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Teacher exchange with the University of Staffordshire

3.2.2025 — Riikka Kramer



University of Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, UK.

Internationalisation and international mobility are important areas at TAMK so my teacher exchange with the University of Staffordshire, in the United Kingdom, was a valuable experience. In January 2025, I visited Stoke-on-Trent, the university's main campus. The main goal of my exchange was to deepen the relationship with the University of Staffordshire and consider different possibilities for future co-operation in education science and teacher education.

Background and Experience

Several years ago, some of our Professional Teacher Education lecturers (TAOK, in Finnish) visited the University of Staffordshire to engage in cooperative projects between English and Finnish students. Although the United Kingdom left the Erasmus scheme following Brexit, we are still looking at opportunities to re-develop joint projects.

Discussions for my teacher exchange were started already during the Autumn 2024 and the most suitable time was found to be the last week of January 2025. During my trip I met several teachers and students in the Institute of Education, which belongs to School of Health, Education, Policing and Sciences. Of course, I had also many teaching hours as required in an Erasmus+ exchange. I visited and taught students the following courses:

- Bachelor (BA) Education

- Post-compulsory Education and Training (PCET) Postgraduate Certificate in Education
- Postgraduate Certificate in Higher and Professional Education (PgCHPE)
- Academic Professional Apprenticeship (APA)
- Master (MA) Education
- Education Doctorate (EdD)

We had many interesting discussions with students and teachers during these lessons where we compared and analysed the similarities, differences and challenges facing the different education systems. I also had an engaging discussion about Entrepreneurialism in Education with the University's entrepreneurship lead.

Stoke-on-Trent is very nice place and is famous for its world-class pottery, such as Wedgewood. Also, some teachers informed me that the singer and songwriter **Robbie Williams** was born there as well as the unfortunate captain of the Titanic, **W.E. Smith**. Stoke-on-Trent has roughly the same population as Tampere.

Reflection and Future

I learned a lot about the education system at the University of Staffordshire and the UK. We found different possibilities for future co-operation in education science and teacher education. This exchange will influence also our lecturers' and students' internationalisation possibilities. For example, one possibility could be to arrange regular online lectures in some courses of both organisations and hopefully we will find also some joint student and teacher projects and publishing opportunities. We will also continue participating in the Institute of Education's *Research Sandwich*. This is a monthly informal online meeting where researchers present and discuss progress and challenges to their research projects. It's important to note that from 2nd April 2025, visiting lecturers from Finland may need to apply for electronic travel authorisation. In summary, TAOK and Institute of Education have already arranged a meeting to discuss more about our collaboration opportunities and look forward to further strengthening the ties between the two organisations.

Text and picture: Sirpa Levo-Aaltonen, Senior Lecturer