely use.

**Question (open):** According to your experience what are the most important aspects that has affected your customers' decision **NOT** to apply to HAMK?

*Nordic climate- not so much knowledge and information about Finland, lack of friends studying in the country*

*Tuition fee and not located in Helsinki.*

*Tuition fees, Finnish Weather, Hard to get residence permit.*

*International students first consider the annual tuition fee and a city where they can find a part-time job.*

*the university rank or reputation*

*Difficult admission test*

*Master programs (Full Time) are not available for International Students*

*Generally, the cancellation rate has been lower for HAMK than for other institutions in our portfolio. Those who have cancelled decided to go to another country - Denmark.*

*Practical oriented studies*

*the brand is still not widely recognised amongst secondary school students*

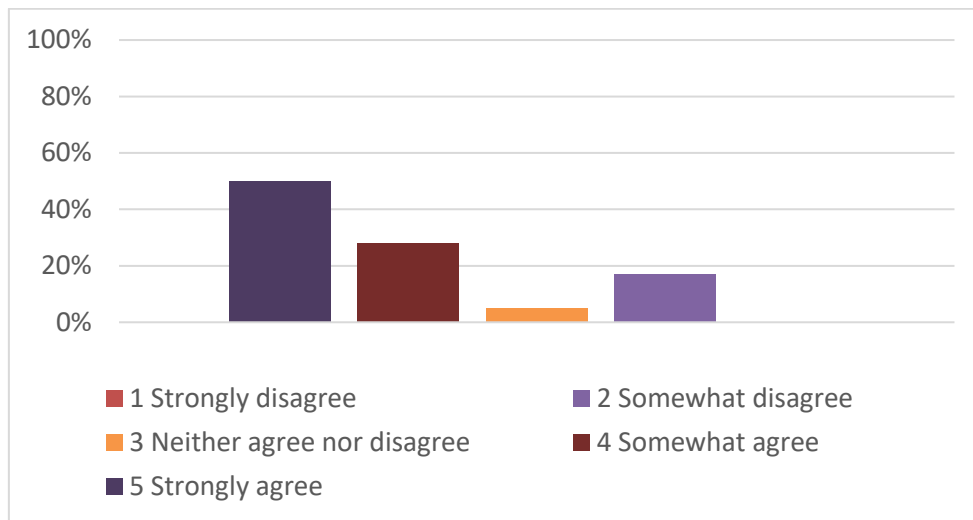
*Master Full-Time courses not available for International students*

*Visa decisions take a long time*

*Lack of full time Master programs*

n=18

Figure 49. According to my experience, the arrangements of HAMK's virtual entrance exams have been successful



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? According to my experience, the arrangements of HAMK's virtual entrance exams have been successful.

Half of the respondents (50%) strongly agrees and 28 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Six (6) per cent of the respondents (=one respondent) neither agrees nor disagrees and 17 per cent somewhat disagrees on the statement. No one strongly disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagree on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. Following answers were given:

***I think it is better if agents take the exam, I mean you provide the questions but we share it with the students, network connections, possibility to have vpn in Iran all of these makes hard to take online entrance exam***

***Many technical issues and miscommunication with the student. The team in charge of helping the student during the exam is not fast enough to help. So the students miss the exam because of the technical failure that could not be solved on time.***

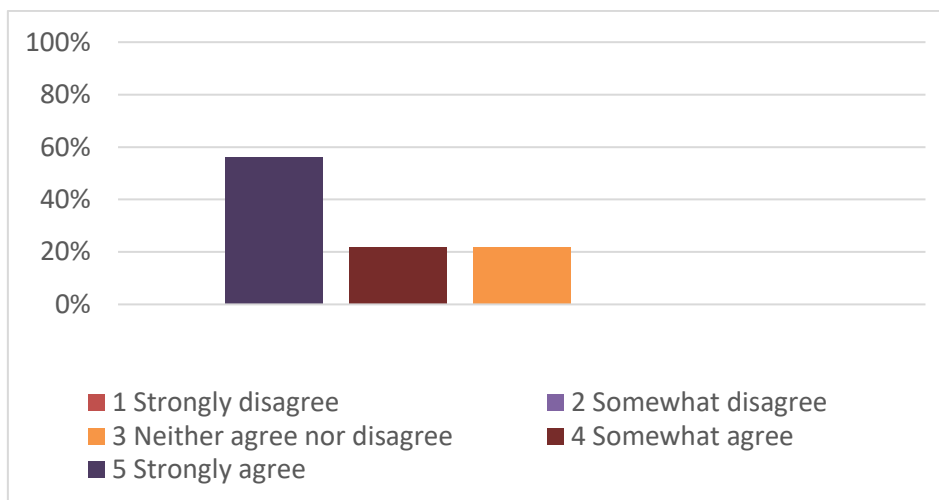
***Internet connection sometimes is not so good sometimes, especially interviews. if HAMK can organise the test in china + online exam at other time, it would be better***

### 5.2.3 Information provided to accepted students

The third group of questions and results is related to information provided to accepted students.

n=18

Figure 50. According to my experience, the accepted students are provided enough information to get prepared for starting studies at HAMK



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? According to my experience, the accepted students are provided enough information to get prepared for starting studies at HAMK.

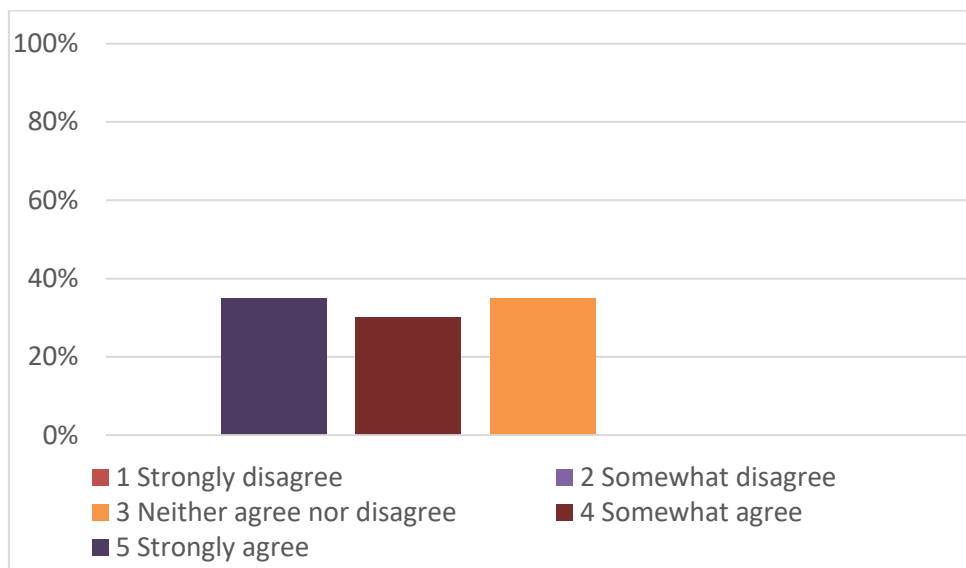
More than half of the respondents (56%) strongly agrees, 22 per cent somewhat agrees and another 22 per cent neither agrees nor disagrees on the statement. No one disagrees on the statement, yet two open answers were given:

***The application process for student housing was slightly unclear for the students.***

***They always ask for further help with the accommodation reservation and arrival service.***

n=17

Figure 51. According to my experience, the students that are required to pay for tuition fee are provided enough information from HAMK to make the payment

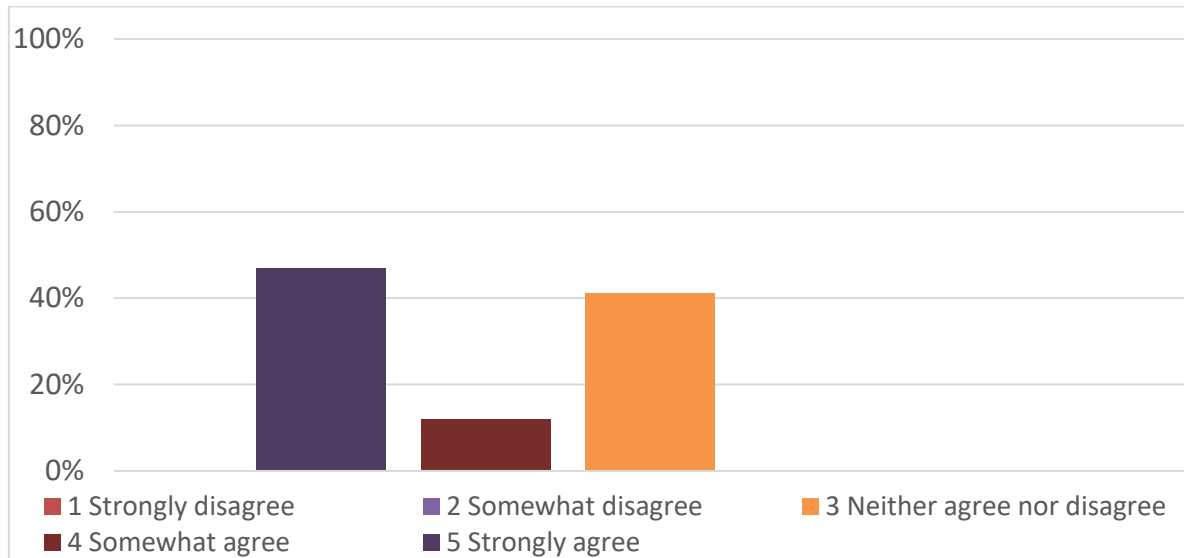


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? According to my experience, the students that are required to pay for tuition fee (non-EU/EEA citizens) are provided enough information from HAMK to make the payment.

Thirty-five (35) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees, 29 per cent somewhat agrees and 35 per cent neither agrees nor disagrees on the statement. No one disagrees on the statement.

n=17

Figure 52. HAMK's decision to let students to pay their tuition fee in three installments for their first year of study helped or made it possible for my customers to start their studies at HAMK

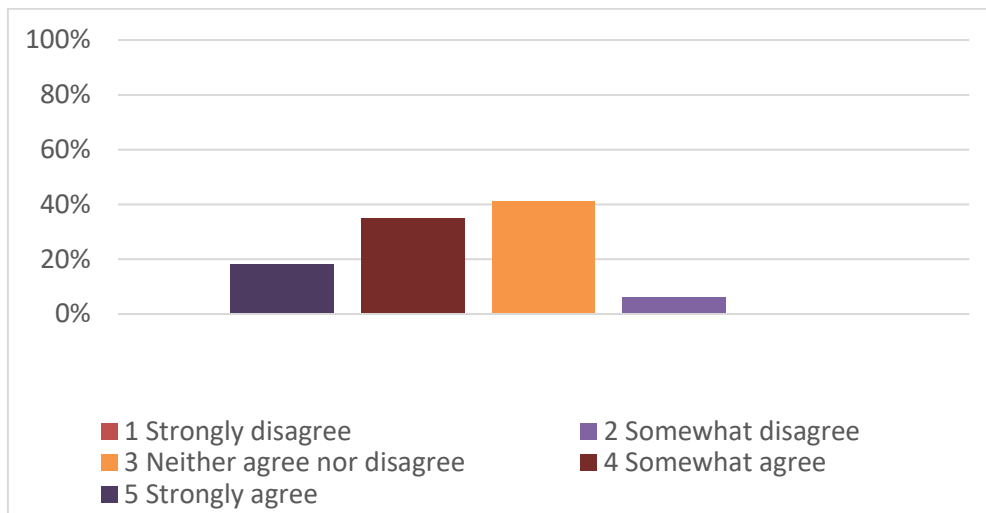


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? HAMK's decision (due to COVID-19) to let students to pay their tuition fee in three installments for their first year of study helped or made it possible for my customers to start their studies at HAMK.

Almost half of the respondents (47%) strongly agrees, 12 per cent somewhat agrees and 41 per cent neither agrees nor disagrees on the statement. No one disagrees on the statement.

n=17

Figure 53. According to my experience, it is easy to find instructions for applying residence permit to Finland



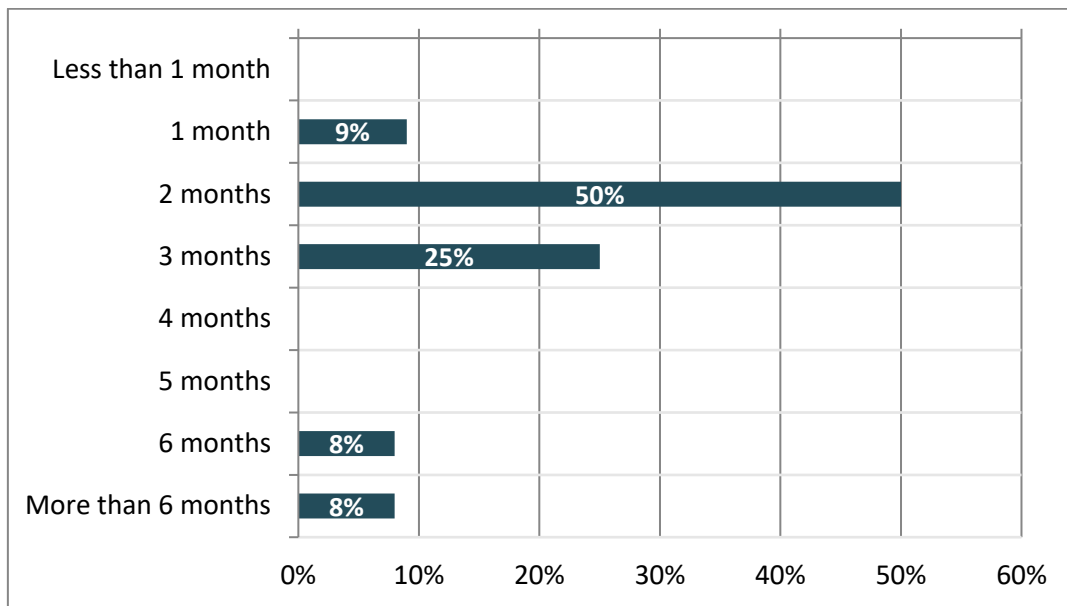
**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? According to my experience, it is easy to find instructions for applying residence permit (needed when the accepted student is not an EU/EEA citizen) to Finland.

Eighteen (18) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 35 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Forty-one (41) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and six (6) per cent (=one respondent) somewhat disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. One answer was left:

***the Finnish embassy website does not state very clearly what is needed for students' resident permit***

n=12

Figure 54. How long has the residence permit application processes to Finland of your customers typically taken?

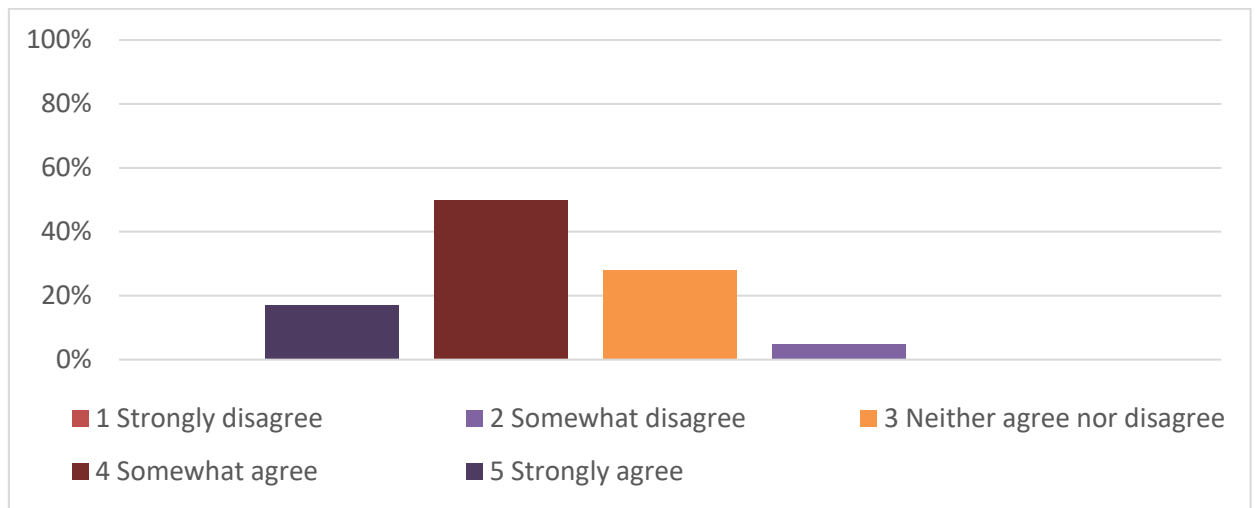


**Question:** How long has the residence permit application processes to Finland of your customers typically taken? (from submitting an application to receiving a residence permit)

Half of the respondents (50%) replied that it has typically taken two (2) months for their customers to get residence permits after application. Fourth of the respondents (25%) replied that the process has taken three (3) months, whereas nine (9) per cent replied that it has taken only one (1) month. Eight (8) per cent (=one respondent) selected option *6 months* and eight (8) per cent option *More than 6 months*.

n=18

Figure 55. According to my experience, it is useful for students to have opportunity to complete HAMK's virtual orientation studies before the actual studies start



**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? According to my experience, it is useful for students to have opportunity to complete HAMK's virtual orientation studies before the actual studies start.

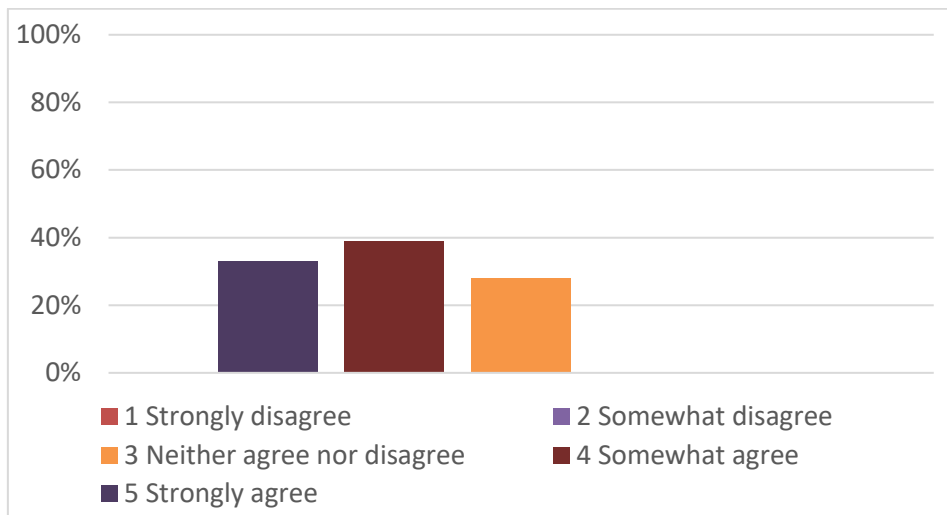
Seventeen (17) per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 50 per cent somewhat agrees on the statement. Twenty-eight (28) per cent of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees and six (6) per cent (=one respondent) somewhat disagrees on the statement. The respondents that disagrees on the statement were asked to explain their selection as an open answer. Following answers were given:

***Please send us information on this. We have not been receiving this. If we are informed about opportunities like this we can bring them to students' attention.***

***Orientation studies is a chance to get to know the campus, the city, to meet people, to get acclimatization, etc. You won't get all these virtually***

n=18

Figure 56. According to my experience, HAMK's new students are provided enough information about accommodation options in the campus towns

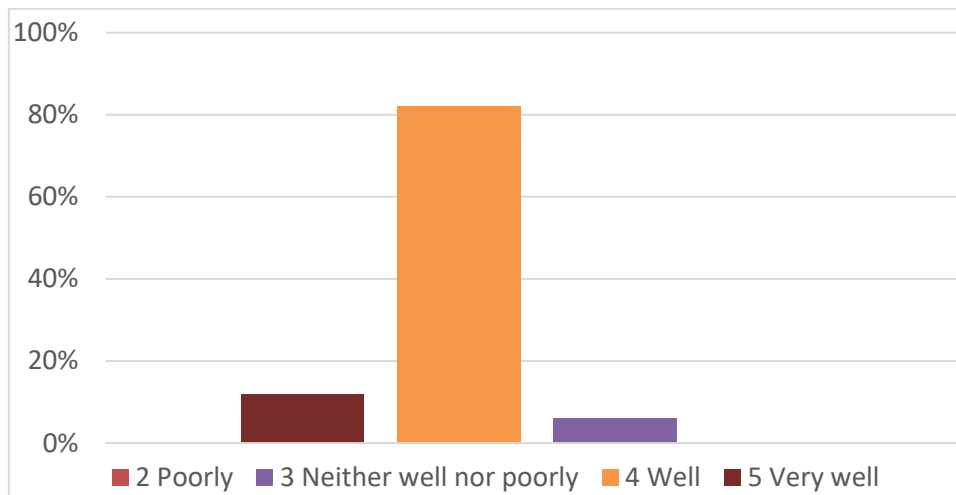


**Question:** What do you think about the following statement? According to my experience, HAMK's new students are provided enough information about accommodation options in the campus towns.

Third of the respondents (33 %) strongly agrees, 39 per cent somewhat agrees and 28 per cent neither agrees nor disagrees on the statement. No one disagrees on the statement.

n=17

Figure 57. How has the studies of your customers that have started their studies in autumn 2020 began?



**Question:** According to your information, how has the studies of your customers that have started their studies in autumn 2020 began?

Twelve (12) per cent replied that their customers' studies have started very well, whereas majority of respondents (82%) replied that the studies have started well. Six (6) per cent of the respondents (=one respondent) selected option *Neither well nor poorly*. No one replied that the studies of their customers' have started poorly. Option *Very poorly* dropped off the questionnaire by mistake but according to the results that didn't have a considerable affect to the results.

The last question is an open question for any information or feedback.

**Question:** Is there something else you would like to share with us?

**Answers:**

*I would like to add that Migri are not having any serious logic of granting students residence permit or not. Which affect directly students decision on applying to study in Finland or not.*

*HAMk should have the conspicuous selling points of why students choose HAMK*

*Try to launch some master programs fill time for International students.*

*Please launch some courses for Master Full time*

*1. Unavailability of full time Master programs*

*2. Entrance tests should be conducted more frequently.*

*3. Length of Engineering Entrance test*

*4. In case of student faces some technical issues (such as camera etc.) but still completes the test, they should be considered if passed and not asked to re-attempt the test.*

*5. In case student doesn't score good marks in one of the tests, they must be given a chance to attempt that particular test only.*

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 Replying to research questions

The key research question of the research is *How to improve the international student recruitment process of Häme University of Applied Sciences to increase the number of prospective students taking a study place at HAMK?* The main research question was broken into more defined questions and the aim of the research was to find answers to them.

1. What are the phases of the student recruiting process of international degree students at the moment?

With Service blueprint it was possible to visualise the recruiting process of the applicants' and students' point of view and recognise the stakeholders and employee actions involved. The student and agent surveys were created based on the identified steps of the customer journey. Creating the Service blueprint was quite arduous and time consuming, but it was worth completing. Besides recognising the steps, actions and stakeholders, the visualisation of the process made it possible to perceive existing and potential cooperation between stakeholders.

2. What are the weak points of the process?

According to the surveys, following points should be taken in account when developing the recruiting process:

- Student selection methods (points awarded for entrance examinations, SAT-results, defined study certificates and school performance) should be presented more clearly.
- More detailed information about ability to get financial aid (scholarship) should be available.

- More information and guidance are needed in activities outside HAMK: residence permit application, applying and renting accommodation and registering to Finnish Population Information System.
- Information and instructions of registering to the Finnish Population Information System to receive a personal identity code and Finnish home municipality should be included into the orientation programmes of all English-taught degree programmes.
- Agents should be provided information about orientating studies as well.

According to the Value Proposition Canvas, following points could help in preventing and solving possible challenges (pains) faced in the application process by applicants and students:

- Offering relevant information clearly: visually clear web pages, easy to navigate to the right pages, text that is easy to understand (in all communication)
- Answering to e-mails and other messages (study portals, Facebook, Instagram) clearly, with needed information and in a reasonable time, also in summertime
- Making sure that right contact information is easy to find (available in many places), developing contact information searching engine so that contact information could be searched by title, degree programme, campus, department, and field of study etc.
- Clearly explaining the application method options and the phases included on the web pages (degree programmes web pages and studyinfo.fi)
- Providing links to the application pages in many places on HAMK's web pages
- Providing clear instructions of the required documents (e.g. what does a certificate mean)
- Providing more defined information on the exam content (e.g. type and level of math)
- Providing sample of the entrance exam/ old exams
- Providing possibility to call the exam team in case of problems (currently only e-mail address given)

- Ensuring fast reaction when applicant is facing technical problems, possibility to join the exam late or retake only the missed part of it
- Taking in account that internet connection is weaker in many countries than in Finland
- Adding visual tabs to the web page (opening more information or leading to another web page) for new degree students of
  - Enrolling for the academic year (instructions and link to studyinfo.fi)
  - Scholarship system (leading to *Tuition Fees and Scholarships* web page)
  - Paying tuition fee (leading to *Tuition Fees and Scholarships* web page)
  - Activating HAMK's user ID (instructions, link to the account activating web page)
  - Accommodation (leading to the *Accommodation* web page)
  - Residence permit (providing step by step instructions for applying for residence permit, phases and required documents, link to the web page of Finnish Immigration Service)
  - Arrival instructions (leading to *Campuses and Maps* web page)
- Sending reminding message about enrollment to the students that have accepted a study place (and paid for the tuition fee)
- Developing HAMK's town specific accommodation web pages (e.g. providing information of phases of the accommodation rental process and types of apartments)
- Developing the system for handling e-mails sent to [tuitionfee@hamk.fi](mailto:tuitionfee@hamk.fi)
- Arranging study tool pop up/virtual support sessions in the beginning of the academic year
- Updating instructions based on the frequently asked questions sent by students and survey results if available
- Gathering information provided in orientation (presentations, instructions, links) to Learn platform
- Reminding students about the registration at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency in the teacher tutor meetings and by e-mail/Yammer/ToDo/

3. To which phases or activities of the process the customers are satisfied with?

### **Looking for information**

Most respondents of the student survey agree that it is easy to find and understand HAMK's application instructions, apply, and take part in entrance exams. Despite of this, around 60 percent of the respondents contacted HAMK staff for further information, mostly by e-mail. Majority of the respondents contacted admissions office, around half used sent message to askus e-mail address and a bit under half used degree programme's direct e-mail address. Almost 70 per cent of the respondents that contacted HAMK staff are satisfied with the content and speed of the responses.

Clear majority of the respondents of the agent survey agree that they have received all the needed information from HAMK's representative. Most of the respondents have been satisfied with the content and speed of communication with HAMK and agree that HAMK's web pages have needed information.

### **Entrance examination**

Almost all the respondents (95%) used entrance exam as an application method and most of the respondents were satisfied with the entrance examination communication and arrangements. Some applicants faced some technical problems during the exam. It is also important to keep in mind that internet connections are not strong in all countries.

### **Getting prepared for studies at HAMK**

Most respondents of the student survey were satisfied with the information provided for getting prepared for studies at HAMK (acceptance letter, website for new degree students). Majority of the respondents didn't have problems in accepting a study place, enrolling to the academic year, activating a HAMK user ID, and paying for tuition fee, but some respondents faced some technical challenges or did not know how to proceed. HAMK's decision to provide possibility to pay the tuition fee in three parts helped almost ninety (90) per cent of

the respondents. More than half of the respondents completed orientating studies and clear majority found it easy to start working on them and found them useful. Most of the respondents were contacted by a tutor and majority found it useful.

4. How can the process be developed with Service Design theory?

### **Concentrating on customer experiences**

In service design the focus is on the customer needs, not on the needs of an organization (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020). Because of this, the Service blueprint was created to understand the customer journey and student and agent surveys were conducted to collect information on customer experiences.

### **Human-centric approach**

In service design, the development work is human-centric and that is why everyone involved in the services should also be involved in the development process (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020). In the research work, HAMK staff members that are providing the services in the recruiting process (i.e. staff of Admissions Services and Strategic communications) were involved in creating the Service blueprint, in the creation of survey questions and also partly in establishing the Value Proposition Canvas. The role of the surveys was to collect experiences and feedback from the students that were involved in the application process recently and agents who are external stakeholders supporting their customers in application process and getting prepared for studies.

### **Observing service with a holistic approach**

In service design services are observed and designed as a unified system including all stakeholders, interactions between them and the material and infrastructure involved (Interaction Design Foundation, n.d.). The service can also be divided into frontstage and backstage components. The service components that are visible for customers are considered as frontstage and the ones that are not visible for them are backstage

components. (Gibbons, 2017) It is also important to identify both internal and external stakeholders as the cooperation of these two is vital in creating successful service process (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020).

Service blueprint was a useful tool in recognising and visualising the people, props (artefacts) and processes involved in the recruiting process and made it easier to observe the process as a whole.

## 6.2 Suggestions for the future

As the service is never ready or perfect, the development process should continue. It is recommended to continue collecting information from customers and other stakeholders involved in the process and develop the process accordingly. The surveys used in this research could be updated and conducted annually. It would also be useful to keep the Service Blueprint updated. To be able complete the Value Proposition Canvas with *gains* and *gain creators*, customer profiles should be created. When the COVID-19 allows, it is recommended to use co-creative workshops as the way to collect data from students and staff and in developing and updating the Service blueprint and Value Proposition Canvas to increase the qualitative data. In development process, it is recommended to keep in mind the activities *discover, define, develop, and deliver* when identifying the problems and suitable solutions for them. It is also vital to have both divergent (searching for opportunities) and convergent (making decisions and selecting) phases in the process.

When providing information in different communication channels and communicating with customers and other stakeholders, it is important to make sure that information is easy to find and it is written and visualised clearly. According to the student survey, most of the applicants are from countries where English is not among the national/public languages. Thus, the level of English skills of the applicants and students most likely vary. It is also important to keep in mind that the IT skills of the applicants and students might be in different levels. There are also differences in the speed and quality of Internet connections around the world. This should be taken in account especially with entrance exam arrangements.

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Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Praying for tuition fee if not an EU/EEA citizen	Enrolling as present/absent for an academic year at studyinfo.fi	Applying for residence permit from the Finnish Immigration Service if not an EU/EEA citizen	Only non-EU/EEA citizens (Embassy or consular of a Finnish Immigration Service if in Finland) if not an EU/EEA citizen	Activating HAAMK user account (receiving a username and a password)	Competing HAAMK's orienting module at Moodle. Note: It is compulsory for engineering students to complete Finnish 1 course in the beginning of their studies, for everyone.
Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Instructing in making an account transfer (contact: messages and phone calls), by sending a payment receipt to the payer by e-mail	Note: EU/EEA citizens can enroll a present/absent after they have confirmed their study place.	Note: The accepted/declined information their non-EU/EEA students need to apply for a residence permit is available on the web pages of Finnish Immigration Service, guiding students asking about residence permit and directing them to the web pages of Finnish Immigration Service (messages and phone calls)	Writing at a Finnish mission (embassy or consular of a Finnish Immigration Service if in Finland) if not an EU/EEA citizen	Instructing in activating the HAAMK account (messages and phone calls), solving technical problems (IT department)	Instructing how to get to the Moodle pages of the modules (orientation lessons), connecting to Moodle, teachers and students, solving technical problems (IT department)
Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Staff of Financial department (sends the receipt, via mail, to the bank, via e-mail, via Communications (reply to questions))	Note: Instructions for enrollment are given in the acceptance letter which is sent by student affairs secretaries, instructing in completing enrollment at studyinfo.fi (contact: messages and phone calls), sending instructions for arriving to the campuses and about the beginning of studies	Student Affairs secretaries (sending acceptance letters), Staff of Admission Services (sending acceptance letters and applying to questions)	Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Staff of Strategic Communications, Admission Services (directing to contact IT) and IT Services	Teachers of the courses and staff of Strategic Communications and IT Services
Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Agents instructing in making an account transfer. Banks: communication with the personnel of banks	Agents instructing in completing enrollment at studyinfo.fi	Agents instructing in completing the residence permit application, communicating during the process, informing about the result and in case of a positive result, sending residence permit card	Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Agents instructing in activating the HAAMK account (receiving a username and a password)	Automated messages/ feedback/results
Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Instant notification of a successful account transfer (the payer's bank)	When a student is added to the student register, an automated message requesting and instructing student to activate his/her HAAMK user accounts sent	Finnish Immigration Service: instant notification and e-mail of a successful submission of a residence permit application (letter or video)	Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Instructing in the phases of activating the HAAMK account (automated notifications), providing username and password, and a 5 digit activation code	
Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Writing instructions for paying for a tuition information between interested departments (financial->admissions)	Writing instructions on how and by which date students have to enroll for an academic year (acceptance letter, new exchange web page)	Writing information about the need of residence permit and how to apply for EU/EEA citizens (acceptance letter, web pages), communication with agents	Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Writing instructions for activating the HAAMK account (using the web page for user account activation)	Writing instructions for finding and logs in to Moodle pages of the modules, planning and writing instructions, creating and downloading material and linking teaching material and adding features and functions
	Staff financial department (provides information, Admission Services (informs student to the student register))	Staff of Admissions Services and Strategic Communications; Student Services (web page)	Staff of Admission Services, Strategic Communications and Student Services (acceptance letter, new student web page)	Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Staff of IT Services and Strategic Communications	Teachers of the courses, staff of Student Services (web page for new students), IT Services, Strategic Communications (replying to questions)
Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Agents: writing instructions for paying tuition fee for HAAMK	Agents: writing instructions on how and by which date students have to enroll for an academic year	Agents and Finnish Immigration Service: Writing instructions for applying residence permit by mail	Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Agents: writing instructions for activating the student account at HAAMK	
Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Transferring money, collecting, storing and sharing data	Collecting, storing and sharing data	Collecting, storing and sharing data	Only non-EU/EEA citizens	Collecting, storing and sharing data	Collecting, storing and sharing data



## Appendix 2: Questionnaire for students

### Questionnaire for the new international students in English-taught degree programmes at HAMK

1. Select your home country, please

Albania

Algeria

American Samoa

Afghanistan

Andorra

Angola

Anguilla

Antarctica

Antigua and Barbuda

Argentina

Armenia

Aruba

Australia

Austria

Azerbaijan

Bahamas

Bahrain

Bangladesh

Barbados

Belarus

Belgium

Belize

Benin

Bermuda

Bhutan

Bolivia, Plurinational State of

Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba

2. Select your degree programme, please

Bioeconomy Engineering

Computer Applications

Construction Engineering

Electrical and Automation Engineering

International Business

Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology

Smart and Sustainable Design

3. Select your age group, please

16-19 years

20-25 years

26-29 years

30-39 years

40-49 years

50+ years

4. Select your gender, please

Male

Female

Other or I prefer not to answer

## Questions about application instructions and support

What do you think about the following statement?

5. It was easy to find HAMK's application instructions.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

6. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

7. It was easy to understand HAMK's application instructions.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

8. If you disagree, please explain why.

9. Is there some information concerning application process that you would have needed?

Yes. Please share what:

No

10. Were you helped by an international agent? (searching for information and in application process)

Yes. Which one?

No

11. Did you contact HAMK staff to get more information or help during the application process?

Yes

No

12. If yes, which communication channel(s) did you use? (choose as many as you like)

E-mail: Ask us (askus@hamk.fi)

E-mail: Admission services (admissions@hamk.fi)

E-mail: Degree programme (e-mail address of the degree programme)

Study portal

Facebook

Instagram

Phone (Admission services)

Other, please share

13. If you contacted HAMK staff, how satisfied you are with the service you received? (speed of response and content)

1 Very  
dissatisfied

2 Somewhat  
dissatisfied

3 Neither satisfied nor  
dissatisfied

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Very  
satisfied

14. If you are dissatisfied, please explain why.

## Questions about application

What do you think about the following statement?

15. It was easy to understand HAMK's application instructions.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

17. It was easy to fill the online application form to HAMK's degree programmes.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

19. It was easy to understand what HAMK's different student selection methods (points awarded for entrance examinations, SAT-results, defined study certificates+ school performance) are.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. If you disagree, please explain why.

21. Which of the following application method did you use?

- Entrance exam
- SAT-results
- International Baccalaureate
- Vietnamese High School Graduation Certificate
- Chinese High School Graduation Certificate from one the following provinces: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Sichuan
- All India Senior School Certificate
- Indian School Certificate

Questions about Entrance exam

If you did not take part in the entrance exam, please move to question 30.

What do you think about the following statement?

22. I am satisfied with the instructions provided about entrance exam.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

23. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

24. It was easy to register to HAMK's entrance exam platform.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

25. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

I am satisfied with the arrangements of the interview part of HAMK's entrance exam.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

27. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

28. I am satisfied with the arrangements of the written part of HAMK's entrance exam.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

29. If you disagree, please explain why.

Questions about acceptance information and confirming the study place

What do you think about the following statement?

30. The acceptance letter with Instructions how to start your studies attachment had all the information I needed to get prepared for studies at HAMK.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

31. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

32. It was easy to understand what actions I should take after receiving acceptance information.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

34. I am satisfied with the instructions provided on HAMK's Information for new students' web pages.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

36. It was easy to confirm the study place at HAMK.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. If you disagree, please explain why.

The following questions are only for non-EU/EEA citizens. Jump to question 43 if you are an EU/EEA citizen.

### Questions concerning tuition fee and residence permit matters

What do you think about the following statement?

38. The Instructions for paying tuition fee attachment sent along with the acceptance letter had all the needed information for me to make the tuition fee payment.

39. If you disagree, please explain why.

40. Did HAMK's decision (due to COVID-19) to let students to pay their tuition fee in three installments for their first year of study help or make it possible for you to start your studies at HAMK?

Yes

No

What do you think about the following statement?

41. It was easy to find instructions for applying residence permit to Finland.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

---

42. If you disagree, please explain why.

## Questions about getting started as a student

What do you think about the following statement?

43. It was easy to enroll as present/absent for an academic year at HAMK.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

45. It was easy to activate the HAMK user account (username and password)?

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

46. If you disagree, please explain why.

47. Did you complete HAMK's virtual orientation studies before or in the beginning of your studies?

- Yes
- No

48. If you completed HAMK's virtual orientation studies, was it easy to start working on them?

- Yes
- No. Please share why:

49. If you completed HAMK's virtual orientation studies, were they useful?

Yes

No. Please share why:

What do you think about the following statement?

50. I am satisfied with the information and instructions provided by HAMK to get started with my studies

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

51. If you disagree, please explain why.

52. How did you start your studies at HAMK?

As online studies from my home country (Online model)

As online studies in Finland (Online model)

Partly physically at Hamk's campus and partly as online studies (Hybrid model)

The following questions are for the students that have arrived to Finland.

Please jump to the question 66 if you are not in Finland yet.

Questions about accommodation and registration to the Finnish Population Information System

What do you think about the following statement?

53. I got enough information about accommodation options in my study town from HAMK.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

54. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

55. It was easy to apply for accommodation.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

56. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

57. I am satisfied with the accommodation rental process of the organization/ private landlord I rented my apartment from.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

58. If you disagree, please explain why.

Questions about arrival to Finland

What do you think about the following statement?

59. I found enough information for my arrival arrangements at HAMK's web pages.

60. If you disagree, please explain why.

Yes

No. Please share why:

61. Were you contacted by a student tutor before your arrival to Finland?

Yes

No

62. If you were contacted by a student tutor, did you find it useful?

Yes

No. Please share why:

63. Were you instructed by HAMK to get registered to the Finnish Population Information System to receive a personal identity code and Finnish home municipality?

Yes

No

What do you think about the following statement?

64. It was easy to register to the Finnish Population Information System to receive a personal identity code and Finnish home municipality.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

65. If you disagree, please explain why.

66. Is there something else you would like to share with us?

### **Appendix 3: Questionnaire for agents**

#### **Questionnaire about HAMK's degree student application process to Agents**

1. In which countries do you represent HAMK? (you can choose several countries)

Albania

Algeria

American Samoa

Afghanistan

Andorra

Angola

Anguilla

Antarctica

Antigua and Barbuda

Argentina

Armenia

Aruba

Australia

Austria

Azerbaijan

Bahamas

Bahrain

Bangladesh

Barbados

Belarus

Belgium

Belize

Benin

Bermuda

Bhutan

Bolivia, Plurinational State of

## Sources of information and communication

What do you think about the following statement?

2. I have received all the needed information from HAMK's representative.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. If you disagree, please share what information would you have needed.

What do you think about the following statement?

4. When I have contacted HAMK's staff, I have been satisfied with the speed and content of response(s)?

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

6. I have been able to find needed information from HAMK's web pages.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. If you disagree, please explain what is missing.

8. According to your experience, what are the most important aspects that have affected your customers' decision to apply to HAMK? (choose as many as you like)

- The reputation of Finnish education
- HAMK's reputation
- The content of the degree programme
- In Finland, HAMK was only one to offer the degree the prospective student was interested in.
- International environment
- Good options for exchange studies and double degrees
- Possibility to graduate fast
- Good online study options
- Practical oriented studies
- Good possibilities to continue studies to master-level
- The career expectancy after graduating from HAMK
- The prospective student believed that it was easier to get into HAMK than some other higher education institute
- Safety reasons; safe society, small amount of people
- Nature, Nordic climate, lack of pollution
- City where the campus is located
- Recommendations from the family, friends, or others
- Some other reasons, please share:

9. According to your experience what are the most important aspects that has affected your customers' decision NOT to apply to HAMK?

## Application

What do you think about the following statement?

10. According to my experience, it is easy to find HAMK's online application form.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

12. According to my experience, it is easy to fill the online application form to HAMK.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

14. According to my experience, it easy to understand what HAMK's different student selection methods (points awarded for entrance examinations, SAT-results, defined study certificates and school performance) are.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. If you disagree, please explain why.

16. Which of the following application methods would your customers most likely use?

- Entrance exam
- SAT-results
- International Baccalaureate
- Vietnamese High School Graduation Certificate
- Chinese High School Graduation Certificate from the following provinces: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, and Sichuan
- All India Senior School Certificate
- Indian School Certificate

What do you think about the following statement?

17. According to my experience, the arrangements of HAMK's virtual entrance exams have been successful.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

18. If you disagree, please explain why.

Information provided to accepted students

What do you think about the following statement?

19. According to my experience, the accepted students are provided enough information to get prepared for starting studies at HAMK.

1 Strongly  
disagree

2 Somewhat  
disagree

3 Neither agree nor  
disagree

4 Somewhat  
agree

5 Strongly  
agree

20. If you disagree, please share what is missing.

What do you think about the following statement?

21. According to my experience, the students that are required to pay for tuition fee (non-EU/EEA citizens) are provided enough information from HAMK to make the payment.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. If you disagree, please share what is missing.

What do you think about the following statement?

23. HAMK's decision (due to COVID-19) to let students to pay their tuition fee in three installments for their first year of study helped or made it possible for my customers to start their studies at HAMK.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. If you disagree, please explain why.

What do you think about the following statement?

25. According to my experience, it is easy to find instructions for applying residence permit (needed when the accepted student is not an EU/EEA citizen) to Finland.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. If you disagree, please explain why

27. How long has the residence permit application processes to Finland of your customers typically taken?  
(from submitting an application to receiving a residence permit)

- Less than 1 month
- 1 month
- 2 months
- 3 months
- 4 months
- 5 months
- 6 months
- More than 6 months

What do you think about the following statement?

28. According to my experience, it is useful for students to have opportunity to complete HAMK's virtual orientation studies before the actual studies start.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. If you disagree, please explain why

What do you think about the following statement?

30. According to my experience, HAMK's new students are provided enough information about accommodation options in the campus towns.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. If you disagree, please explain what is missing

32. According to your information, how has the studies of your customers that have started their studies in autumn 2020 began?

2 Poorly	3 Neither well nor poorly	4 Well	5 Very well
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. If poorly, please explain why.

34. Is there something else you would like to share with us?