



# Exploring the Impact and Full Potential of International Education

## Questions of Competitiveness, Employment and Integration

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# Exploring the Impact and Full Potential of International Education

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RIIKKA VANHANEN, HELLI KITINOJA & MARJO PÄÄSKYLÄ (EDS.)

# Exploring the Impact and Full Potential of International Education

QUESTIONS OF COMPETITIVENESS, EMPLOYMENT AND INTEGRATION



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Riikka Vanhanen, Helli Kitinoja & Marjo Pääskylä (eds.)

EXPLORING THE IMPACT AND FULL POTENTIAL  
OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION  
Questions of Competitiveness, Employment and Integration

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# ABSTRACT

Riikka Vanhanen, Helli Kitinoja & Marjo Pääskylä (eds.)  
Exploring the Impact and Full Potential of International Education  
Questions of Competitiveness, Employment and Integration  
(Publications of JAMK University of Applied Sciences, 205)

The Finnish Network for International Programmes (FINNIPS) joins the majority of the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) together in cooperation over the development of international education in Finland. The main task of the network is to arrange the entrance exams to the UASs' English-taught degree programmes in a selection of countries outside Finland. However, along with the various development activities conducted within the network since its establishment at the end of 2009, the role of FINNIPS can be seen to stretch beyond the entry stage of studies.

The network's second publication is a cross-section of the various themes and on-going discussions that shape and affect the role and functions of international degree programmes in Finnish UASs. The topics regarding the quality and economic impact of education as well as the employment and social integration of the foreign higher education students are addressed in the articles of this publication.

The wide array of themes dealt with in the articles contributes to the quest to acknowledge the various dimensions and effects of international education in Finland. Furthermore, the publication seeks to address the most topical questions and map the current challenges related to international UAS education and, at the same time, offer tools and accounts of best practices with regard to the further development of it.

Keywords: Higher Education, Universities of Applied Sciences, International Degree Programmes, Tuition Fees, Quality of Education, Economic Impact, Employment, Employability, Social Integration



# FOREWORD

## THE FINNIPS NETWORK IS A HIGHWAY TO FINNISH HIGHER EDUCATION

The aim of this publication is to clarify the different aspects of internationalisation in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences.

Finnish higher education system has been ranked highly in several international comparisons. Good results are not a coincidence, they are based on long-term training and constant development of quality.

All Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences have been audited by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC, nowadays FINEEC, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre), and their quality management systems fulfill all international standards. One of the special strengths in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences is the strong cooperation between education and working life. During their studies students work in research and development projects in cooperation with companies to deal with the real working life cases. By these learning methods Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences have achieved a well-known role in the international higher education community.

In Finland, teachers' professionalism is ensured by high-quality vocational teacher education, which is carried out in five Universities of Applied Sciences. In recent years, Finland has become a popular study destination for the vocational teacher education also for foreigners from many continents.

In Finland we have a high level of education combined with pure Finnish nature and safe living environment. By these words I welcome all the foreign students to study in our Universities of Applied Sciences.

Markku Lahtinen

Chairman of Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences



## INTRODUCTION

# ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS – A GATEWAY TO INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Riikka Vanhanen

Between the first round of exams in 2010 and spring 2015, the Finnish Network for International Programmes (FINNIPS) has arranged entrance examinations in 20 different countries around the world. The country selection is decided on a yearly basis and 12 to 16 exam countries have been chosen as exam locations for each spring. Over the years, the exams have been arranged in Brazil, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Kenya, Latvia, Nepal, Poland, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Vietnam. Nearly 12,000 applicants have taken almost 14,000 exams at these occasions over the years. In all the six rounds of exams, of the applicants invited to the FINNIPS exams abroad, an average of 66% have participated in them. Approximately 50% of these applicants have been accepted as students to one of the network's universities of applied sciences (UASs). (Internal statistics of the FINNIPS exams 2010–2015.)

The number of universities of applied sciences participating in the network has varied between 14 and 22 (see Table 1 for the member UASs in 2015). In different years, the number of degree programmes, whose exams have been arranged within the cooperation has fluctuated between 43 and 67. Hundreds of staff members - lecturers and administrators - from the network's UASs have been involved in the cooperation efforts from the planning phase of the exams and the admissions process to the implementation of them.

The rationale for the UAS to engage in the cooperation efforts within the network comes down to the fact that entrance examinations are a compulsory step of the admissions process to the UASs' English-taught Bachelor degree programmes. All the applicants, no matter where they come from, have to take part in the exams in order to be considered for admission. Travelling to Finland for the exams is not possible for most of the applicants due to reasons related to visas, schedules and finances, for example. Hence, the main motives for the FINNIPS cooperation is to arrange the entrance exams abroad in order to get foreign students in the first place and to do it in a cost-effective, yet high-quality and trustworthy manner, which is possible only through concentrated action. As long as the entrance examinations are used as a selection method for the UASs' English-taught degree programmes and as long as there is interest in ensuring that they are truly international, recruiting foreign students and arranging the exams in countries outside Finland will be a necessity.

The exams are not, however, solely a necessity in terms of completing a compulsory step of the student selection procedure. They are also an opportunity to carefully screen the applicants' suitability to study in the UASs' degree programmes. The contents and emphases of the exams in the different fields of study are designed with the aim of selecting such applicants who are both capable and motivated to study in the programme and develop their professionalism within the field in question. Most of the testing takes place through written exams, which obviously could be arranged in alternative ways such as by using virtual solutions or putting emphasis on written applications. However, the group discussions, which are currently used as part of various different exams in the fields of Business, Nursing and Sports, require the presence of exam supervisors in order to be able to observe the applicants and their authentic interaction. The discussions are an important and effective way to assess not only the applicants' fluency in English but also their interaction skills and abilities to create accurate and mature contributions to the discussion. Being able to select the best applicants for the programmes is therefore also an important question of quality.

The exam supervisors taking care of the exam arrangements and conducting the assessments of group discussions are representatives of the network's UASs and to a large degree also the same people who will eventually be teaching the students in the study programmes. Indeed, it is the lecturers and even the heads of programmes, responsible for the studies in different ways, who are involved in the student selection process first hand. This provides them with useful practical-level knowledge about the prospective students including a glimpse of their cultural backgrounds, and offers a great standpoint for considering the teaching practices and possible development needs of the degree programmes. One of the benefits of the network cooperation, the accumulation of knowledge, does not therefore solely concern the actual exam arrangements, but also refers to the gaining and sharing of information, ideas and know-how about the overall development of the international degree programmes.

The organisation of the cooperation along with the carefully planned processes and measures regarding the exam arrangements have been described in more detail in the network's first publication "FINNIPS -Joint Efforts for Internationalisation" (2013). Therefore, instead of focusing on the network cooperation per se, the purpose of this publication is to take a step away from the admissions process and look into topics that emerge as areas of interest during the other stages of the studies within international degree programmes. Accordingly, the following description of the development activities of FINNIPS

sheds light on the ways in which the topical issues regarding international degree programmes are monitored, discussed and dealt with at various kinds of events, meetings and work groups, and when necessary, addressed by statements drawn up by the network's steering group.

## MARKETING, DAYS OF INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES AND PUBLICATIONS AS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES WITHIN FINNIPS

In addition to and alongside the entrance examinations, FINNIPS works on planning and implementing joint marketing efforts to promote the international degree programmes and Finnish UAS education in general. The marketing measures are often considered to focus on the student recruitment activities that closely precede the yearly application period but as the discussion about the tuition fees will show later on, the promotion of education is a much more complex process and requires continuous efforts and future-oriented strategic considerations about the aims and means of it.

To start with, joining forces in the area of marketing within FINNIPS has not been quite as straightforward as the cooperation in arranging the exams. At the beginning of the cooperation, the views regarding the network's role in marketing were divided: while some of the member UASs considered that the joint visibility of the network's degree programmes is a prerequisite for arranging the exams in different countries, some of the UASs held that the promotion of the educational offerings should be done by each UAS respectively. Due to these kinds of divergent views, the very first stages of the network cooperation were dedicated to the development of the entrance exams and ensuring the high quality of all the practices around them. However, as the coordination of the activities and exam arrangements started rolling and the marketing budgets at individual UASs started decreasing at the same time, it soon became evident that FINNIPS might also provide a useful platform for joint efforts in the area of marketing. FINNIPS nowadays has a website ([www.finnips.fi](http://www.finnips.fi)) that serves as a landing page for applicants interested in any of the network's UASs and their degree programmes. Furthermore, the network has a variety of brochures and presentations, which include, for example, descriptions of the range of study options as well as student testimonials. The marketing material thus opens up views to Finnish UAS education from different perspectives.

FINNIPS also participates in education fairs around the world. The network's representatives usually attend from three to five fairs prior to the

application period which takes place in January every year. Over the years the network has promoted the Finnish UASs' educational offerings and the chance to take the entrance exam in one's own country, or at least close to it, in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, the United Kingdom, China and Brazil. In addition to the fairs, FINNIPS has also carried out school visits and taken part in seminars promoting Finnish education in different countries. At all these occasions, being able to promote a number of different institutions and a great variety of study options in different fields of education has proven to be efficient and warmly welcomed by the audiences around the world. Individual UASs and their degree programmes may still have their own marketing measures aimed at attracting students from overseas. However, FINNIPS nowadays has a solid role in promoting jointly all the network's UASs and their programmes.

Since the very beginning of the network cooperation, FINNIPS has arranged several trainings for exam supervisors and admission services as well as workshops and panel discussion with participants, both from the member UASs and various interest groups. Based on the positive feedback received from these events and acknowledging the true need to create discussion forums around the topic of international UAS education, the network decided to expand the variety of its operations by adding a new event to the yearly calendar. In 2013, the network took over the coordination of the Days of International Degree Programmes, which had previously been arranged alternately by individual universities of applied sciences. However, since the events had not been arranged after 2010, FINNIPS made the decision to take responsibility for organising them.

The Days of International Degree Programmes is a two-day event that every autumn gathers around 150 participants from Finnish UASs and different interest groups to discuss and develop a variety of practices related to degree programmes taught in English at Finnish UASs. In the past two years, the topics have covered multicultural pedagogy, international student recruitment as well as the quality and competitiveness of international degree programmes, to name but a few. The themes of the event in the autumn 2015 will be built around the topics dealt with in this publication. Overall, the programme of the Days of International Degree Programmes always addresses current issues in the field of education and brings together teachers, administrators and other UAS staff members to develop the international degree programmes, not only in terms of class room practices but also in a wider framework.

In addition to the Days of International Degree Programmes, producing publications is considered as a means to generate and maintain active

discussion on the role and significance of international UAS education. “FINNIPS -Joint Efforts for Internationalisation” was published in 2013 with the aim of both introducing the network’s activities and stressing the relevance and value of international degree programmes for the overall internationalisation of UASs. The articles of the publication provide insights into the everyday practices, aims and challenges of the degree programmes in different study fields and overall, deal with similar questions that are also taken up in the Days of International Degree Programmes. The current publication follows the same lines of intention and seeks to contribute to the planning and evaluation of the international degree programmes, their activities and the wider framework of international education.

## NEW INITIATIVES AND CHANGES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SCENE EVOKE IDEAS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

As has been pointed out, the nature and scope of cooperation within the FINNIPS network has evolved along with the development of the network itself, as well as due to the needs of UASs and their ever-changing operational environment. Having said that, one of the important tasks of the network is to follow and, when needed, have its say on the constant development plans affecting UASs. The following remarks bring up a couple of examples of the current issues, which in 2015 influence the network’s activities and its plans regarding the future cooperation.

Thus far, there have not been tuition fees in regular degree programmes at Finnish HEIs. Tuition-free education has, without a doubt, been one of the unique features and distinctive factors when promoting the Finnish UAS education around the world. However, the newly formed government of Finland has, in its new Government Programme, outlined that tuition fees could be introduced to non-EU/EEA students (e.g. Study in Finland, 2015). There is no detailed information available about the schedules yet but it is expected that the initiative will proceed in the coming years. This will be a significant change for the degree programmes participating in the FINNIPS cooperation as there have not been tuition fees in these programmes for any students, regardless of where they come from.

In addition to not having tuition fees, applying for the degree programmes has been free for all the applicants so far. However, a change is taking place here as well and in the future, a fee will be charged for handling the applications of those applicants whose pre-higher education qualifications have been completed in countries outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland (Ministry of



Education, 2014). The €100 fee will be collected for the first time in the application period for studies starting in autumn 2016 (see e.g. Opintopolku.fi).

How both these fees will affect the English-taught programmes in Finnish UASs remains to be seen. However, the initial speculations made in the light of experiences from Sweden and some other countries suggest that the numbers of applicants will go down. As the list of exam countries at the beginning of this article reveal, a significant part of the FINNIPS exams are arranged in countries outside the EU/EEA and in the past few years, the largest groups of students have come from Russia, Nepal and Vietnam. This suggests that changes in the numbers of applicants can be expected to show clearly also in the FINNIPS statistics.

The above-described initiatives are not, by any means, the only changes requiring new actions within the operational environment of international degree programmes. Instead, the development needs and trends concern various areas of education and are advocated by different actors and instances both in Finland and globally. As the previous accounts disclose, along with the various development activities, the functions of FINNIPS clearly stretch beyond the entry stage of studies and thus raise new topics for discussion, which perfectly suits the network's role and purpose. None of the development work is, however, done solely by and within the network. An important part of the development activities consists of the input provided by the representatives of the network's numerous interest groups who offer their expert views and analysis regarding the issues that at different points of time are considered current and crucial. The publication at hand is an example of this kind of development work where the topical questions are discussed from different perspectives and answers sought to them together, as a joint effort. The following introduction regarding the contents of the publication reveals the most burning topics which in 2015 are to be addressed within the development of international UAS education.

## CONTENTS OF THE PUBLICATION

The publication is divided into four main chapters, each of which concentrates on its own theme. The chosen focuses are approached from different perspectives by writers representing universities of applied sciences and their important interest groups. The articles of the first part deal with different kinds of policies that steer the higher education (HE) practices both at national and international level. The second part brings up an important aspect as the economic impact of international higher education in Finland is considered.

The writings include statistical information as well as contemplations on the potential of international degree programmes in economic terms. The third chapter is centred around the theme of employment whereas the fourth and final chapter is dedicated to questions of the social integration of foreign degree students into Finnish society.

To start with, Kaisu Piironen from the Ministry of Education and Culture gives an overview of the topical issues in the internationalisation of higher education institutions (HEIs) by going through the Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government Programme. The article provides ideas regarding the future actions and development needs in HE internationalisation. Vice Rector Riitta Pyykkö's article, on the other hand, looks back at the internationalisation development of HEIs in Finland with a focus on international degree programmes and quality enhancement. Next, the article by President Tapio Varmola from Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences discusses the Bologna process and its impact on the internationalisation efforts within UASs. The last article of the first chapter is written by Berit Kiuru from the European Migration Network to provide a comprehensive idea of the policies and practices of student immigration. By mapping the current policy landscapes, providing facts and figures regarding migration and outlining the dimensions of HEIs' internationalisation, these writings together form the wider framework for the publication.

The focus of the second chapter is the economic impact of international UAS education and it starts off with a text by Irma Garam from CIMO. The article describes and analyses the findings of the studies conducted together by CIMO and VATT about the economic impact of international HE students in Finland. The next article by President Jussi Halttunen from JAMK University of Applied Sciences continues the contemplation on the impact of international degree programmes by providing an extensive description of the benefits that stretch from economic to cultural and from regional to societal level. The chapter is concluded by Timo Juntunen also from JAMK, who explores the potential of international education in terms new possibilities in the area of education export.

Chapter three deals with questions of employment and the enhancement of employability. Annika Forsander from the Ministry of Employment and the Economy starts off by outlining and analysing the labour markets as well as the competences needed within them. Next, Marita Aho from the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) continues on the theme by contemplating the ways in which HEIs could improve their cooperation with business life as well as pay attention to the importance of alumni relations while seeking to support the

employability of international degree students. The last two articles then provide accounts of concrete measures taken in UASs to enhance the employability of foreign students. First, Science Advisor Minna Söderqvist describes how at Kymenlaakso UAS, the Finnish language and job-seeking skills of foreign students, for example, have been supported with different actions. Then, International Relations Manager Nina Björn from JAMK University of Applied Sciences provides an account of the international Day at Work concept, within which foreign degree students gain a concrete experience of working in a Finnish company. The perspective of an employer can also be read as Petri Salminen, the CEO of Salminen & Tikka Ltd describes his experiences of the Day at Work event.

The last chapter of the publication concentrates on the social integration of international students. Taina Moisander from the Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (SAMOK) points to the importance of social integration while also assessing the challenges regarding it. The next two articles provide some answers to the questions and requests posed in some of the previous texts as concrete examples and models of the ways to support social integration are introduced. The first experiences are written by Director of International Relations Ulla Weiho from Lahti UAS and the other examples come from Seinäjoki UAS and are described by the Manager of International Affairs, Helli Kitinoja. Last, but certainly not the least is the article by Kwame Afreh, an alumnus of Laurea UAS's international degree programme, who shares his experiences about studying, working and living in Finland. The texts in the final chapter point to areas in need of development within practices aiming at supporting the integration of international students but at the same time, they offer concrete advice, tools and models to be tried out and further developed.

As the short introduction about the writers and their articles indicate, the topics are many and approached from a variety of perspectives. Some of the texts are founded on facts and figures, while some of them draw future visions by considering possible lines of action in more creative terms. This kind of combination of quantitative and qualitative information seems very appropriate when writing about international education and its various impacts, which can never be unambiguously measured in euros, dollars or any other currency. While some aspects of the effects and the full potential of international UAS education are unveiled and assessed in the writings of the publication, many of them are yet to be acknowledged and remain to be considered by the reader.

TABLE 1. FINNIPS member UASs in 2015

- Arcada University of Applied Sciences
- Centria University of Applied Sciences
- Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences
- Häme University of Applied Sciences
- JAMK University of Applied Sciences
- Kajaani University of Applied Sciences
- Karelia University of Applied Sciences
- Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences
- Lahti University of Applied Sciences
- Lapland University of Applied Sciences
- Laurea University of Applied Sciences
- Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences
- Novia University of Applied Sciences\*
- Oulu University of Applied Sciences
- Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
- Satakunta University of Applied Sciences
- Savonia University of Applied Sciences\*
- Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences
- Tampere University of Applied Sciences
- Turku University of Applied Sciences
- Vaasa University of Applied Sciences

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Opintopolku.fi. 2015. Hakemuksen käsittelymaksu tulossa syksyllä 2016. Accessed on 18 August 2015. Retrieved from: <https://opintopolku.fi/wp/valintojen-tuki/yhteishaku/korkeakoulujen-yhteishaku/hakemuksen-kasittelymaksu/>

Study in Finland. 2015. New government suggests tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students. Accessed on 1 June 2015. Retrieved from [http://www.studyinfinland.fi/front\\_page\\_news/101/0/tuition\\_fees\\_for\\_non-eu\\_eea\\_students](http://www.studyinfinland.fi/front_page_news/101/0/tuition_fees_for_non-eu_eea_students)

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\* UASs enrol for the FINNIPS cooperation on a yearly basis. Novia and Savonia Universities of Applied Sciences will not attend the entrance examination cooperation in the 2015–2016 term.

Vanhanen, R., Kitinoja, H. & Holappa, J. (Eds.). 2013. FINNIPS -Joint Efforts for Internationalisation. Publications of JAMK University of Applied Sciences 155. Accessed on 17 August. Retrieved from: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-830-278-3>



HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES  
AND THE QUALITY OF INTERNATIONAL  
DEGREE PROGRAMMES

# CURRENT ISSUES IN THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Kaisu Piironen

Internationalisation is strongly entwined with the production of new information and the core essence of research and education. Higher education and research has always been, and always will be, international. Juha Sipilä's Government Programme still places a lot of expectations on higher education. The programme states that, in 2025, the Finnish system of higher education will be of higher quality, more international, effective and efficient, or internationally competitive, than currently. In addition, the system of higher education must facilitate the regeneration of Finnish society based on high competence and produce competence for the resolution of global problems. Higher education institutions and scientific institutes anticipate the future and consider in their operations changes in the operating environment, such as the digitalisation often referred to in the Government Programme.

Internationalisation always impacts the teaching session and teachership in particular; the teaching session changes as the language and culture of instruction changes and the composition principles of teaching groups change. The internationalisation also reflects and is reflected in the cultural and language skill requirements of working life and challenges them to change, which leads to a new kind of human resources policy. Higher education institutions recruit foreign teachers and researchers more actively in order to offer a genuinely international, high-quality learning environment that meets the needs of modern working life. Once again, the Government Programme highlights the need to increase the internationalisation of education and research in general and more concretely remove the barriers to education exports during this term of government. Due to the newness of the Government Programme, some of the actions still lack more detailed entries or separate proposals for action.

Whichever way the entries of the Government Programme are interpreted, its implementation cannot disregard the international students studying in Finland or the experts and research, development and teaching personnel who work in Finland. The Finnish system of higher education can only be truly internationally competitive if it has international experts. In accordance with the objectives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the number of foreign nationals studying at Finnish higher education institutions has increased in



the 21st century; there are already almost 20,000 foreign degree students, which amounts to 6% of all students. The agreements between the Ministry of Education and Culture and higher education institutions set targets for the number of foreigners. The agreement procedure also monitors the number of degrees completed by foreign students. International students are also visible in the financing models of higher education institutions: in the university of applied sciences model as degrees completed by foreign students and in the university model as master's and doctoral degrees completed by foreign students.

## LANGUAGE SKILLS, TUITION FEES AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TAKEN UP IN THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME

The Government Programme states unequivocally that the employment of international students who have studied in Finland will be promoted and an investment will be made in their Finnish language skills. Work has started at the Ministry of Education and Culture to determine the current situation regarding language studies. The ministry will determine the state of the Finnish language education offered by the higher education institutions during 2015 and, together with the institutes, draw up development measures for studying Finnish by the end of spring 2016. The monitoring of studying Finnish will be incorporated with the information collection and feedback procedures regarding higher education institutions. Another aim is to determine whether higher education institutions could co-operate cross-organisationally in language education so that the students of different higher education institutions could benefit from the studies offered at different institutes. The migration policy section of the Government Programme highlights tuition fees for non-EU and non-EEA students. Where possible, the tuition fees could be compensated through tax deductions. Tuition fees were trialled in Finnish higher education institutions in 2010–2012 but, as only a small group of chargeable degree programmes participated in the trial, it is not possible to draw any proper conclusions based on the trial. Higher education institutions were quite cautious in applying for trial programmes; in the prevailing situation, some organised equivalent foreign-language programmes outside the trial. For this reasons, they wanted to avoid taking too many risks. Building chargeable programmes, especially in the strengths of higher education institutions, is laborious and expensive. In a situation where it was not known whether the trial would be continued, not everyone wanted to embark on it and instead organised equivalent

training free of charge. However, in the new situation where tuition fees are permanently recorded in the Government Programme, it is likely that they will be implemented more extensively by higher education institutions.

The entries on migration policy also highlight other elements that impact higher education institutions. The most straightforward mention is the statement that the employment opportunities of foreign students who have studied in Finland will be promoted. The placement of those with a master's or bachelor's degree in Finland has been monitored by Cimo and the Ministry of Education and Culture (CIMO, 2014). In 2011, 49% of foreigners who had completed a degree at a university of applied sciences were working in Finland one year after completing their degree. Of those who completed a degree at a university of applied sciences, students of the social, health, and sports fields found employment most often – 68% of them were working the following year.

## INTEGRATION INTO FINNISH WORKING LIFE SHOULD BE SUPPORTED

The International Student Barometer (2014) mapped students' satisfaction with higher education institutions in general but also with career services and their expectations regarding the kind of support they should offer in the first place. 90% of the international students studying in Finland were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the general situation in their own higher education institution. Finland is considered a safe country with a functional learning environment. However, the students' free-form comments reinforced the idea that there is room for improvement in the connections between curricula, career services and working life. Stronger connections are also wanted between the teaching staff and working life. Finnish higher education institutions received significantly poorer assessments than the reference countries in all the sections concerning the link between studies and working life. For example, 11% fewer respondents in Finland than in other countries believed that their studies would help them find a good job. They were generally less satisfied on average with the career counselling they received from the teaching staff and the career services of higher education institutions.

The survey clearly reveals that the integration of international students into Finnish working life should be supported more strongly during studies. The students were also asked about likely reasons why they would leave the country where they studied after completing their studies. Factors connected to employment were at the top of the list: students believe that they will go

elsewhere if there is no suitable work available in their own field, the language barrier prevents staying or employers are not interested in foreign jobseekers. In Finland, these factors were felt to be 4–6% more important than in the survey countries on average. International students at higher education institutions want and expect guidance and counselling about career paths and different options, including information connected to applying for jobs. Students also need help getting jobs and mapping appropriate work experience and job opportunities.

Help is undoubtedly needed. In 2013, CIMO in cooperation with Demos Helsinki implemented a survey project that examined the views of employers and students regarding the significance of international competence in working life. One of the key results was that international competence and international experts are not really recognised in working life. As part of the study, Demos Helsinki envisioned new understanding about the changing needs of working life and a new kind of competence that could meet the needs of the new era. Changing population, scant resources, the challenges of digitalisation and a global economy appear to be the central trends that are changing working life, and they impact the operating environment of all businesses and employers even if the company itself does not feel that it operates in an international market. The study raised the idea of expanded international competence alongside conventional international competence, requiring new kinds of skills, such as persistence, productivity and curiosity. The report indicates that Finnish working life and employers do not necessarily consider international experience a significant recruitment criterion but they still appreciate those exact abilities and skills that they feel international experience produces. The phenomenon is also visible in the fact that people who completed exactly the same degree at a Finnish higher education institution found different employment opportunities depending on their nationalities. (CIMO, 2014.)

## INTERNATIONALISATION IS A NECESSARY ASPECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Some of the Government Programme's migration policies touch upon the academic world –including policy definitions that strive to promote work-related migration and state that immigrants enhance our innovation capacity and know-how. Immigrants do not always have to be degree students at Finnish higher education institutions– they can be lecturers, specialists, persons involved in a start-up or students completing individual courses. The

possibilities are extensive, and not all windows have been opened yet. The Government Programme's immigration section also contains the requirement that an independent study of the costs of migration and its impact on our society be conducted. The study is doubtlessly needed – it will be good to get impartial information about a politically current and sensitive topic. Regarding higher education, the topic has been partially examined in a joint study by VATT Institute for Economic Research and CIMO, which looked at the impact of education offered to foreigners from the economic viewpoint. One of the key results was that an analysis restricted to the studying period does not give the whole picture of the economic impact because that phase focuses on the costs. The most significant benefits are only created after graduation, assuming the person finds employment and stays in the country. (Suhonen, 2015.) That is why examination of the economic impact of foreign students in higher education should be continued so that the study also covers the years following graduation. Thus, it must be ensured that students who have completed a degree in Finland are allowed to stay in Finland and find employment that corresponds to their education.

The Government Programme advises, encourages and even demands that higher education institutions operate in an international and high-quality manner. Internationalisation, foreign experts and operating methods that deviate from what is customary should be capitalised on, not feared! Finland's long-term objective is to be a country where people always want to learn new things. When we talk about higher education, we can say that learning new things is not accomplished with domestic manpower, methods and resources alone – when new things are studied at higher education institutions, internationalisation is always present. The global is local – in the end, it is only a matter of expanding the local dimension, first to national level and finally to the global dimension. Higher education institutions cannot afford to consider internationalisation as something separate from core activities; instead, internationalisation should be connected to the reality of the operating area in both everyday activities and grand speeches.

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# QUALITY ENHANCEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Riitta Pyykkö

In recent decades, the internationalisation of Finnish higher education has been systematic. Staff mobility began to increase in 1980s, and at the same time most universities increased language training for their staff. Especially at the beginning, internationalisation was tightly connected with the use of English as the teaching language. There was also a threat; changing the language of teaching to English was considered to make the programme international, and less attention was paid to other elements of internationalisation, such as working in a multicultural auditorium, with different academic and learning cultures.

In the 1990s, there were also some state financial incentives for both research universities and for the new universities of applied sciences. The Finnish centre for international mobility CIMO was established in 1991, and a major stimulus for internationalisation on a European level was Finnish membership of the European Union in 1995.

In the 1990s, the first international degree programmes also started, although the emphasis in internationalisation was still more on exchange studies. At the beginning, there were also attempts to use languages other than English (German, French, Russian, Swedish), but quite rapidly the only language of so-called 'international programmes' started to be English (except a few programmes on Finnish language and culture for foreigners). Today the position of English is not questioned.

During the last 15 years, a major driver of the internationalisation of higher education has been the Bologna process, building up the European Higher Education Area together with the European Research Area. This has brought us comparable three-cycle degree structures, renewed credit systems, recognition of studies and learning, national and European qualifications frameworks, etc. Europe continues to be in global competition, which also means intensified cooperation with other parts of the world.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAMMES

International programmes and teaching in English at universities are not isolated activities. This means that every university should also have a university-wide approach to the development of all international education it offers. A

question is, do we really have a strategic approach to the internationalisation of our universities, or are the English language programmes just a result of the initiatives of separate enthusiastic teachers? Do we offer the same programmes both in Finnish/Swedish and English? International degree programmes and programmes taught in Finnish or Swedish should form a strategically planned whole.

In some cases, offering the same education in both languages is, of course, necessary, because Finnish universities have to serve the Finnish- or Swedish-speaking communities. This obligation of the Universities Act was questioned in 2013 when Aalto University planned to change all Bachelor degree programmes in economics and business into English. The Deputy Chancellor of Justice decreed (Apulaisoikeuskanslerin päätös 2013) that universities can also use other languages, but they should also offer degree education in all fields in Finnish/Swedish. This does not mean, that all programmes (especially thematic, problem-based programmes) should be offered in Finnish or Swedish, but all programmes in a certain field cannot be offered exclusively in English.

This indicates that the internationalisation of degree education is also connected with national language policy, language programmes and strategies. Many universities also have their own language policy programmes, which cover all basic activities: research, teaching and learning, support services and administration. The reality today is that although the number of students and staff members coming from different countries around the world is growing, most Finnish universities are only becoming bilingual in terms of Finnish/Swedish and English. The opportunities of multilingual and multicultural learning and working environments are often, unfortunately, unused. On the other hand, although English is the lingua franca understood and spoken by academia, academic English also needs support, both for the teachers and the students.

## WHAT STEERS INTERNATIONALISATION?

Education in Finland is steered by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This is realised by laws, decrees and other documents. An important document is the Development Plan for Education and Research (Education and Research 2012), prepared for every government term. The state-level steering is a powerful instrument. On the other hand, all universities are by law responsible for the quality of all the education that they offer.

The funding of universities of both sectors is based on performance. It has become clear that the performance-based funding model is a very effective steering tool. This is also important from the point of view of internationalisation:

9% of the core funding for research universities and 4% for universities of applied sciences is based on “international” indicators (degrees taken by international graduates, student exchange, international mobility of the staff, international research and teaching staff, international research funding).

The internationalisation of Finnish universities has also been steered by a special Strategy for the internationalisation of Higher Education institutes for the years 2009–2015. It consists of five main target areas: building up a genuinely international higher education community, increasing quality and attractiveness, development of export of expertise, supporting a multicultural society and taking a global responsibility. The evaluation of the impact of the strategy is now ongoing, but it is already evident that many of the goals of the strategy have been at least partly achieved.

As a member of the European Union, Finland and Finnish higher education are, of course, also steered by many European processes. Finland has from the very beginning been active in promoting the goals of the Bologna process. These processes have also been effectively used for national purposes by adding some national targets to the implementation processes. Many EU documents, such as the European Quality Charter for Mobility from 2006 or the communications from the European Commission have also had a significant effect on the internationalisation of Finnish higher education.

## INTERNATIONAL SURVEYS AND STUDIES

Finnish higher education institutions also participate in different international surveys. Most universities and universities of applied sciences have participated in, for example, the International Student Barometer which measures student satisfaction with learning, living and accommodation and support services offered by universities. There have been also many other mobility surveys and studies, conducted by the European university organisations (e.g. Mobility: Closing the gap between policy and practice by the EUA in 2012).

The surveys show a shift of focus from the organisation of studies to a more learning outcome-oriented approach. The Finnish Centre for international mobility CIMO recently conducted a survey on the effects of a period abroad on students’ learning and attitudes (De Oliveira Andreotti et al 2012; also Fakta express 1A/2015). The methodology was developed by researchers from the University of Oulu. The students take two surveys: one before and one after their international experience, which makes it possible to identify changes in the dispositions of the students. There is also a set of socio-demographic questions in the first survey.



Some national student feedback surveys also partly enable international comparison. The most important of them is 'Bachelor Feedback', the model for which is German. Nevertheless, it seems that the opportunity for international comparison is not very much used in Finnish universities and that the main function of the feedback survey is to offer information that universities can use when they develop their education further. The results of the Bachelor feedback are also taken into account as a funding indicator; 3% of the state funding for both sectors is allocated on the basis of the results of the survey.

In 2009–2013, the OECD carried out a feasibility study for the Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes, AHELO. The purpose was to see if it is practically and scientifically feasible to assess what students in higher education know and can do upon graduation, and to do it at the global level, valid across diverse cultures, languages and different types of institutions. A full-scale assessment later might also be a ranking of the countries/institutes like the PISA test.

There were 19 countries participating in the study, with almost 250 higher education institutions and 23,000 students involved. One challenge was the motivation of the students; the lowest participation rates were in countries where students enjoy high academic independence, like Finland, Norway and the Netherlands. One reason for low interest was surely the fact that, in this feasibility study, students did not get feedback on their own performance. The study showed, however, that assessing higher education learning outcomes at a global level is possible and feasible (for more information, see Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes. Feasibility reports 2012, 2013).

There have been also several thematic evaluations of internationalisation issues organised by the Finnish national quality assurance agency FINHEEC (from 2014 onwards, FINEEC). International degree programmes have gone through several evaluations (see Teaching Through a Foreign Language 1999; Lahtonen & Pyykkö 2005; An Evaluation of International Degree Programmes in Finland, 2013). An important overarching evaluation was the Evaluation of the Bologna Process Implementation in Finland (2012), consisting of a national evaluation of the reform and an international 'meta-evaluation' by a well-known expert in research on higher education, Professor Ulrich Teichler. Internationalisation has also been a focus area in several other evaluations, such as evaluations of centres of excellence in university education, subject evaluations or evaluations of doctoral programmes and audits of the quality assurance/management systems of universities.

## INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATIONS

The Finnish system of quality assurance is based on an enhancement-led principle (see, e.g. <http://karvi.fi/en/higher-education>). The universities of both sectors are by law responsible for the quality of education they offer (Ammattikorkeakoululaki 2014, 62 §; Yliopistolaki 2009, 3 §, 87 §), and the duty of the national quality assurance agency is not to control but to provide information that assists both universities when they develop their activities and the Ministry of Education and Culture in national strategic development and steering. In the current institutional audit system, there also exists a control element, because the decision can be either positive (the university passes the audit) or negative (a re-audit is needed). Nevertheless, there are no sanctions, neither financial nor functional for the universities. During the second round of audits, many universities have chosen an international audit panel, which also offers opportunities for international comparison.

Some universities, especially in the fields of engineering or business studies, also have international accreditations or are seeking for them. The most important accreditations of business studies are AACSB (Association of Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business), EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System), EPAS (European Foundation for Management Development) and AMBA (Association for MBAs). The European Network for Accreditations of Engineering Education awards the so-called EUR-ACE labels for programmes in engineering through authorised agencies, in Finland from 2014 through FINEEC.

One reason, or most probably the main reason for taking part in international accreditation is the need for a 'quality label', which communicates quality to external stakeholders. Accreditation indicates a certain standard met, either minimum or excellence, and is a tool in the increasing competition for partnerships, staff and students. In many countries accreditations are important for student recruitment, but in the Finnish university context this is less important. The same can be said about international rankings; they are important for possible international students, but Finnish secondary education graduates still rarely take them into account.

## SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS OF THE LEVEL OF INTERNATIONALISATION

There are also specific evaluations of the level of internationalisation of universities or degree programmes. For example, the German Rectors' Conference has been conducting so-called HRK-Audits on the internationalisation of

universities ([www.hrk.de/audit/](http://www.hrk.de/audit/)). The Academic Cooperation Association ACA has organised projects on quality and internationalisation, especially on the evaluation and improvement of institutional strategies for internationalisation. The Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education NOQA has made joint evaluations of Nordic Master's programmes. The THE (Times Higher Education) ranking of 'International Universities' and the U-Multirank ranking of the international orientation of the universities also indicate the increased attention to internationalisation and rankings. Rankings use quantitative indicators: number of international students (incoming and outgoing mobility), number of international staff, international co-authored publications, etc.

A new undertaking during 2012–2015 was the so-called CeQuint (Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation) pilot project by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), in which 12 European quality assurance agencies were involved. The overall aim was to provide a methodology to assess the quality of internationalisation in higher education at both programme- and institutional level and to help enhance the quality of internationalisation. Compared with the fully quantitative approach of the rankings, in the CeQuint the emphasis was on qualitative criteria and quality assessment.

The evaluation model consists of five standards and each of these standards has three criteria. At the programme-level evaluation, the standards are as follows: intended internationalisation, learning outcomes, teaching and learning, staff and students. In institutional evaluation: intended internationalisation, action plans, implementation, enhancement and governance. The assessment scale is four-staged: unsatisfactory – satisfactory – good – excellent. In order to get a certificate, at least three standards should be assessed as good or excellent and no standard as unsatisfactory (for more detailed information, see CeQuint 2012–2015). As an outcome, ECA rewarded good quality in internationalisation in the form of certificates. During the pilot assessments, many good practices were also collected and are published on the ECA website.

The project focused more on improvement and only secondarily on certification. The main questions were: how can quality be measured in an international degree programme? What makes a programme international? Is it only the language of teaching? Or have the graduates from these programmes achieved better intercultural and international learning outcomes than those in local-language programmes?

I chaired two review panels during the pilot project, one programme evaluation and one institutional evaluation, and my experience was that the CeQuint methodology better suits programme assessment than the institutional

one. It can offer a useful tool for quality enhancement, and the CeQuint criteria could also be used in the internal quality management of universities. The evaluation of intended international and intercultural learning outcomes was surely the most important new thing in the model. It also proved to be the most challenging for the evaluated institutions and programmes. It became clear that the HEIs still lack a common 'language of learning outcomes' and that the situations in European countries differ greatly from each other. There are also big differences in university legislation and steering that influence the use and understanding of the concept of learning outcomes. What is or will be the added value of a quality label on internationalisation is still too early to assess.

## THE IMPACT OF POSSIBLE TUITION FEES ON QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

The question of collecting tuition fees has been and still is highly political. During 2010–2014, Finland conducted a trial with fees for non-EU students in Master's degree programmes. The trial was outlined in the government programme of 2007, as well as in the state-level development plans for education and research for 2007–2012 and 2011–2016.

During the pilot project, the influences and impact of the trial were evaluated, and the evaluation and follow-up group of the project published three annual reports (Korkeakoulujen lukukausimaksukokeilun seuranta ja arviointi 2011, 2012, 2013), organised seminars, workshops and hearings, and carried out surveys of the international experience. The final report (Korkeakoulujen lukukausimaksukokeilun seuranta ja arviointi. Työryhmän loppuraportti 2014) was delivered to the Minister of Education in April 2014.

The main finding was that the trial as such was not a success: the number of programmes that in fact started to collect fees was very low, and concentrated only on a few universities (Oulu, Lappeenranta, Aalto and Haaga-Helia). In addition to that, almost all students in those programmes received some kind of grant, which means that the economic impact was minimal or even negative. The reasons for low participation can be found, firstly, in the fact that collecting fees was only a trial, and the period for the trial was quite short. Secondly, the fees could be collected only in second-cycle degree programmes, which made it quite aimless for the universities of applied sciences. It also became clear that Finnish universities of both sectors see the fees both as an opportunity and as a threat.

What was useful was that during the trial many things important for the development of the quality of international degree programmes in general

were discussed, such as the quality of teaching and learning, attractiveness of Finland and Finnish universities, level of support services, etc. Finnish universities also had an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other countries.

The debate on tuition fees has continued, and some of the Finnish political parties have even expressed their pros and cons in their official manifestos. There are also surveys or studies on the economic effects of international students on Finland (see Faktaa Express 4A/2014, 2A/2015) that tell about the need for facts and figures both for and against the fee-free system and about a clear shift towards a focus on economy. The discussion is continuing.

## CONCLUSIONS

The massive internationalisation of higher education is a relatively new but broad and varied phenomenon. It is driven by a combination of political, economic, socio-cultural and academic rationales. It is also a combination of strategies and policies on several different levels, from a European level to national, institutional and programme levels. A clear trend is a shift from cooperation to more competition, and the growing impact of different evaluations, accreditations and rankings.

The impact of evaluations can be looked at from at least three aspects: first from the point of view of internal enhancement and improvement, secondly, from the assurance of certain standards, and thirdly, from the point of view of quality labels, making the quality visible. All three aspects are also present in Finnish higher education.

All national evaluations of higher education in Finland are based on an enhancement-led principle. Institutions are autonomous and themselves responsible for the quality of education they offer, but information from evaluations and surveys can effectively be used at all levels as a tool for improvement. Evaluations offer also valuable information on more general issues like the integration of international students and staff in Finnish academia and local communities. The main question is, how the findings and recommendations from evaluations are disseminated and implemented.

Evaluations of internationalisation like CeQuint are somewhat in between enhancement-led evaluations, accreditations and quality labels. They indicate a certain standard of internationalisation, and, at the same time, can be used in marketing, but also as a tool for internal quality improvement. An interesting question concerning international accreditations is also their “field-specification”; at the moment, they seem to be most popular in engineering

and economy, but in the future there might also be a growing number of international accreditations and certifications in other fields.

A question that has not yet been discussed in this paper is the possible importance of evaluations in the development of joint degree programmes. Joint degrees are very demanding to develop, but at the same time offer an excellent opportunity for mobility, benchmarking and enhancing the quality of the programmes. In a way, they form the highest level of international cooperation in degree education.

The internationalisation of higher education has come a very long way in recent decades. At the same time, much work remains to be done. Internationalisation must grow in quality and be better aligned to the overarching aims and objectives of universities. Internationalisation is not a goal in itself, but a means to enhance the quality of higher education.

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# THE BOLOGNA PROCESS EXPEDITES THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Tapio Varmola

We are approaching the 20th anniversary of the Bologna Process. The process concerns all higher education institutions in Europe as well as some in a wider area. The European Higher Education Area currently comprises 47 countries: members outside of the EU include Russia and many states which emerged after the dissolution of the USSR.

The Bologna Process involves the development of higher education degrees and related quality assurance according to joint principles, with a focus on employability after obtaining a degree. The participants have developed a joint system for dimensioning higher education degrees, the ECTS. Another aim of the process is to promote lifelong learning and the social dimensions of higher education.

Within the scope of higher education degrees, all countries involved in the process adhere to a two-tier degree system based on Bachelor's and Master's degrees. While the scopes of the degrees vary, their combined total scope is generally 300 ECTS credits. Doctoral training was integrated into the "joint" degree system in the Berlin Communiqué in 2003.

Since the outset, activities related to the mobility of students and staff have constituted some of the most concrete elements of the Bologna Process. The process has provided thousands of students with the opportunity to complete studies or related traineeships in another EU country or outside the EU. Such EU programmes (including the Erasmus programme) have been very popular among the citizens, unlike many other EU operations.

The Bologna Process is primarily related to activities within the framework of teaching, which is the second pillar of foundation for higher education institutions. The promotion of research and innovation activities includes the development of the European Research Area and the extensive ongoing Horizon 2020 programme.



## THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND FINNISH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Finland joined the EU in 1995, allowing Finnish higher education institutions fully fledged participation in the Bologna Process starting in 1999. At the initial stage, there was national level debate in Finland as to whether the process should only be applied to universities. However, universities of applied sciences were already represented in process related events in 2001 (Prague) and 2003 (Berlin).

An extensive report of over 200 pages has been prepared concerning the progress of the Bologna Process, using diverse materials to describe the status of the different aspects of the process in Europe and in the EHEA area (The European Higher Education Area in 2015: Bologna Process: Implementation Report).

According to the report, a distinction is currently made between the internationalisation and mobility of higher education institutions. Internationalisation is described as a process involving intercultural and global perspectives in addition to an international one. The international operations of higher education institutions involve both teaching and research.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Finland is one of the countries that prepared a national strategy for the internationalisation of its higher education institutions in 2009. Few countries have prepared such a strategy. Instead, many higher education institutions have prepared their own internationalisation strategies. Finland is currently discussing the need to prepare a new internationalisation strategy to cover the entire higher education sector.

The public funding model for Finnish higher education institutions is based on the results obtained by the institutes. International activities are a criterion for funding in both higher education sectors, although with an emphasis of only a few per cent. Finland does not employ a separate budget for funding internationalisation. In this sense, we deviate from the alignment of most EU countries.

Many of the activities intended to promote mobility have been a visible aspect of the internationalisation of higher education institutions in Finland. The figures related to mobility became established at their current level at the turn of 2010s. EU studies intended to examine student motivation to complete exchange studies and related obstacles show a fairly significant

amount of low motivation among students in Finland. Approximately 30% of students report low motivation to be an obstacle to exchange studies: our neighbours Sweden and Norway are at the same point. It appears young Finnish people find it difficult to separate from their friends or partners: approximately 60% report separation to be an obstacle. The figure is the fourth highest within the EU.

However, in relation to its size Finland is a very active country in terms of mobility at the Bachelor's and Master's level. This applies to both leaving and incoming students. Finland has greatly benefited from the good results generated by our education system: excellent PISA study results have served as a particularly good marketing measure targeted at students in the EHEA area.

A few countries (such as Switzerland) have also introduced doctoral exchange studies. This might be an option worthy of consideration in Finland: according an Academy of Finland report, the quality of Finnish research improves when conducted by international teams (Academy of Finland, 2014). Moreover, some countries have introduced internationalityrelated competence requirements in the recruitment of teaching staff (Denmark, for example).

Some aspects of the Bologna Process have not succeeded very well. High expectations were initially targeted at joint degrees. However, few joint degrees have been created. An estimated 5% of higher education institutions participate in joint degrees in Finland, and the rates are even lower in Sweden and Norway. They seem to be a significant aspect of education in large EU countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

In many cases, double degrees have proved more practicable. They can be used to tangibly compare the core functions of higher education institutions, i.e. the contents of degrees in the same field. Issues related to legislation are also simpler than they are in conjunction with joint degrees.

The Bologna Process Implementation Report also shows that the latest innovation in online teaching – MOOC courses – have not spread as widely as anticipated a few years ago: they usually constitute less than 10% of the provided teaching. However, it is evident that online teaching is increasing and may be significant in promoting internationalisation at home.

## SPECULATIONS CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF TUITION FEES AND EMPLOYMENT

Over many years, the debate concerning higher education policy in Finland has involved talk of charging tuition fees to students from outside the EU/EEA countries. The government of Juha Sipilä has reported that they will

implement a reform in the government programme that allows for such fees. Both those who promote and oppose the reform often make references to international experience.

There are currently five countries in Europe which do not charge tuition fees to domestic students: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Greece. Correspondingly, nine countries charge tuition fees, most famously the United Kingdom. The majority of countries fall somewhere between the two approaches.

Nordic experience has shown that charging tuition fees will change the number and structure of foreign students: their number will decrease and fewer students will come from outside the EU/EEA area. Then again, new recruitment channels may be created. The Bologna Process Implementation Report relates that Sweden has recruited many students from India. It would be desirable for the new system to integrate foreign degree students more closely into Finnish society, both in terms of employment and culture.

While the employment of foreign students has progressed in Finland, much remains to be done. For example, Germany has recently begun to purposefully promote the recruitment of foreign students with the aim of acquiring skilled workforce for the German business sector. Finland should aim to create agreements which promote the recruitment of skilled foreign workforce by key employers – both private and public – in different areas. This requires longterm cooperation between higher education institutions and key employer partners.

Finnish higher education institutions have greatly benefited from the Bologna Process. The joint European process has systematised teaching development, created a sensible joint framework for a degree structure and permanently raised international cooperation to a new level.

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# STUDENT IMMIGRATION FACING CHANGES

Berit Kiuru

The number of foreign degree students in Finland has increased strongly in the 2000s, which can also be seen in the number of students applying for a residence permit. At the same time, the residence permit application procedure has been developed and the requirements for issuing residence permits have changed. As the number of foreign students has grown, the debate on their role as a solution to future labour needs in Finland has also increased. The students' right to work while studying has been expanded, and while at the beginning of the millennium students were required to leave the country after completing their studies, at risk of deportation, at the moment staying in the country is offered as an attractive option for students who have received a degree or other qualification.

This article is mainly based on the study produced by the Finnish National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN) in 2012<sup>1</sup> which reviewed the immigration of higher education students from third countries from Finland's perspective (EMN 2012). In the study, a third-country national refers to a person who is not a national of the EU Member States, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland. For this article, the content of the study has been updated with regard to statistics and by taking the development of legislation and policy into account.

## A QUARTER OF THE IMMIGRANTS ARE STUDENTS—THE IMPACT OF TUITION FEES REMAINS TO BE SEEN

In 2013, there were nearly 20,000 foreign degree students studying at Finnish higher education institutions, a figure three times as high as in the year 2000 (CIMO 2014). In recent years, studying has been the stated purpose of approximately one quarter of all immigration to Finland. The number of residence permit applications on the grounds of studying filed by foreign nationals has fluctuated between 5,000 and just over 6,000 applications per year in the 2010s (EMN 2014a). However, it is estimated the number of student from non-EU and non-EEA countries will plummet—as happened in Sweden and Norway—if tuition fees are introduced, as has been planned in the preparation of the Government Programme in May 2015 (Helsingin Sanomat 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> The study was produced by the Finnish National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN), which is coordinated by the European Commission. The Commission is not responsible for the views or conclusions presented herein.

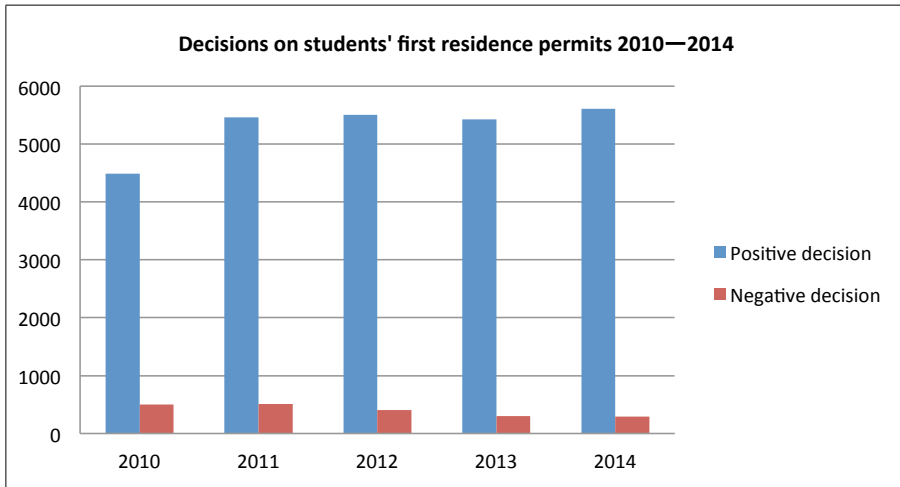


Figure 1. Decisions on students' final residence permits 2010–2014 (The Finnish Immigration Service)

In 2014, the Finnish Immigration Service issued 5,611 first student's residence permits to students from third countries. The number increased slightly compared to 2013 (5,426). A total of 291 applicants (5%) received a negative decision on their student's residence permit application. Most student's residence permits were issued to Russians (1,130), Chinese (855) and Vietnamese (428) applicants. (EMN 2014b.)

TABLE 1. Decisions on the first residence permit applications based on studies, Top 10 nationalities 2014 (The Finnish Immigration Service)			
	Negative	Positive	Total
Russian Federation	15	1,130	<b>1,145</b>
China	7	855	<b>862</b>
Vietnam	4	428	<b>432</b>
Republic of Korea		315	<b>315</b>
United States of America	4	247	<b>251</b>
Nepal	58	170	<b>228</b>
Japan	2	215	<b>217</b>
Pakistan	40	159	<b>199</b>
Brazil	1	159	<b>160</b>
India	3	153	<b>156</b>
<b>TOP 10 total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>3,831</b>	<b>3,965</b>
Total all	291	5,611	<b>5,902</b>

## THE RESIDENCE PERMIT PROCESS TACKLES TODAY'S CHALLENGES

A foreign national can reside in Finland with a visa or on a visa-exempt basis if studies last three months or less. If studies in Finland last for more than three months, a foreign national must apply for a residence permit. A first residence permit shall be applied for abroad before entering Finland (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 60, Subsection 1). The residence permit application is submitted to a Finnish diplomatic mission, which will refer the matter to the Finnish Immigration Service for a decision. A first residence permit may be issued to an applicant in Finland only in exceptional cases—for example, if the applicant has entered the country for the purpose of taking an admission examination and the studies will commence relatively soon after the examination (Finnish Immigration Service 2013). However, a residence permit extension cannot be applied for abroad; instead, it must be applied for in Finland by filing the application with the District Police (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 60, Subsections 2 and 3). In the majority of cases, the decisions on the applications are also made by the police.

The amendment to the Finnish Aliens Act (HE 295/2014) approved by the Parliament in the spring 2015 makes it possible that in future, a residence permit application can be filed abroad not only at a Finnish diplomatic mission

but also at the diplomatic mission of another Schengen State or at an external service provider in those locations where the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has agreed on outsourcing. The amendment is aimed at securing the operating capacity of Finnish diplomatic missions abroad and maintaining an effective level of service for residence permit applicants. However, at this stage there is no information available about the concrete effects of the amendment, that is, in which countries and with which schedule residence permit applications can be filed abroad in locations other than just the Finnish diplomatic missions (interview, Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2015).

The implementation of biometric technology at the beginning of 2012 has slowed down the residence permit process for some students. Residence permit applicants have their fingerprints taken for the residence permit card in conjunction with submitting their application (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 60d, Subsection 1). This requirement means that applicants must present themselves at the Finnish diplomatic mission in person. Applications may not be sent by post. In principle, an applicant only needs to make one personal visit to the diplomatic mission. Nevertheless, in practice circumstances in some countries—such as the unreliability and slowness of postal services—mean that applicants need to make a second personal visit to the Finnish diplomatic mission to pick up their residence permit card (interview, Finnish Immigration Service 2015).

On the other hand, electronic services have improved the efficiency of the residence permit process.<sup>2</sup> The possibility of using electronic services was introduced for applicants of a first student's residence permit in 2012. Currently, electronic services are also available for applicants of a residence permit extension. An application can be filed electronically, but the applicant still must visit a Finnish diplomatic mission or a police department to verify their identity and to present the enclosures to the application as original documents. In conjunction with the visit, applicants must also have their fingerprints taken for the biometric residence permit card. The processing of the application does not begin until this personal visit has been made. (Finnish Immigration Service 2013.)

The option of using electronic services has been well received: in 2014, 76 per cent of first residence permits for studying were submitted to the electronic application service. In 2014, the Finnish Immigration Service made decisions on electronic residence permit applications on average in 18 days and on paper applications on average in 30 days. (Interview, Finnish Immigration

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<sup>2</sup> The service can be accessed through the Finnish Immigration Service website, the police website or directly at <https://e-asiointi.migri.fi>.

Service 2015.) An application that is filed electronically is immediately available for the Finnish Immigration Service for processing, whereas paper applications submitted at diplomatic missions must be sent to Finland by diplomatic mail. Applications submitted electronically arrive with more complete information than before as the system guides the applicant in filling in the electronic form. This reduces the need for requests for additional information, which saves time for both the authority and the applicant. (Ministry of the Interior 2015.)

Over the past several years, the Finnish Immigration Service has assigned a high priority to processing student residence permits. The so-called Student Team that works in the Finnish Immigration Service processes applications in an expedited process without applicants having to specifically request for expedited processing. The aim is to issue residence permits to eligible students in a timely manner to avoid delays in the commencement of studies.

## A STUDENT MUST MEET THE RESIDENCE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

The conditions for issuing a residence permit are based on the so-called Student Directive (Directive 2004/114/EC). Along with the national implementation of the Directive, the Finnish Aliens Act was amended and students were required to take out health insurance.

A temporary residence permit (B) for studying is primarily issued for studies leading to a degree or vocational qualification and only on reasonable grounds for other studies (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 46). This type of residence permit is issued, for example, to an applicant who has been accepted as a student at a university or university of applied sciences. Such reasonable grounds may include necessary language studies or other preparatory studies in advance of actual studies, if the applicant has already been accepted as a student by a Finnish educational institution. In other words, residence permits are not issued to applicants solely for purposes such as language or preparatory courses. However, it is possible for foreign nationals to study the Finnish language for up to three months if they have a valid visa or come from a visa-exempt country. Participating in a formal student exchange programme and complementing one's studies independently are also considered valid grounds for issuing a residence permit. (Finnish Immigration Service 2013.)

Issuing a residence permit requires that the alien has a valid travel document and that the general requirements for issuing a residence permit are met (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 35 and 36). A residence permit may be refused if the alien is considered a danger to public order, security or health or



to Finland's international relations. A residence permit may also be refused if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the alien intends to circumvent the rules on entry into or residence in the country, or in other words, if it is suspected that studying is not the de facto reason for the applicant entering and residing in the country. Confirming that applicants have sufficient language skills is primarily the responsibility of educational institutions. However, the Finnish Immigration Service may refuse a residence permit on a case-by-case basis on the grounds of circumventing the rules on entry if, at the time of the application process, it is determined that the applicant's actual language skills do not correspond with the information provided to the educational institution. (Finnish Immigration Service 2013.)

A student must have secure means of support (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 39). A statement on how the student secures his or her means of support in Finland must be submitted to the authorities. According to the guidelines of the Finnish Immigration Service, students are considered to have secure means of support if they have at least EUR 560 (net) per month and EUR 6,720 (net) per year at their disposal. The assessment of secure means of support takes into consideration bank deposits as well as any scholarships and grants available to the student as well as benefits offered to the student by the educational institution (such as accommodation and meals). (Finnish Immigration Service 2013.)

Third-country nationals coming to study in Finland must also take out health insurance (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 46), as they will not be covered by the Finnish national health insurance system and may also not be covered by municipal health services in Finland. Foreign students coming to Finland to study for a period of less than two years must have private insurance that covers medical expenses up to €100,000. Students coming to Finland<sup>3</sup> to study for a period of at least two years must have private insurance that covers primary medical costs up to at least €30,000. In practice, such insurance policies also cover doctor's fees and the costs of medical treatment and diagnosis. The insurance policy must be valid for the full duration of the studies. In the case of students who come to Finland through a student exchange organisation, the insurance coverage provided by the organisation is accepted as is. (Finnish Immigration Service 2013.)

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<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to the Finnish Municipality of Residence Act, foreign students who come to Finland for a minimum of two years seeking a vocational degree or university degree are generally assigned municipal domicile in Finland. Foreign students who come to Finland for a period of study of less than two years are generally not assigned a municipality of residence. Regardless of this, all foreign students are outside the national health insurance system as, technically as a matter of law, they are not considered to have permanent residence in Finland. For more information, see the Finnish Act on the Application of Residence-based Social Security Legislation.

Refusal of a residence permit by the Finnish Immigration Service is usually based on the applicant not having secure means of support or the supporting documents being falsified. The refusal rate varies considerably between different nationalities. For example, in 2014 a relatively high number of Nepalese and Pakistani applicants were refused a residence permit, while the majority of Russian and Chinese applicants were issued a residence permit. (Interview, Finnish Immigration Service 2015.)

In recent years, higher education institutions and the Finnish Immigration Service have improved the scrutinisation of documents to detect forgeries. The authorities and educational institutions have engaged in valuable cooperation in the form of training and consultation. Measures have been taken to combat misuse in countries of origin through cooperation between the authorities and liaison officer operations. Best practices have been outlined for entrance examinations organised abroad.

## A STUDENT'S RIGHT TO WORK HAS BEEN EXPANDED— MONITORING PROBLEMATIC

A student's right to work while studying has been expanded in the 21st century. At present, a residence permit issued for studying allows working (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 78, Subsection 3(4)) if:

- a) the employment is a traineeship required for a degree or other qualification or part of the preparation of a research paper required for the studies and in the form of gainful employment;
- b) the average amount of work is 25 hours a week at a time when there are classes at the educational institution; or
- c) the full-time work is at a time when there are no classes at the educational institution.

Employers are required to ensure that the working hours of foreign employees who are students do not exceed the legal limit stipulated by the Finnish Aliens Act. However, it is unclear whether employers actually monitor this, or if monitoring is even possible in certain situations, for instance in the case of a foreign student having two employers at the same time. The authorities in charge of residence permits may take the legal limits on working hours into consideration in making decisions on residence permit extensions and investigate whether an applicant has exceeded the limits, particularly in cases where the applicant has failed to earn the required number of credits.

Simply maintaining enrolment in an educational institution does not qualify an applicant for a new residence permit. In practice, the monitoring capacity of the authorities is also limited in this regard. For these reasons, the relevant provisions of the Finnish Aliens Act have been criticised for being contrived. (Interview, Helsinki Police Department 2012.)

As the purpose of a student's stay in the country is studying, employment should not become the primary reason for residence. The Finnish Aliens Act and the Criminal Code of Finland contain provisions pertaining to illegal employment.<sup>4</sup> A student who intends to engage in full-time employment, with working hours exceeding the legal limits stipulated by the Finnish Aliens Act, must, prior to commencing employment, apply for a residence permit for an employed person or another residence permit for gainful employment. Nevertheless, when making a decision on a new residence permit application for the purpose of employment, the Finnish Immigration Service may take the applicant's previous record of infractions into account. For example, if an applicant has not studied at all or has only earned a few credits over the first years of study, his or her conduct may be considered circumvention of the rules on entry under Section 36 of the Finnish Aliens Act. As a rule, a new residence permit for the purpose of employment is not issued in such cases, although the applicant's intention to work were not questionable as such. (Finnish Immigration Service 2014.)

## PERSONS WHO HAVE RECEIVED A DEGREE OR OTHER QUALIFICATION ARE POTENTIAL LABOUR

Unlike in the early 21st century, students now have the opportunity to stay in Finland after completing their studies to seek work. For this purpose, a student can file an application with the District Police for a specific permit for the purpose of seeking work (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 54, Subsection 4). The amendment to the Finnish Aliens Act (HE 219/2014) entering into force in April 2015 made it possible that a person who has received a degree or other qualification in Finland may be issued with a residence permit for seeking work for one year instead of the previous limit of six months (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 55, Subsection 4). The purpose of the amendment is to promote the efforts of students from third countries to seek employment and enter the Finnish labour market. Foreign nationals should be able to utilise

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<sup>4</sup> For more details, see the Finnish Aliens Act, Section 185, Subsection 1(2) and Section 186, Subsection 1 as well as the Criminal Code of Finland, Chapter 47, Section 6a.

the qualifications they have acquired in Finland in the Finnish labour market and find employment that corresponds to their education.

The number of residence permits for seeking work that are granted to persons who have received a degree or other qualification is approximately 150 permits a year (Ministry of the Interior 2015). This is explained by the fact that a new residence permit may also be applied for on other grounds. A foreign student who, after receiving a degree or other qualification in Finland, is offered work can apply for a residence permit extension for the purpose of employment at the District Police. A foreign national who has received a degree or other qualification in a Finnish educational institution is exempted from the employee's residence permit requirement and the related rules regarding the determination of home market labour availability (Finnish Aliens Act, Section 77, Subsection 1(8)). Consequently, the foreign national is issued with other residence permit for gainful employment, not requiring a preliminary decision by an Employment and Economic Development Office. This also applies to foreign nationals who leave Finland after completing their studies but eventually return to Finland for the purpose of employment. (Finnish Immigration Service 2013) A foreign national may also become an entrepreneur and apply for a residence permit for a self-employed person.

Foreign students are a resource that can help meet future labour needs in Finland. However, a significant number of them do not stay in Finland for employment after completing their studies. On the other hand, it has become evident that most of the students would like to stay but their employment opportunities are impaired by inadequate language skills and scarce contacts in working life. Attention has been drawn to this problem in the Government Integration Programme (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2012) and the Future of Migration 2020 Strategy, for example. The strategy outlines that the prerequisites of students who have received a degree or other qualification for staying in Finland for employment must be improved particularly with the aid of language lessons during studies. The strategy also states that the opportunities of foreign students to participate in traineeship must be improved. This promotes their integration into Finnish working life. (Future of Migration 2020 Strategy.)

The concept of foreign students as a future labour resource was also brought up in the government negotiations in May 2015. The working group preparing migration policy statements for the Government Programme outlined that student employment will be promoted and investments will be made in Finnish language skills. The implementation of the Government Programme

as planned would also mean that in future, students who have completed their studies were encouraged to stay in Finland for employment with the aid of a right to a tax deduction. (Helsingin Sanomat 2015.)

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ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FOREIGN HIGHER  
EDUCATION STUDENTS AND THE POTENTIAL  
OF INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES

# ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FINNISH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Irma Garam

The number of international students in Finland has grown substantially since the turn of the millennium. In 2013, almost 20,000 degree students from abroad were studying at Finnish higher education institutions, which is almost three times as many as in 2000. The increase is a result of national efforts put into international education as well as global mobility trends. Finnish higher education institutions have been actively recruiting international students and developing study programmes and services in the English language. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has encouraged higher education institutions to recruit students from abroad.

Because the provision of education to international students is an important part of the work of higher education institutions, it is relevant to study its impact from the economic perspective, too.

The Government Institute for Economic Research VATT and CIMO have jointly looked into the economic impact of international students in Finnish higher education. In autumn 2014, VATT and CIMO published a preliminary study on what is already known about the subject, based on studies conducted elsewhere (VATT 2014a). In December 2014, VATT and CIMO started a project analysing the economic impact during students' time of studies. The report will be published in VATT Publication Series in May 2015 (Suhonen 2015). Based on these analyses, CIMO has published Facts Express publications on the economic impact of international students in Finland.

This article looks at the economic impact of international students based on the studies done by VATT and CIMO. What do we know about the international students in Finnish higher education? What do we know about their economic impact and employment in Finland?

## FOREIGN FULL DEGREE STUDENTS IN FINNISH HE

The number of international students doing a whole degree in Finnish universities has risen rapidly in the 21st century. In 2013, the total number was almost 20,000. Almost 10,000 international students studied in universities of applied sciences equivalent to 6.9% of their total student population. Just



over 2,800 international students were granted a Finnish higher education degree in 2012. Almost half the degrees were from universities of applied sciences.

TABLE 1. The most common nationalities of international degree students in 2013 and 2007 (Statistics Finland)	
2013	2007
1 Russia	1 China
2 China	2 Russia
3 Vietnam	3 Estonia
4 Nepal	4 Sweden
5 Estonia	5 Germany

The list of most common nationalities of international degree students includes both neighbouring countries of Finland and developing countries from Asia. China and Russia have topped the list for many years already. However, the number of students from the developing countries of Asia and Africa has increased greatly in the past few years. These countries particularly include Vietnam, Nepal, Nigeria, India and Pakistan.

The majority, about 75% of international students in Finnish higher education institutions, come from outside the EU/EEA. By continent, about 40% come from Asia, about the same amount from Europe and about 14% from Africa. Universities of applied sciences recruit more African students than traditional universities. In the past few years, Asia has increased its share as the sending region at the expense of Europe. Compared to some other European countries, such as Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany, there are proportionately more international students from Asian and African countries in Finland (CIMO 2013).

Just under half of international students in Finland are studying for a Bachelor's degree in universities of applied sciences, just under a third for a Master's degree in traditional universities and about 15% for a Doctorate. The English-language degree programme provision of universities of applied sciences concentrates on the Bachelor level. In contrast, universities only offer a very limited number of Bachelor's degree programmes in English; their recruitment of international students focuses strongly at Master's and doctoral levels.

The most common subjects of study of international students in Finland are technology and economics, accounting for over half of the international students in Finland. This reflects not only the natural interests of students but

also the subjects in which the Finnish institutions have developed the most study programmes in English.

In European comparison, Finland together with the other Nordic countries is an active provider of study programmes in English (Wächter & Maiworm 2014). It is difficult to estimate the exact number of the international degree programmes but at the moment the Finnish HEIs offer about 400 study programmes in English. Many of the programmes are quite new and the majority of them have been created in or after 2006 (Välimaa et al. 2013).

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE ECONOMIC IMPACT BASED ON STUDIES AND RESEARCH?

There are studies and research done on the economic impact of immigration in general in Finland and other countries. They give us some guidelines to evaluate the impact of international education.

VATT (2014b) has studied the economic impact of immigration in Finland. According to the calculations, the net impact of immigration on the Finnish public economy depends decisively on the age of the immigrants and how well they and their offspring succeed in the labour market. At the beginning of a person's career, between 20 and 40 years of age, the net benefit of an immigrant to the public economy is at best almost €200,000, if he or she and his or her offspring succeed in the labour market as well as those born in Finland of the same age. When immigrants are young or old, costs become higher than benefits. This is also true if young adults do not succeed in the labour market as well as those born in Finland.

Similar results have been recorded in Sweden and the United States, too (VATT 2014a). Immigration of young adults at the peak of their working life results in a clear net benefit to the public economy. In other age groups, the cost of education, health care, pensions and other services rise considerably.

These studies are not specifically about students, but the results do indicate that recruitment of international higher education students is beneficial to the public economy. Higher education students belong to the most productive group: young, skilled adults. Crucial from the point of view of productivity is that they remain in the country after graduation and find employment at their educational level.

There are also cost-benefit analyses on the economic impact of international students made in several countries. According to these calculations, international higher education students seem to have a positive impact on the public economy.

According to an analysis done in Denmark, increasing the number of international students has long-term economic benefits for Denmark even when the training is funded by Denmark, as is the case when students are from the EU/EEA. The benefit of 1,000 international students on public economy varies from DKK 0.4 to 0.8 billion. The benefit results from the tax revenue from students who stay in the country to work. In the mid-term (about 20 years), increasing the number of students from non-Western countries outside the EU/EEA will result in the biggest financial benefit. In the long term (about 40 years), the biggest benefit results from increasing the number of students from Western countries outside the EU/EEA (Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education 2013).

According to calculations made in Germany, the state would get back the money invested in the four-year higher education degrees of international students in five years, if 30% of them stayed in the country to work (Prognos AG 2013). According to an analysis made in the Netherlands, the net benefit of an international student to the public economy is between €10,000 and €90,000 during his or her life time, depending on the type of the educational institution and the country of origin of the student. The premise is that 19% of students remain in the country, that they would earn similar salaries, their characteristics in the labour market would be similar to those of Dutch people with a similar education, and they would use public services in a similar way to Dutch people and live as long (CPB 2012).

We need to interpret these results with caution, however. The premises about employment, consumption and use of services have a decisive impact on the sum total of the calculation.

## STUDY TIME COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – FINDINGS FROM THE FINNISH ANALYSES

The costs and benefits of international students to the Finnish economy during their study time can be divided as follows:

Resource costs of higher education institutions

- organisation of education and guidance
- provision of support services
- tailor-made services and support, such as recruitment from abroad and provision of tuition in a foreign language

## Other public sector costs

- student accommodation, health care and student catering
- other financial support<sup>1</sup>

## Direct economic benefits

- income from tuition and other fees<sup>2</sup>
- students' research results
- economic value attached to students' labour
- students' spending on goods and services

## Externalities, that is, by-products of activities

- congestion costs, that is, overcrowding in student services
- marginalisation of Finnish students in higher education
- cultural interaction
- impact on the success of Finnish students in their studies

It is often pointed out when discussing tuition fees that they should cover the costs of education. However, according to the analysis made by VATT, there is no clear answer to the question of how much the education of international students costs. Different methods of calculation take different things into account and produce different results.

The simplest method to estimate the cost of the higher education resources is to divide the cost provided by higher education institutions themselves by the number of students<sup>3</sup>. According to this method, the education of

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<sup>1</sup> Foreign students cannot receive a Finnish student grant if they are in Finland with a temporary student residence permit. To get a residence permit, students coming to Finland from outside the EU/EEA must prove that they have sufficient funding to cover their studies and insurance to cover possible health care and medicine costs.

<sup>2</sup> Between 2010 and 2014, Finnish higher education institutions were able to trial tuition fees on students from outside the EU/EEA who were enrolled on foreign-language Masters' programmes. At present, in spring 2015, tuition fees are not being charged. An application fee of about €100 is planned for students applying from outside the EU/EEA for study programmes starting in 2016.

<sup>3</sup> To be precise, this is the mean value of the average expenses of sector units of HEIs, weighted by the number of international students.

an international student will cost, on average, €7,000/year at a traditional university and a little more at a university of applied sciences. The figures have remained roughly the same over the past few years. A 3.5-year degree at a university of applied sciences costs, on average, about €26,000.

Differences between different fields are great. The most expensive study fields in universities of applied sciences are culture, and natural resources and environment. The most inexpensive fields are business and administration, the sector with the most international students (about €6,700). Another popular field among international students – technology – is more expensive (about €8,200).

The above calculation method does not take into account that some of the costs of institutions are fixed, remaining the same regardless of the number of students. These things are taken into account in marginal cost calculation in which the average cost of an individual student is estimated using statistical methods. With this calculation method, the cost of education for one full-time degree student is lower, on average, €2,800 per year in a traditional university and €2,300 at a university of applied sciences.

When foreign and native students are examined separately, surprising results appear in the VATT analyses. The cost of international students at universities of applied sciences seems to be lower than that of the native ones. At traditional universities, the opposite is the case: the education of foreign students at traditional universities costs more than that of the native ones, sometimes – depending on the calculation method used – even considerably more. The margin for errors in the calculations is so great, however, that it is not possible to estimate costs of foreign and native students reliably based on them.

The study-time economic benefits of international students can be estimated by the euros spent and salaries received. In the analyses conducted by VATT, the data comes from a student survey conducted in 2014<sup>4</sup> that, among other things, examined the spending, income and employment of students.

According to the student survey, international students in Finland spent, on average, €840 per month, that is, about €10,000 per year. This is the amount of money a foreign student brings to the Finnish economy. The biggest expenses were accommodation and food.

Salary from a job, received by 36% of respondents, is the biggest source of funding for international students. The salary was, on average, €270 per month and €3,300 per year. It is not clear from the data if the salary came

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<sup>4</sup> A total of 3,620 HE students took part in the online survey. The survey did not ask respondents' nationality but we identify as international students those 492 respondents who were born outside Finland, whose parents were born outside Finland and who had completed their previous education outside Finland.

from Finland or from abroad; it is probable that the students worked for a Finnish employer. Other important sources of funding were parents, other relatives and savings.

Based on the students' spending and salaries, we can give a rough estimate of the tax income for Finland. Each student pays, on average, €1,000 in VAT per year through their spending. Furthermore, it is estimated that students pay income tax and other tax-like fees from their salary, on average €740 per year.

About a third of respondents received public sector benefits, such as the student grant. This was a less significant source of income compared to salaries, support from families and savings, amounting on average, to about €170 per month, €2,000 per year. It is not clear from the survey if the benefits were paid from students' home countries or from Finland, in which case they would represent a cost for Finland. Students who are in Finland on a temporary student residence permit cannot receive student grant in Finland.<sup>5</sup>

Students from EU/EEA spent somewhat more than those coming from elsewhere. Their salaries were also somewhat greater, out of which they paid tax. On the other hand, they also received benefits either from their home countries or from Finland.

The below table summarises the study time costs and benefits of international students. We can roughly estimate the economic impact of the international students on Finland during the time of their studies according to them.

TABLE 2. Study time costs and benefits of international students (Suhonen 2015, 41)	
On average per international student, €/year	
Cost of provision of education <sup>6</sup>	- 7,400
Public sector benefits to student	- 2,000
Salary paid to student	- 3,300
Student spending	+ 10,100
VAT on student spending <sup>7</sup>	+ 1,000
Income tax paid by student	+ 740

<sup>5</sup> According to the statistics by KELA (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland), over 2,400 foreign nationals received student grants for their studies in higher education during the academic year 2013–2014 (Kela statistics about student benefits 2013/14. Social benefits 2014. Official Finnish statistics. Table 24, page 60). These are often foreign nationals who have originally come to Finland for a reason other than to study.

<sup>6</sup> The mean value of the average expenses of sector units of higher education institutions, weighted by the number of international students.

<sup>7</sup> Included in the value of student spending.

If we assume that an international student receives a salary in Finland but that his or her public sector benefits come from abroad, the costs and benefits to Finland during their study time break more or less evenly. In this example, we have included the cost of the provision of education and the student's salary as costs (total of €10,700/year) and their spending and income tax as benefits (about €10,800/year).

On the same premise, the net cost to the public sector in Finland is just over €5,600 per year per student. The cost of the provision of education is included as a public sector cost and the taxes paid by students as benefits.

## THE COMPLEXITY OF IMPACTS

Providing foreign nationals with education is a wide issue with a number of effects that cannot necessarily be measured monetarily. Some are difficult to discern, some unexpected. In addition to the impact on the public economy, international students have other economic effects. Students who start working contribute to increasing production in the country and strengthen international networks and business between countries. On the other hand, increased competition for jobs may lower salaries.

Students entering higher education already have a long education behind them, education that somebody has paid for. The cost of education preceding Bachelor degree studies at a university of applied sciences is, on average, about €80,000. For those who come to Finland directly for higher education, this has been paid for by somebody else.

Recruitment of international students also has an impact on the volume and quality of training provided by the higher education system. If provision remains constant, local students may not find a place to study. According to the calculations made by VATT, recruiting international students at universities of applied sciences may lead to fewer local students. It appeared that two international students in the field of natural sciences and five international students in the fields of tourism and catering take a place from one Finnish student. These results are preliminary, however, and should be treated with caution. Furthermore, the presence of international students may have an impact on the learning of local students.

When decisions about internationalisation of education are being made, we should consider other types of impact, too, such as the development of competences needed at work. An international study environment may increase understanding of different cultures and establish trust and cooperation between countries. Students whose experience of studying in another country

was positive will become good ambassadors for that country, even if they do not stay there. As for the home country of those studying abroad, students may play an important role in developing their societies, particularly as many come from the developing world. (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills 2013.)

## THE DECISIVE POINT OF THE ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT OF AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IS WHETHER THEY STAY IN THE COUNTRY AFTER GRADUATION

The study conducted by VATT only looked at the study time of students. Higher education is always an investment in the future and it is not surprising that calculations restricted to the time of studying will emphasise costs. This goes for Finnish students, too. The biggest economic benefits from studying will only become realised after graduation, if a student stays and becomes employed in Finland.

According to Statistics Finland (CIMO 2014), just under half (46%) of international students who graduated in Finnish higher education institutions in 2011 were employed in Finland a year after, 6% continued studying, 18% remained in Finland for other reasons, and 31% had left the country. The percentage of those employed in Finland has gone down in recent years.

Those with a degree from a university of applied sciences are employed a little more often than those with a Master's degree from a traditional university. Students in universities of applied sciences have more time to settle in Finland than students in a two-year Master's programme at university. Their degree also includes work-based training, giving them work experience. The social and health care sector stands out as having a good employment rate among international students. This is probably an indication of the need for manpower in this sector. The percentage of African students in this field is above average, which can explain their good employment rate compared to other nationalities.

International students in Finland are already interested in staying in Finland when they arrive and during their studies. Over 70% regarded the possibility to work in their country of study and to become employed there in the long term as important factors when choosing their country of study (ISB 2014). Depending on the study, 41–45% of international students in Finland would like to stay here if they could secure a place of study or work. About 20% believe that they will definitely stay in Finland after they graduate, and somewhat fewer believe they will move away. (Niemelä 2008; SAMOK 2008.)



It is essential – also for the economic impact – to make sure that international students who graduate from Finnish higher education institutions remain in Finland and become integrated into society and the labour market.

So far, there have not been studies in Finland that look at the economic impact of international students over a longer period. Following the study conducted by VATT, there is now a clear need to study the subject in the longer term, taking into account the time after graduation, too.

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# CONSIDERING THE BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Jussi Halttunen

Universities of applied sciences (hereinafter UAS) in Finland have been traditionally very active operators for enrolling foreign students. Roughly about 7–10 % of the student body of the UAS sector comes from abroad either as degree students or exchange students for 1–2 semesters. The flow of incoming exchange students from abroad to Finland has traditionally exceeded the flow of outgoing students from Finnish HEIs to abroad. The reasons for the imbalance are the ambivalent interests between the Finnish exchange students and the prevailing exchange agreements between HEIs. The Finnish students prefer the major European and North American cities and their universities as exchange study places. As these are places of only limited access without high tuition fees, the imbalance of exchange prevents Finnish students from benefiting from the opportunities to study abroad. If we could recruit more incoming foreign exchange students from North America and Western Europe to Finland, that could improve the opportunities of Finnish HE students to go and study abroad. On the other hand, Finnish students are more reluctant to go on exchange to universities in Asia, Russia, Eastern Europe or Germany, although these might provide excellent opportunities to study abroad.

The incoming foreign degree students are mostly from outside the EU/EEA from Russia, China, Vietnam, Nepal and some African countries like Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. There are some major differences between HEIs in Finland in opportunities to recruit and enrol foreign students. Larger HEIs in the Helsinki metropolitan area and other major cities in southern Finland usually have better opportunities to offer the needed diversity of international programmes and sufficient accommodation for incoming students. Of course some cities and UASs in Finland are more attractive on account of their image and services for students. The crucial thing is usually the prevailing international student society in the city.

As the current flow of degree students from some Asian and African countries to Finland is increasing, there are enough incoming students for all HEIs despite the size and location of the city. Possible tuition fees for students from outside the EU/EEA in 2017 is expected to change this situation radically as experiences in Denmark and Sweden have shown. Incoming international students are important for HEIs and their stakeholders in many ways as described

in this article. The outgoing flow of Finnish students to degree studies abroad has traditionally been rather thin, especially at Bachelor level. Some Swedish-speaking students go to Sweden from Åland and the west coast of Finland.

## IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR HEIS AND CITIES

As we do not have tuition fees in Finland for foreign degree students at HEIs, the immediate economic benefit and revenue comes via the public funding system from government. Foreign degree students are included in the full-time equivalent (FTE) student body of HEIs. The main public funding comes from the degrees awarded (46%) and the amount of students who are awarded 55 credits annually. Besides this basic funding, there is an extra bonus of 0.75% for a foreign student degree and 2.25% bonus based on the volume of student exchange. Those HEIs that suffer from lack of domestic students in their international programmes could quite easily compensate for the situation by active recruitment of foreign degree students. Major education countries like the UK and USA have created a huge business in university education. The leading universities charge high tuition fees for foreign students, which generates great revenue. Although we could in go the same direction, there might be several pitfalls. As a non-native English speaking country we do not have the same natural relevance to international education as these leading education countries. In some cases, Finland has successfully utilised its positive PISA reputation as the leading country in excellent learning outcomes.

The question of tuition-free education in HEIs for all students has been a hot topic of current political discussion in Finland. Some arguments against tuition-free education emphasise the great burden on Finnish taxpayers to cover all the education of those students who will probably leave the country immediately after graduation. Some arguments point out the fact that the incoming foreign students reduce the opportunities for Finnish students to enroll at HEIs. The reasons why we have had tuition-free education for all foreign students are related to expected immigration and employment after graduation. That is a relevant matter in some cases, especially with the Russian graduates who are more willing to settle down in Finland after graduation.

However if the foreign students do not need to pay tuition fees, they have to personally cover the necessary expenses for accommodation, living, textbooks, computers, etc. This benefits HEI stakeholders like student housing foundations and service providers in the city and its surroundings.

The student exchange programmes, which are partly funded by the EU ERASMUS programmes, are excellent ways to foster short-time study

abroad. Outside the EU/EEA, student exchange is carried out by mutual agreements between HEIs. In the framework of mutual agreement, outgoing Finnish students are eligible to study without paying tuition fees at partner universities and vice-versa for the students coming to Finland. In that sense, student exchange gives remarkable benefits for HEIs when enlarging students' learning opportunities.

Another very fruitful mode of operation in international education are the mutual joint- and double degree programmes, which are quite often related to student exchange agreements. Double degrees are very common at EU/EEA level, but also at some Russian universities. Foreign double degrees are regarded as normal degrees granted in the public funding system, although they do not require as much permanent study at the hosting HEI.

## LONG-TERM BENEFITS FOR FINNISH SOCIETY

Foreign degree students at Finnish HEIs have huge potential for permanent immigration. Especially students from the neighbouring countries like Russia and Estonia are more willing to settle down in Finland after graduation than their European or Asian counterparts. The key thing related to immigration is the willingness and ability to learn Finnish. Even small steps in the improvement of Finnish language skills might help immigration. Most HEIs provide Finnish language courses for their foreign students.

Finnish interim legislation tightly regulates temporary stays in Finland during study time for students coming from outside the EU/ETA region compared to the students from most EU member states. There has traditionally been a rather strict policy in the Finnish government to prevent the immigration of foreign students rather than to foster it. This policy should be changed in Finland as we might have a surplus of competitive young talents in the future. If we give them a good tuition-free education, why should we not give them opportunities to work in Finland after graduation. The government and authorities should adopt a more flexible policy for immigration admissions to stay in Finland. Nowadays foreign students from outside EU/EEA are ejected from the country too soon after their graduation.

A few foreign students start their own business during their studies. Student-based entrepreneurship at HEIs should be regarded as an excellent outcome of our education system. Foreign students should have great opportunities to start their own ventures, which would benefit from networks in their home countries (e.g. Russia).

## CULTURAL BENEFITS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Foreign students at HEIs build an international community, which consists of a mixture of different sub-cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Cities like Jyväskylä that have large communities of foreign students in relation to their indigenous population have a special international atmosphere and image, which is visible every day in the streets and restaurants. This gives great opportunities to build a real active international community, which is vibrant and tolerant of new ideas. Usually this eventually leads to the provision of several international services in the community (restaurants etc.). A foreign student body inside an HEI is excellent for the Finnish internationalisation too and provides plenty of learning opportunities for domestic students and faculty and staff members. Cultural aspects tend eventually change learning methods at HEIs to be more communicative and student-centred. The ethnic background of students and other relevant aspects like religions must be taken in account when building student services at HEIs in a tolerant way.

## INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES AND THEIR POTENTIAL TO RECRUIT FOREIGN STUDENTS

To enroll foreign students, there must be international degree programmes and courses completely taught in English. In most cases, Finnish HEIs recruit foreign students from different ethnic background in a balanced way. This means avoiding the dominance of a single nationality or ethnical background and trying to build a coherent group. Usually there are students as well, which is highly recommended for the dynamics of the group. The most popular international programmes at Finnish UASs are International Business and Nursing. After graduation from the Nursing programmes, a student must be personally validated by Finnish government agency Valvira to become a professional and registered nurse in the EU.

There is fierce competition between UASs to enroll the most talented and motivated foreign students into their programmes. Some HEIs have therefore applied quality labels and certifications to their international programmes to show their prestige and excellent quality. JAMK UAS is the first HEI outside the traditional academic business schools in Finland to have been granted the EPAS accreditation quality label by the EFMD (see e.g. the JAMK website). This label should be regarded as a key to the better networks among international HEIs and communities. To gain the accreditation, the programme and curriculum must show outstanding quality in the international academic business school framework.

As we are not native English speakers in Finland, we must always put serious emphasis on improving our teacher's skills to teach in English. Sometimes this has been regarded as a weak point according to feedback left by foreign students. Younger Finnish people can usually communicate more fluently in English than the large baby-boomer cohorts born immediately after the Second World War. In most cases it would be useful to recruit native teachers from different ethnic background to provide English-language prestige in international programmes. Another option is to build an international network of visiting lecturers who can frequently provide courses for foreign students.

If international degree programmes are necessary to enrol foreign degree students, there must be other kinds of relevant courses available for incoming exchange students from abroad. Some HEIs like JAMK have successfully started to implement tailor-made international short courses for incoming exchange students. A splendid example of this is the JAMK Summer School, which starts in late May and lasts three weeks until midsummer. The students mostly come from North and South America and some Asian countries. The idea of the JAMK Summer School is to provide international courses at times that suit foreign semesters.

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVE AND DEVELOPMENT

International operations are an essential part of HEIs, because young people in Finland need learning opportunities abroad. It is therefore very important to belong to the international networks and provide different kinds of student and staff exchange between partner institutes. In a small country like Finland, companies are highly dependent on the export trade of goods and services, so HEIs have an important mission to educate highly competent young professionals for the business sector. Without incoming exchange students, it is not possible to send domestic students abroad, because the exchange is balance-driven. Any imbalance will eventually lead to the cancellation of the exchange programme, especially in the case of North American universities.

The educational export business is one of the fastest growing forms of trade worldwide. The leading operators in the world in that business are the native English-speaking countries like the USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand. They have a competitive advantage in the global market due to their native English. The demand for international education is increasing, especially in major Asian countries and some African countries. Most HEIs in Finland would like to take part in global educational export. The most promising education programmes from Finland could be nursing and teacher education.

At present, it has not been legally possible to export entire degree programmes from Finland as we do not have tuition fees. Government regulation has prohibited HEIs from selling degree programmes abroad.

The government of Finland is planning to make tuition fees mandatory for HEIs when enrolling students from outside the EU/EEA at the beginning of September 2017. Based on the experiences of Sweden and Denmark, there will be some disturbance in the flow of international students due to the new tuition fees. However, the debate about tuition fees is twofold. Reasonable tuition fees should be proof of the eligibility and quality of the international programmes. In any case, there should be a stipend system for talented students, which will help them relocate into the programmes. Regulations related to the export of entire educational programmes abroad should also be reformed.

## CLOSING REMARKS

To be successful in the enrollment of foreign students, HEIs should be part of the right networks. Relevant and eligible partner universities are necessary for successful international operations in terms of student and staff exchange.

When enrolling foreign degree students, there are useful networks and partners available too. It is very difficult and expensive for an individual HEI to organise global entrance examinations and the needed international marketing in the global student market. Many HEIs co-operate with national embassies and consulates. The global organisation the British Council is a widely used partner in many Asian and African countries.

Last but not least, I would like to mention the FINNIPS network (Finnish Network for International Programmes) as a good example of a very active and cost-effective operator to help HEIs enroll foreign degree students. FINNIPS is a grass-roots-level network of active people from Finnish UASs who have gathered together to share the work of arranging entrance examinations abroad. The FINNIPS network has been coordinated by JAMK since 2010.

I would like to thank the FINNIPS people for their activity and work in international student enrolment.

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# INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES AS SPRINGBOARDS FOR EDUCATION EXPORT

Timo Juntunen

Globally the most significant business area in “education export”, as this phenomenon is called in Finland, are degree programmes for foreign students. In Great Britain, tuition fees revenues are estimated at £17.5 billion a year, constituting 75% of the UK’s total education export volume (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013).

The Programme of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä’s Government states that obstacles to education export must be removed. Minister Sanni Grahn-Laasonen specifies this strategic goal in the programme by promising: “In order to speed up education export, the government intends to enable charging tuition fees to students from outside EU and ETA countries. This will enable the entry of the Finnish higher education institutes into international education markets. Legal obstacles to education export must be removed.”<sup>1</sup>

## WHERE IS THE BEEF?

Since the Strategic Programme was released, in public debate there has been the assumption that foreign students do their studies on campuses in Finland.<sup>2</sup> This is most likely so, because not all debaters are aware of other options to deliver commercial degree programmes. In any case, “importing foreign students” is one of the options and some presented arguments are not valid in regard to other options.

This article aims at improving the quality of debate on how the Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences can deliver the degree programmes and charge tuition fees. The article includes some personal consideration, what are the most suitable business models for commercial degree programmes, and in what sense existing degree programmes constitute springboards for commercial programmes.

By asking the following seven questions, one can improve the quality of debate about tuition fees:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://team.finland.fi/>. News on the 4th June 2015.

<sup>2</sup> For instance UAS’s presidents comments on 15 May and on 20 May [http://yle.fi/uutiset/pikkukaupunkien\\_vetovoima\\_ei\\_riita\\_ulkomaalaisten\\_lukukausimaksut\\_verottaisivat\\_opiskelijavirtoja/8000362](http://yle.fi/uutiset/pikkukaupunkien_vetovoima_ei_riita_ulkomaalaisten_lukukausimaksut_verottaisivat_opiskelijavirtoja/8000362) [http://yle.fi/uutiset/ammattikorkeakoulun\\_rehtori\\_ulkomaalaisten\\_lukukausimaksut\\_karsisivat\\_hyvin\\_sopeutuvia\\_maahanmuuttajia\\_haitallista\\_yrityselamalle/7995362](http://yle.fi/uutiset/ammattikorkeakoulun_rehtori_ulkomaalaisten_lukukausimaksut_karsisivat_hyvin_sopeutuvia_maahanmuuttajia_haitallista_yrityselamalle/7995362)

- Should Finnish UASs offer Master's or Bachelor programmes?
- At whom will the programmes be targeted, and who will pay the tuition fee?
- What is the mode of international service mobility upon which the programmes will be based?
- Where will the programmes be delivered?
- With whom will Finnish UASs cooperate in programme delivery and in the provision of supporting services, such as marketing the programmes, organising entrance exams, etc.?
- Who will actually deliver teaching activities?
- What will be the fields of the programmes offered?

## PRODUCTS AND CUSTOMERS

When speaking about UAS degree programmes, Bachelor's programme, as "a standard education export product", means 3½–4- year full-time studies and Master's programme 1½–2 year part-time studies. The main challenges of UAS Master's programmes are in gaining international recognition, three-year work experience as an entry requirement and students' difficulties in studying and working simultaneously. "A customised" one-year full-time programme could be more attractive than "the standard product" in many countries. If UASs can overcome these challenges, and especially if the three-year entry-requirement is removed, the UAS Master's programme will be the top-selling product of the Finnish UASs.

Those meeting the entry requirements of UAS Master's programmes constitute an attractive customer segment. This customer segment will have more money than normal applicants for Bachelor's programmes. Furthermore, in addition to money from the students' own pockets, many countries have public funding schemas for further educating teachers, civil servants or company staff in areas matching national strategic development goals. Based on JAMK's experience in Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan, it is realistic to assume that public money will be available for programmes matching national priorities and fulfilling the other criteria of sellable degree programmes.

Some foreign students will certainly apply to Bachelor programmes taught at UAS campuses in Finland. However, applicant volumes for programmes

taking place at sites abroad might be higher, because the total costs of obtaining a degree is lower. In addition, the duration of studies has an effect on the total costs. If there are appropriate means to lower study costs, like recognition of prior studies and working experience, the attractiveness of the Finnish programmes can be improved.

## MODES AND LOCATIONS OF THE PROGRAMME DELIVERY

According to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS 1994, 285–286), there are four modes for the mobility of education services:

1. Cross-border supply
2. Consumption abroad
3. Commercial presence
4. Presence of a natural person

The debate about tuition fees has mainly concerned the fourth mode of mobility, the presence of a natural person – a student – in Finland. However, this is only one mode for the mobility of education services. It is the easiest and least risky, but it most likely does not bring the best possible revenues in the long run and does not help the education sector to become a significant export sector, which has been the goal since the Education Export Strategy was announced in 2010.

As to GATS modes of mobility, the main message is that without the sites abroad (mode 3), without the delivery of programmes abroad with local partners (mode 2) and without virtual services (mode 1), the education exporters and the government of Finland cannot reach the set goals. There are primary schools in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain and a Qatar-Finland International School in Doha operated by EduClusterFinland Ltd. Those UASs with confidence in their product and the courage to take some risks must immediately start to establish a legal entity abroad with a clear business model ensuring competitiveness of the programmes.

Alternatively, UASs can run programmes abroad in close partnership with local institutes so that, instead of a local entity in the target country, the parent company is in charge of the operations at the site. For example, JAMK cooperates closely with the Chinese Beihua University by running with them the so-called Sino-Finnish Nursing School. Currently students there study the Finnish curricula, but receive degrees only from China. Removing the obstacles of charging tuition fees would open new earning possibilities.

In the 1960s, the Open University in the UK was widely considered the world's first successful distance-learning university. In 2015, there are plenty of virtual universities offering degree programmes and courses online. Again it is obvious that without investment in online learning, course production and business model design for online education, Finnish UASs face problems in the scalability and cost-efficiency of their total offering. How to run existing programmes and courses taught in English online? How to cooperate with other UASs and online learning providers in the online education business? These issues must be tackled immediately.

A simply theoretical answer to questions about where the sites of the Finnish UAS must be located is this: the site must be located in cities with the best estimated revenues in the long run and in countries where socio-political-economic risks are manageable. A notable fact is that the actions of the government of Finland and Finnish companies have an effect on site location decisions. Agreements between the government of Finland and other governments, and relations between Finland and the intended targets of education export must be considered. For instance, the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministries of Education in PRC and Finland, signed on 12 June 2015 provides the basis for education export in China.<sup>3</sup> Finnish universities and industry can learn a lot from their colleagues in Germany by seeing how German training institutes or their partners in the target export countries use German technology and products in the learning process, and thereby market German knowhow and products.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND TEACHING RESOURCES

It is worth elaborating on cooperation possibilities between Finnish UASs prior to decision-making on establishing a site or launching a virtual degree programme production project. Cooperation reduces risks and increase resources for running high-quality programmes. A new dimension for national cooperation will be opened if vocational schools get permission to sell vocational qualifications.<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Education and Culture is currently processing this, and in autumn 2015 there will be momentum to innovate the kind of benefits that a Finnish campus with a vocational and higher vocational study line could bring. National partnerships do not obviate the need for creating strong partnerships with

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Kansainvaeliset\\_asiat/kulttuurisopimukset\\_ja\\_ohjelmat/ohjelmat/Kiina\\_koulutus\\_2015.pdf](http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Kansainvaeliset_asiat/kulttuurisopimukset_ja_ohjelmat/ohjelmat/Kiina_koulutus_2015.pdf) (cited 16 August 2015)

<sup>4</sup> Debate on allowing Finnish vocational schools to sell vocational qualifications is taking place with the project Ammatillisen koulutuksen viennin edistämisshanke with stakeholders <http://www.ammattillinenkoulutusvienti.fi/> (cited 16 August 2015)

local vocational or higher education institutions. Local partners can speed up market entry, provide necessary contacts locally and bring cost-effectiveness. For example, in the Republic of Kazakhstan one of the top-ranked private universities is the Kazakh-British Technical University.

If students from outside the EU and ETA study in Finland, permanent faculty members of UASs will be responsible for training delivery. What if the programme is delivered at the site abroad? For many reasons, Finnish UASs let only a few faculty members move to a site abroad, so those Finnish UASs dreaming about establishing such a site must have capacity and means to recruit the majority of the faculty from local faculty members or to conclude contracts with partners that have faculty members. Faculty members can be found locally, from the region or from any country. If Gulf countries are regarded as potential destinations for sites, Finnish UASs must be able to recruit faculty members locally, meaning the Arab-Muslim countries in the Middle-East. The business model must also include an exit plan for expatriates and a plan for increasing the number of local staff. This phenomenon is called *saudisation*, *emiratisation* or *omanisation*, depending on the country.

Finnish UASs should invest in developing and delivering programmes in fields in which the programmes are estimated to be competitive in the global markets based on analysis. Price must be competitive, but also the quality of programme must be somehow proven. The reputation of Finland in the field matters as well as a university's position in the rankings, international and national recognition, accreditation, etc.

## INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES AS SPRINGBOARDS FOR COMMERCIAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Programmes taught in English on campuses in Finland with years of experience and continuous development work constitute springboards for providing commercial degree programmes. The assessment of global demand and competitive position of these programmes is the starting point for making degree programme products in the short term. Years of experience of running a programme is considered a reference by customers. Years of experience also means that the content and methods of work are tested in practice. Due to practical experience, the faculty has tacit knowledge and a critical mass of teaching resources to deliver the programme in an even more demanding business environment. Before market entry, some fine-tuning for the programme must be done, but it is extremely risky to start selling a commercial degree programme from scratch.

Programmes taught in English also serve as springboards for producing the content of the virtual programmes or courses, and for the virtual education business in general. By improving the quality of existing online education content and by producing new content for ongoing programmes, UASs can expand their virtual offering in the most cost-effective way. Alliances with other UASs in the content production, marketing, sales and delivery of online offering can bring many kinds of added value.

## COMMERCIAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES AS A STRATEGIC DECISION

*"International experience proves that the precondition for enforcing education export is that actors in the field invest significant strategic resources in developing products for export and the promotion of export. Besides sufficient resources, being competitive in global market presupposes the capacity and motivation to take risks."*(Ministry of Education and Culture 2013, 10.)

It is easy to agree with the opinion above. A point additional to the need for sufficient resources and for the courage to take risks is that there is also a need for a clear and well-prepared business model and experience from the domestic market. The fact that an UAS has years of experience in running a programme taught in English provides an advantage for those who will participate in the process of designing a new one. In addition to good quality, a programme must have a critical mass of in-house experts and ways to subcontract them outside, and a team with business skills and strong support from university management.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS'  
EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

# EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES DEGREE STUDENTS

Annika Forsander

In recent years, the number of student immigrants in Finland has increased at a rapid rate. In 2014, such students formed the third largest group of new immigrants in Finland (see Figure 1 below).

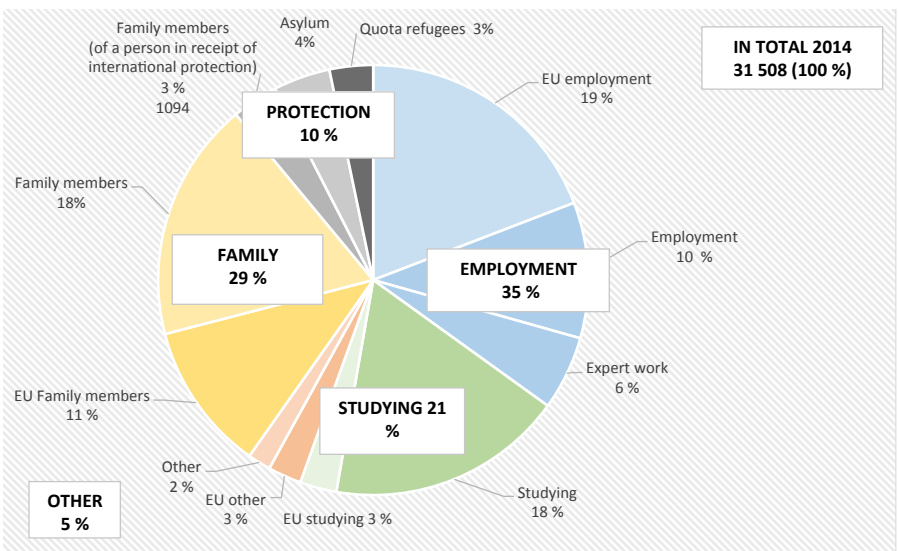


Figure 1. The first residence permits and records of EU residents' residence permits according to grounds in 2014 (Raunio 2015, 15).

This is largely the result of the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2009, which specifically highlights the “internationalisation at home” of higher education institutions, i.e. the recruitment of foreign students, researchers and teaching staff. (Korkeakoulujen kansainvälistymisstrategia 2009–2015, 2009.)

The problem with the ministry's strategy was that it was not harmonised with immigration and labour political objectives. In other words, a more extensive social political objective for recruiting degree students to higher education institutions was not set. Do we want the students to remain in Finland after graduation? If so, where and how will they find employment?



The programmes intended for foreign students at Finnish higher education institutions have two special characteristics from the perspective of internationalisation: they are free of charge to students and do not necessarily include compulsory Finnish or Swedish studies. Even though the degrees are (at least for the time being) free, they do not include significant quantities of components targeted at the local labour market. It is therefore unclear which labour markets the programmes are targeted at and where.

According to the definition in the Polytechnics Act (351/2003), the mission of universities of applied sciences is to provide degrees targeted at local labour markets, thus enhancing the preconditions for local trade through their role. Most of the clarifications cited in this article confirm that foreign degree students would be willing to stay in Finland after graduation if they found suitable jobs. Foreign degree students are pleased with their studies and Finland, but have poor employment opportunities here compared with those available in other countries. (Faktaa Express 2012; 2014; Majakulma 2011; Shumilova et al. 2012.)

Centre for International Mobility CIMO has examined the placement of foreign students in the labour market over a year after graduation. In 2012, slightly less than half (49%) of the foreign citizens who completed a university of applied science degree were working in Finland one year after graduation. In addition to that group, 25% of the graduates remained in Finland (students, unemployed, etc.) and the remaining 26% probably left the country. (Faktaa Express 2014, 3.)

In her study, Arja Majakulma (2011) applied a comparative approach to examining the employment of foreign graduates from Finnish universities of applied science. The employment rate for foreign graduates from Englishlanguage programmes was 58%, while the corresponding rate for Finns was 81.9%. What is interesting is that the foreigners who had graduated from Finnish or Swedishlanguage programmes had better employment rates. The employment rates were particularly high in the social welfare and health care sector.

The above reports show that Englishlanguage degree programmes do not provide employment for foreign graduates in Finland. Where is the problem? What needs to be done in order to better employ talented young university of applied sciences graduates who were recruited to study in Finland?

## GLOBAL AND LOCAL LABOUR MARKETS

The labour market can be roughly divided into two sections based on the operating terms and required competence. I call these two labour market sections the global and local labour markets, and different trades have been divided into different labour market sections based on whether they require local or global competence.

Local competence means skills, which are tied to a local environment, such as a specific region or country. A typical example of local competence is the language of a country or the vocabulary used in a specific field. Local competence also entails mastering the society and culturespecific, often tacit, information of one's trade as well as managing tradespecific networks. The formal qualifications for locally specific occupations are typically subject to national regulation, for example health care professions, teaching work and social work and the work of psychologists.

The link between the occupations listed above to local competence means that they cannot be easily transferred across state borders into different language and social environments. Different social, care and teaching occupations are good examples of local labour market occupations.

Such occupations are typically public sector occupations, but also include fields, which suffer from a shortage of labour in Finland. From the perspective of many foreigners, employment in these fields is problematic owing to the related regulations concerning language skills: good Finnish or Swedish language skills are required for employment in these occupations owing to the requirements of formal qualification and smooth everyday activities.

Working environments in the global labour market and industries are typically globally standardised, which means that related competence is also globally standardised. In Finland, such labour market islets, operating on the terms of the global economy, are constantly increasing, for example in technical fields and in natural science research and funding. Career paths typically cross state boundaries in such work, because the small Finnish market makes it difficult to build a rising career in Finland (Forsander et al. 2004).

But how far will globally standardised competence carry in the local labour market? The recession of the IT industry and mass terminations of employment left immigrants who had lived in Finland for many years unemployed and lacking the localised skills, which could have facilitated finding new employment, including Finnish language skills and local labour market contacts. Many were "stuck" at their location because of their children's education and/or spouse's job. Terminations of employment and cushioning support measures

(e.g., Nokia's Bridge Programme) promoted startup entrepreneurship and have contributed to the creation of an innovation environment, the results of which cannot yet be assessed (e.g., Raunio 2015).

## HOW TO PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT?

The previous description would indicate that, from the perspective of all parties, including the vitality of the country and its regions, universities of applied sciences and, above all, the students themselves, it would be wise to invest in the quick employment of students after graduation. Foreign degree students should therefore develop localised competence during their studies that would facilitate employment when combined with their expertise.

The employers and trade industry in the operating areas of universities of applied sciences as well as the public sector rightly assume that an international graduate from a Finnish degree programme is ready to enter the labour market after graduation. Things will be entirely different if degrees become subject to a fee to cover the costs of organisation. Then the objectives of the education product will not correspond to gaining labour in the local labour market. However, it is unlikely that such fees would be high enough to cover the costs of organisation without a scholarship system (which, in turn, would increase bureaucracy).

Key aspects of improving the labour market eligibility of foreign students who have graduated from an Englishlanguage degree programme during their studies, and preferably even prior to their studies are: acquiring professional competence and networks, and intensively studying Finnish or Swedish in their own field as an integral part of the degree studies. The objective should be to create a foundation for level B2 Finnish or Swedish language skills, which can be further enhanced in working life.

It is essential that studies related to the national languages and Finnish society are included in a prioritised and integrated manner so that students can study in Finnish or Swedish towards the end of their studies. This means that Englishlanguage programmes should be targeted at truly global boundarycrossing fields, which are intended to serve the international labour market (Kielimuurin yli 2013).

Simultaneously, concrete routes for employment in the country-wide, regional and local labour markets should be constructed within degrees in the form of traineeships, mentoring and workplace visits.

The needbased modification of Englishlanguage degree programmes to truly serve the employment of foreign students would therefore require

large-scale changes in the degree structure. Because it is clear in the light of future labour needs that the abovementioned efforts and investments would pay themselves back, the objective of employment should be more clearly observed in the funding model for universities of applied sciences, allowing funding to stress employment in addition to student numbers and degrees in a more encouraging fashion.

Students from outside the EU and EEA have previously had a period of six months for finding/applying for work within the scope of their new temporary permit. This period has been extended to 12 months, which is a good improvement. However, the problem is that the added time does not solve anything without the structural changes described above. The extra time also involves issues related to livelihood and social security.

Figure 2 below shows a model for promoting the employment of immigrant degree students.

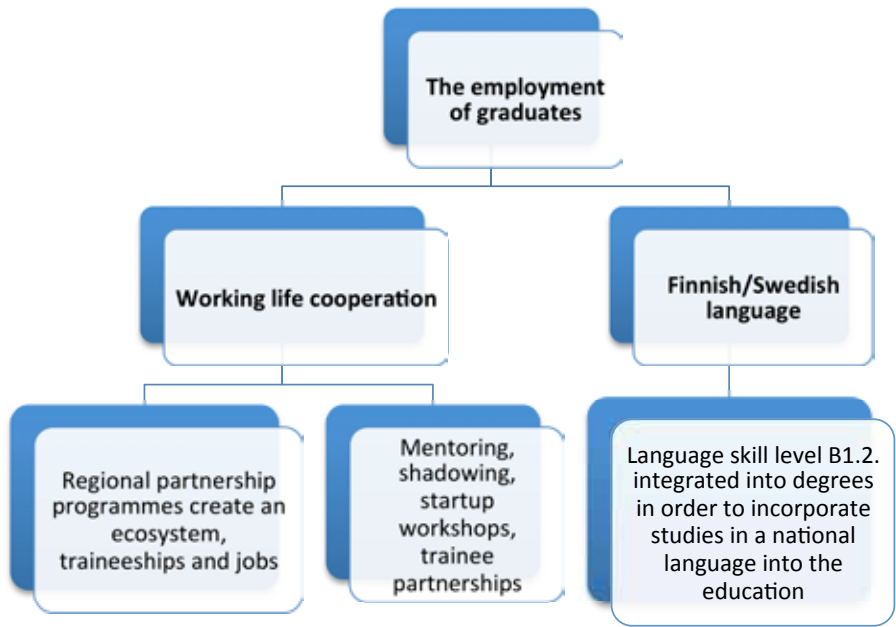


Figure 2. An employment model for foreign degree students at universities of applied sciences

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# IMPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FINLAND

Marita Aho

The Confederation of Finnish Industries EK has been active in the debate on how to improve the employability of international students in Finland. I chaired the steering group of the VALOA project in 2010–2012, where the goal was to find ways to facilitate the integration of students into the Finnish labour market (see, for example, the websites [www.studentintegration.fi](http://www.studentintegration.fi) and [www.beglobal.fi](http://www.beglobal.fi) produced by the VALOA project). As early as in 2009, I gave a presentation at a lifelong learning seminar entitled “Employers’ expectations towards international degree programmes in Finnish HEI”. I based my presentation on my cooperation with the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) and on my own dialogue with companies, students and higher education institutions’ (HEI) personnel.

At the 2009 presentation, I focused on areas where HEIs could perform better. I listed seven measures, which could improve international students’ employment prospects in Finland. The starting point of international degree programmes (at least at universities of applied sciences) should be the need for working life skills. Employment to the Finnish labour market should be regarded both as a strategic goal of programmes and as a central part of their implementation. Students’ Finnish language skills need to be strengthened. Teachers’ English skills need to be excellent. The follow-up of graduated students should be systematic. Students need better support in organising internships.

I also recognised the role of working life itself in improving students’ employment prospects. How do HEIs identify skill needs in companies if working organisations themselves are not willing to discuss and analyse them? Further work in the VALOA project made me even more convinced that all parties, HEIs, students and employers, should review their attitudes and actions and contribute better in the integration of international students into Finnish society and working life. On some occasions, I have even questioned the necessity of Finnish language skills in all internships or recruitments.

## TOWARDS FUTURE-ORIENTED DIALOGUE

The challenges raised six years ago are, however, all but obsolete. It is interesting to compare the 2009 list with the recommendations of the report “An Evaluation of International Degree Programmes in Finland” published by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council FINHEEC in 2013. There is a great deal of similarity. One of the main problems of international degree programmes (IDP) identified in the evaluation was the difficulty that international students have in gaining access to the Finnish labour market. The evaluation group recommends for example that follow-ups of IDP alumni should be organised more systematically and quality boards also with external stakeholders should be established. The role of professional organisations in developing and improving IDPs should be strengthened. The evaluation group also stated that the size of IDPs should be considered from an economic point of view. The evaluation group was well advanced in the present debate on the stronger, distinctive profiles of different HE institutes and saw the need to share tasks, combine resources and increase cooperation (Välimaa et al. 2013).

According to my interpretation, the FINHEEC evaluation report agrees that matching the expected learning outcomes of international programmes with the expectations of working life is one central tool in improving the quality of the programmes and employability of graduates. Engaging businesses and industries in quality assurance was not very common in 2013. Only one of IDPs explicitly mentioned a quality board, in which both internal and external stakeholders, including representatives from professional field, businesses and industries and students discuss the course results. The board organises start and exit interviews, during which the students can reflect on the competences that they have gained as part of the programme.

The future of the labour market is “foggy” and detailed forecasts on skill needs cannot be made. This does not mean that universities of applied sciences and labour market cannot learn from each other and, even if forecasting is not possible, *foresight* is and is maybe more important than ever before. Foresight is necessary, but its working methods must change. One cannot be too *specific* or too *local* in anticipating future businesses, professions or skills. One must not be short-sighted. One must look beyond borders (private, public, sector, region, nation, industry, service, user group ...) One must be prepared for the unknown as well as having expertise on history and the present day. It is most important to create opportunities. To do this, one needs to understand not only future skill and knowledge combinations, but also the right kind of communities and the right kind of spaces (physical, virtual, mental and social elements of space).

I strongly believe that all universities, universities of applied sciences especially, would benefit from this kind of future-oriented dialogue with external stakeholders, including businesses and industries, in planning and executing their international degree programmes. This dialogue should be carried out in a systematic way and on a regular basis. Besides leaders and planning staff, teachers and RDI-personnel should also be engaged in the dialogue.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

Dialogue and networking do not solve all problems. A good database about the inputs, outputs and different societal outcomes of IDPs is needed. The follow-up of graduated students, for example, should be systematic. Again, the 2013 evaluation report is rather critical. Only one institution seemed to have detailed knowledge about what their alumni were doing: working, studying or still looking for a job. (Välimaa et al. 2013.) It is important to stay in contact with alumni, because they are the best experts on the skills needed to be able to compete in the existing job market.

Finnish HEIs are not yet strong in their alumni relations. We noticed it in the TYÖPALA project coordinated by EK. The TYÖPALA project (the Finnish acronym TYÖPALA plays with the words work, feedback and piece) was set up to develop and pilot employer feedback on university education in Finland. Five universities piloted the project with the aid of their alumni. A questionnaire was sent to employers via alumni, which evaluated the relevance of skills used at work that were developed through university education. The test did not sufficiently succeed. Most of the alumni did not respond to the mailings of “their” university. Even fewer alumni forwarded the questionnaire to their immediate supervisor. The test also revealed that not all universities at least at the time (2013) had proper alumni databases with accurate contact information. It would be interesting to know whether universities of applied sciences are more advanced with their alumni cooperation. What is the present situation regarding the follow-up of international alumni?

One of the main obstacles in finding an internship or job in the Finnish labour market is the insufficient ability to speak Finnish. Language problems may to some degree camouflage uncertainties on how to cope with students or graduates from unfamiliar cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In most cases, however, the Finnish language is essential in communicating with colleagues and customers. There is diversity in work place realities, but I am convinced that a certain level of Finnish skills would be highly beneficial to all foreign students staying in Finland.



## COOPERATION WITH BUSINESS LIFE - A WIN-WIN SITUATION

There are many challenges in international programmes in HEIs. Finnish businesses and industries welcome the efforts of universities of applied sciences and universities to find new strategies and road-maps to overcome the existing problems. Businesses and industries are willing to cooperate in improving the quality and societal impact of international degree programmes, including the employability of international students.

Willingness to cooperate has its roots in the internationalisation agenda of Finnish businesses. The Confederation of Finnish Industries EK has studied the obstacles that small- and medium- sized companies face in entering international markets. There is a clear need to strengthen market knowledge in target countries. Companies must have a better understanding of the needs of potential customers. One must also be able to create networks with other business organisations and get to know different decision- makers in the country. Who could be a better pathfinder for a Finnish company than a graduate from a Finnish university of applied sciences originating from that particular market area?

Cooperation is a win-win situation. It is not only companies that benefit from international students better networking in Finnish society, but it serves the students and HEIs as well. According to “Oivallus”, a skills needs anticipation project coordinated by EK in 2009 -2011, the future is in many ways a question mark. But one thing is for certain: we react to changes in our operating environment by networking with different actors. These networks are channels through which companies, organisations and individuals gain access to new knowledge and skills that complement their existing competences. Companies and universities of applied sciences with their national and international students should create these kinds of “learning networks”.

## THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF TUITION FEES

Finally, what about the much-debated issue of tuition fees? Would they encourage and help universities of applied sciences to develop their international degree programmes and the employability of foreign students? This issue is covered briefly in the recent report “Towards a future-proof system for higher education and research in Finland”, commissioned by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and published in March 2015. According to the report, the volume of Finland’s cross-border higher education remains low compared to the benchmarked countries (Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland). Finland continues to offer tuition-free higher education to

all foreigners. The Danish and Swedish experiences indicate that the number of foreign students from outside EU/EEA who come to study will decrease dramatically during the first years after such fees have been introduced. Fees would thus have a negative impact on the internationalisation of the Finnish HE system. After a few years, the number of incoming students tends to increase. In the longer term, it is not certain that there will be fewer foreign students on Finnish campuses. Tuition fees will force HEIs to more actively recruit foreign students and also develop better routines for receiving and hosting them, says the report (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015).

Finnish HEIs will probably not be able to gain a substantial increase in their public funding in the coming years. International competition in recruiting motivated and talented students is tough. Finnish HEIs are not as known as most of their fellow organisations in the UK or U.S. Finnish society might not yet be among the friendliest towards foreigners. I strongly believe, however, that we could make employability, working life cooperation and measures supporting students' employability the "unique selling points" of Finnish HEIs in the "competition for internationalisation". Employability and close contact with working life are the particular strengths of our universities of applied sciences. In order to be able to build this competitive edge, Finnish HEIs need to improve foresight mechanisms with working life. Students' Finnish language skills need to be strengthened and teachers' English skills need to be excellent. The follow-up of graduated students must be systematic. Students need support in organising internships. International students need support in being employed in Finland after their studies.

International degree programmes in Finnish higher education need better resourcing. I believe tuition fees would help HEIs to develop their international branding, marketing activities and all the support functions that IDPs and especially international students need.

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# GOOD PRACTICES TO SUPPORT THE EMPLOYABILITY OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

Minna Söderqvist

The internationalisation of higher education is a fascinating phenomenon. Having worked and studied it for more than 20 years, I have to admit that the employability of foreign graduates is one of the most challenging phenomena within the field. Nationally, a huge number of different projects have tried to solve the challenge of decreasing the unemployment of foreigners (see discussion in Söderqvist 2005). This article is based on the working experiences of the author within several higher education institutions in several roles (e.g. teacher, student counsellor, international coordinator, senior expert, principle teacher, team leader) and on participation in national and international review processes of internationalisation as well as having served as one of the editors of the Internationalisation Handbook published jointly by Raabe and EAIE and as reviewer for several other journals. However, most of the real cases are from the Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences.

## FINNISH LANGUAGE SKILLS – A MUST IN WORKING LIFE

Is it right to increase the number of foreign students in Finland if we are unable to guarantee that the unemployability of foreign graduates is not more than that of the originally-Finnish graduates? This question has been a driving force behind many actions taken. One of the most desired competences of employees is the language skill (ex. Korkala 2012, Söderqvist 2005; 2012, Garam 2004, Raatikainen 2004, Paajanen 1999). It has been clear for years that the Finnish language is needed when working in Finland. Only in some big multinational companies can you fully work in English and, even there, you cannot fully participate in discussions during lunch and other breaks if you do not speak Finnish (Söderqvist 2005). This is natural for human beings just as the national language of other countries is needed for working in those countries. In Finland, however, we believed for quite a long time that Finnish studies are not needed as part of the curriculum in the English-speaking programmes whereas in the other countries, such as Russia, Belgium, France and Germany, students have been required to be able to communicate in the country's language even before being able to start their studies in that particular country.

In 2011, the Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences was the first in Finland to make a change to its international business curriculum 2012 and started to require 20 credits of Finnish from its originally-foreign students studying in English in the Bachelor's Programme for International Business. In addition to that, 5 cr. of "Intercultural Issues in Finland" is required. Even before that, 14 cr. of Finnish plus 3cr. of "Focus in Finland" were offered as optional studies, so it was not a huge change, but of course resulted in much discussion within the university due to its influence on the quantity of other courses that could be offered. Finnish is offered both as "normal" and as virtual courses. Also, tandem language courses are offered so that two students form a pair under the guidance of a language teacher and provide each other with some linguistic experiences and learning in each other's language.

Elsewhere, at least Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (earlier Helia) has offered quite many Finnish language courses to its students in the degree programme of multilingual management assistants, and Metropolia has also paid attention to the teaching of Finnish to its foreign students (metropolia.fi). In general, however, based on Välimaa et al. (2013, 43–47), more attention to teaching Finnish is needed in this country. Only 28% of traditional universities offer obligatory Finnish language courses and, when offered, the mean quantity is less than 5 ECTS. 73% of universities of applied sciences do offer obligatory Finnish courses, but their ECTS credit amount mean is also quite modest at less than 8 ECTS. How does such a small amount of Finnish learning help you to become employed?

## THE TEACHING OF JOB SEEKING SKILLS: FROM CURRICULUM VITAE AND APPLICATION LETTERS TO DEEPER KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL COMPANIES

By way of example, Majakulma (2013) has argued that job-seeking skills are quite important. From international human resource management, we know that different cultures require different things from a job seeker. It is important to know how to write a CV and an application letter not only in a certain language but also using the right culturally valid information, even when a foreign language is used to write the application letter. Also, it is of enormous importance that the interviewee and the interviewer understand each other: sometimes a third party is even required to interpret the answers of both parties to each other in order to achieve an employment contract. There was a case in which both parties were willing to co-operate but, without a jointly

trusted agent to translate the meaning of the words, the contract could not have been signed since the understanding of the meaning was not shared in the same way (Söderqvist 2005).

In order to teach the basics of job-seeking, language teachers, work placement mentors, recruiting officers and planning officers have provided students with possibilities to learn those skills. In addition, cooperation with other stakeholders has been engaged in. Language teachers in the KYAMK international business programme teach students how to write application letters and CVs, not only during foreign language courses but also during Finnish courses. These are later used during work placement consultation lessons when the teachers responsible for work placements for those majoring in either international marketing or international trade try to help the students to find work placements worth of minimum 30 cr. as the legislation requires from students of universities of applied sciences (Ammattikorkeakouluasetus 1129, 2014).

However, it has been quite difficult for students to even know where to apply for in order and to whom they could target these letters. Based on that experience, in the 5-credit project management course the context of the project for originally-foreign students was changed from thesis-related to getting deeper knowledge of local companies. This course has now been organised twice. Students have invited companies from the area to come and present what they are doing and explain what type of positions they could offer business students. Not surprisingly, both students and companies have liked these get-togethers.

The international business and culture unit has been privileged to have one planning officer just for cooperation with the companies. She has been not only the contact point between companies and teachers, but has also organised several development projects to help originally-foreign students find work placements during studies. Some of these projects are further discussed in LCCE®-harjoittelu project report published in 2014.

At Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, there is another person to help would-be graduates find jobs not only by providing information on available opportunities but also by organising short training courses on how to seek employment. These courses have been full all the time, due to the fact that not all students have been able to take these virtual courses. Negotiations have been ongoing to procure more resources for this activity.

Cooperation has been lively in other directions as well in order to help students get the needed job-seeking skills. For example, the University of Helsinki had a unit at the Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education at

Kasarminmäki. Kymenlaakso UAS's students amongst other highly-educated originally-foreign graduates in the area were offered personal guidance on how to look for jobs as part of a development project.

## ADVICE FOR COMPANIES HOW TO PROFIT FROM THE ORIGINALLY-FOREIGN STUDENTS

A small-to-medium-sized enterprise (SME), according to the EU definition, has less than 200 employees. In the Kymenlaakso area, most SMEs are far smaller and it is not clear to them how they could use originally-foreign students to make their business prosper. This is a national phenomenon (Söderqvist 2005; 2012). Companies claimed that foreign employees did not give them much help in developing their businesses, but one would expect this to be different.

For that reason, several actions have been taken and have been discussed in project reports (Söderqvist 2013; 2014). For example, during the 5-credit course called "Internationalisation Strategies and a Project", students have been making internationalisation plans for companies. They have made plans for a window and door producer for the Russian market to promote mosquito repellent in Russia and the Baltic countries, to internationalise navigation programmes and to study the possibilities of internationalising the tourism-related services of various service providers. Several bachelor's theses have also been done to promote the internationalisation of the area and suggest how Kymenlaakso UAS itself can improve its ways of working.

The company cooperation planning officer ran a project called "Work placement as part of the LCCE®- concept". One of the actions was to create a platform in which students, companies and Kymenlaakso UAS could meet. Students could put their CVs into it and companies could market their job openings there. However, due to IT obstacles this project was never accomplished and the use of Jobstep is recommended.

Companies have been told that Kymenlaakso UAS can offer

- Multicultural and multilingual teams to solve internationalisation plans
- Language and cultural training
- Students to first be used at Finnish units and then sent to foreign units
- Project workers

- Trainees
- Thesis workers
- Friends to families

All this information has been published in many channels. Families and companies have been provided with knowledge about the more than 40 nationalities present on the Kouvola Kasarminmäki campus. Many actions have started, but there could still be more cooperation. Work continues to develop alumni networking, for example.

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# INTERNATIONAL DAY AT WORK

Nina Björn

The International Day at Work was organised in Jyväskylä on 10 October 2014. The event was the first of its kind in Jyväskylä and all of Finland. The aim of the day was to give an opportunity for all companies in Central Finland and the foreign students at the University of Jyväskylä and JAMK University of Applied Sciences to get to know each other, to show the students Finnish working life and show the companies the competence that the students could offer them. Another aim was charitable action: the fees paid by the employers to the students for the day's work were donated to the Day at Work 2014 collection intended to promote education and safe everyday life for homeless children in Zambia and Kenya.

The event was organised by Central Finland's Team Finland operators, whose aim was to make finding and placing students in businesses as easy as possible for both businesses and students. The event was attended by 32 companies and 41 foreign students representing different fields. The students were placed according to their nationalities and competence areas and based on the wishes and needs of the companies. Each company had 1–5 students, although there were not quite enough spots for all the students.

## ORGANISING THE EVENT

The idea of organising the Day at Work event was sparked at a workshop of Central Finland's Team Finland operators, who were brainstorming activities in the region and internationalisation on a wider scale. A core team of Central Finland's Team Finland operators were responsible for planning and implementing the Day at Work event. Operation a Day's Work (ODW) Finland joined in early on, and gave us permission to use their name in the event.

Posters were made to advertise the event to both companies and students. The event was marketed to companies at various events, e-bulletins and conventionally using telephone recruitment. Students were informed of the event using various communications media at their educational institutes, such as intranet sites.

Companies were asked their wishes regarding students, which were complied with where possible. Companies and students were matched with

consideration of these wishes, which involved the student's language skills, home country, field of study and competence. Students' wishes regarding companies were also taken into account to some extent.

Once the companies and students had been matched, the students were given information on their company and contact person, with instructions to agree on the details of the day directly with the company. Companies received practical information about the day, brochures from ODW Finland and a payment form. Each company paid ODW Finland €50 per student. The sum was agreed on by the organisers.

A dedicated Facebook page was opened for the event, and students and companies could comment on the events and experiences of the day there. After the event, feedback was collected from the companies and students.

## WORK TASKS AT THE COMPANY

The students performed very different duties at the companies. The day involved familiarisation with the company and its operations, which the students used to create marketing analyses, for example. The company personnel got to practise their language skills by conversing with the student and learn about the student's culture and the company's line of business in the student's home country at the same time. Many students were given different translation tasks related to, for example, social media and marketing materials such as websites, brochures and company introduction materials.

## STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Most of the students highlighted the benefit of getting to see Finnish working life and what it is like to work in Finland. A day as a company's "employee" gave them a new outlook on the business field in Finland and Jyväskylä, and how companies and their employees operate. The students got to do meaningful tasks and talk about their country and culture. One important offering was the experience itself, with their own future and job search in mind. Jyväskylä itself also opened to the students in a whole new way, from a business viewpoint. Many of them were also pleased to get to practise their Finnish during the day. The students were left with a positive image of the companies because they were received positively and included in the work community. The students also felt very positively about the day's charitable function.

Comments from the students:

*“Day at Work is a real benefit to me as I come to know the working culture in Finnish company.”*

*“The best thing for me is to see what a working day looks inside the organization.”*

*“...it was a great experience of seeing Jyväskylä from a different point of view, that is, of the business perspective and opportunities for foreigners in the region.”*

*“One of the benefits is practicing my Finnish language skills, I was speaking only Finnish with the employers. It was really good and challenging to use the language in the working life, and I believe I coped with that task.”*

*“I am proud that I can do some contribution to the charity.”*

## BENEFITS FOR THE COMPANIES

The companies found the day very rewarding in several ways. The foreign student brought a different “kick” to the working day. Many found the introduction to a different culture and “language training” useful. The situation report of the company’s business field in the student’s home country was also mentioned as a positive thing that supports the company’s operations. The students involved had a good attitude and gave a positive image of themselves and their competence. As such, a few companies said in their feedback that the student will be a good contact for his or her home country in the future. One company considered the student a potential future employee.

Comments from the companies:

*“The trainee was an extremely competent and charismatic person who inspired our work community in several ways.”*

*“New perspectives for operating in different countries.”*

*“We gained a lot of useful information for the needs of businesses and our own organisation. Day-long language training for our personnel.”*

*“A positive atmosphere at the office and especially in a customer meeting.”*

*“Excellent conversations about the similarities and differences of cultures.”*

### An entrepreneur's experiences of the day: Salminen & Tikka Ltd

Our company, Salminen & Tikka Ltd, participated in the Day at Work event by employing a Chinese university student for a day. Salminen & Tikka Ltd is a partner of expansionary companies in the development of sales and business operations and the recruitment, management and training of sales personnel. We have helped launch and promote several commissions connected to the initiation and development of the international business operations of many Finnish companies. Considering our operations, the Day at Work event was an ideal fit for our company, for example in view of developing the services offered to our client and the development of our own expertise.

Our aim for the Day at Work event was good discussions and expanding our thinking with a student, who observes Finland from an international perspective. I am also a partner and advisor in several different companies, so we toured different types of businesses with the student over the course of the day. This enabled the student to form a broader outlook of the operations of Finnish SMEs.

In our work, we have observed that Finnish companies have a germinating desire to expand but they think that launching international business operations is harder and riskier than it actually is. Finnish companies have an inbuilt sense of "inadequacy" regarding their operations, which far too easily causes them to think that their operations should be much larger or more impressive before moving into the international market. In fact, the most significant offering of the Day at Work event were the discussions and observations of how well-positioned for internationalisation Finnish companies already are at the moment. Based on the conversations with the foreign student, it was easy to note that the competence and products of Finnish companies certainly bear comparison with their international competitors. The language skills of Finns are often much better than we are aware of.

For our company, the Day at Work event proved to be an excellent way to reflect on our competence and our customers' chances of success from the viewpoint of a different cultural context. The discussions and mutual exchange of ideas with the Chinese university student, who already had a lot of work experience, provided a welcome change from the daily routines and new ideas for business in an international environment.

*Petri Salminen, CEO, Salminen & Tikka Ltd*

## BENEFITS FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The mission of higher education institutions is to educate competent employees for working life and support the internationalisation of the region's working life. Students, foreign students in particular, need more and more contact and connections to working life during their studies. The Day at Work provided one way to meet these challenges. With the event, we could offer foreign students the opportunity to experience working life and show their own competence to companies. This also lowers the threshold of businesses to take a foreign student as a trainee or temporary assistant in the future, for example, and perhaps offer a more permanent position some day.

From the perspective of the higher education institutions, the Day at Work event increased understanding on both sides. The companies that participated in the event revealed what type of skills and people companies need and for what type of tasks. Similarly, the companies were made more familiar with the foreign students and competences of the educational institutes. I think that the event will create new opportunities for companies and the right kind of students to find each other.

The higher education institutions also gained a breath of fresh air from the students who spent the International Day at Work at companies. A Chinese student who spent the day working at the Marketing Services of JAMK University of Applied Sciences brought new ideas for international marketing and student recruitment. The Marketing Services personnel felt that they had received a language immersion, and the student gained a new, employee perspective on the university. Cultural competence and understanding increased on all sides, which is very important for everyone operating in an international context.

The Day at Work even increased and solidified the cooperation between different operators in Central Finland and strengthened the operations of the Team Finland network in Central Finland.

## FEEDBACK ON THE EVENT

The feedback on the day from the companies and students was positive. The companies were very satisfied with the students, feeling that they had received many benefits from the Day at Work event. The students were equally satisfied with the day. The companies and students expressed gratitude to the organisers, and all the practical arrangements went well. All the companies and students who filled in the feedback survey hoped that the

International Day at Work event would be organised again. And it was, in spring 2015 in fact.

We wish to thank the companies of Central Finland, Operation a Day's Work Finland, all the students who participated and, naturally, all Central Finland's Team Finland operators for a successful International Day at Work!

## SOCIAL INTEGRATION

# INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Taina Moisander

The importance of supporting the integration of international students has been topical in Finland for several years. Firstly, the number of international students in Finland has been rising steadily since 2005. The number has doubled in less than 10 years; in 2013 there were nearly 20,000 international students in Finland (CIMO, 2013). Of this group, about half stay in Finland to either work or continue their studies. It is also known that more students would like to stay if they found employment. (CIMO, 2014). One of the factors that makes international students move to countries with higher income levels is the prospect of finding opportunities for employment in the country of destination (VATT, 2014). This is the case for nearly 70% of students coming to Finland (CIMO, 2014, 4).

Secondly, international students have not always found it easy to integrate in terms of social life (SAMOK, 2008, 86). It is therefore important that a minimum understanding of integration encompasses social integration into the surrounding community as well as economic integration. Successful integration means the immigrant adapting to surrounding society in a way that they are able to actively participate in life and can obtain new information, skills and ways of acting. Knowledge of Finnish or Swedish as well as of the culture were seen as the most important factors contributing to integration as well as support and guidance received at the beginning, according to a survey for students in higher education (Sjöblom-Immala, 2013, 95).

## IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATION

Feeling integrated in a given community or society affects the decisions individuals make regarding their commitment to that particular country. It is valuable both for the individual and society as a whole that integration takes place (Sjöblom-Immala, 2013, 95). For Finland it has been a goal to support the integration of international students and other immigrants alike, which is why the Government Integration Programme for 2012–2015 was drawn up. The number of immigrants has risen in Finland, and the need to support their inclusion into the different sectors of society has hence gained momentum. With regard to international students, the need to recruit more labour and remain competitive in the global marketplace has often been linked to this



student group. International students are also seen as an important part of creating an international study environment, which increases the quality of education (Strategy for Internationalisation of Higher Education, 2009, 9). Whether one wishes to remain in Finland or not, the chance to truly integrate should be a reality, so measures need to be taken in order for students to have this possibility.

## CHALLENGES TO INTEGRATION

Although there have not been recent extensive studies made on the integration of international students, the main challenges that exist are known. According to the International Student Barometer (ISB) 2014, international students in Finland feel that it is on average more difficult to get to know local students and people, when compared to the other countries that took part in the Barometer (2014). The same survey revealed that the integration of international students into working life should be supported more during the course of the studies by the higher education institutions (HEI). This means that language and other social factors as well as the lack of employment opportunities hinder the integration of students.

Both the lack of connections to the locals and barriers in learning the language contribute to difficulties in finding employment. However, resistance from employers to hire international talent also hinders the process of gaining meaningful employment. International jobseekers face discrimination in the labour market based on their ethnic, cultural and religious background, according to international students (CIMO, 2014, 5). Additionally, employers do not necessarily recognise the added value of international talent, and are therefore hesitant to hire people of foreign background. Only half of international businesses regarded international competences as important, while only 10% of businesses without international activities thought so (Hidden Competences, 2013, 5).

Inadequate language skills are often used as a reason not to hire foreigners. Whether fluency in Finnish is always needed can be debated. At the same time there are fields in which one needs to know the language in order to carry out the responsibilities. International students rate language skills as the single most important factor of employability, writes Majakulma (2014, 5). Besides the language barrier to gaining employment, without contacts to the locals and a network to utilise in the job market, looking for work becomes more difficult. The ISB also shows that satisfaction with career guidance services at the HEIs in Finland was lower than in the other countries surveyed. International

students in Finland may lack knowledge of labour market functionality, ranging from the simple job-seeking skills of writing proper CVs to knowing how to market oneself.

Language learning in itself is a challenge. As the courses offered as a part of the curriculum are too few, international students do not easily acquire a fluency in Finnish and/or Swedish. Next to studying and working, taking additional classes during one's free-time is not straightforward, which is why it cannot be assumed that international students will learn on their own, even if they are motivated to. The lack of contact to locals in part affects the opportunities present to practise language skills. Lack of language skills also affects the possibilities of finding internship placements or job opportunities upon graduation. Internships, being a mandatory part of studies, have to be given the attention they deserve. Internships are meant to create connections to working life, increase understanding of the labour market and enhance the practical skills needed in working life.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION? WHAT CAN UASS DO?

Although HEIs should not be left alone to tackle the issue of integration, there are many things that should take place in the immediate environment into which international students arrive, i.e. the campus and academic community. Creating an inclusive campus life, where international students feel an equal part of the academic community is where integration should first take place. Although most Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) communicate sufficiently in English, are international students truly heard and given opportunities to get involved in all the activities on campus? Could more courses be offered to mixed groups and projects be organised to facilitate networking and integration with the native Finnish/Swedish-speaking student population?

An obvious issue for UASs to improve is the facilitation of language learning. The timing of language teaching should be adjusted so that international students are exposed to language learning from the beginning of their arrival in the country. The number and quality of Finnish language courses offered at higher education institutions should be adapted to meet the needs of properly learning a new language. The importance of learning Finnish should be emphasised so that international students are given a realistic picture of coping in society and the labour market.

While it is at the core for Universities of Applied Sciences to cooperate with the labour market, it does not seem to fit the purpose in the case of international students. Finding the specific attitudes employers hold in a given region should be looked into in order to overcome the barrier of employer resistance to hiring foreigners. Good practices promoting working life connections, such as visiting local business so that employers gain an understanding of the type of skillset that local HEIs have to offer, are good ways to enhance the employment opportunities of international students. More attention needs to be paid to the facilitation of quality internships, so that international students can fully benefit from their studies. Careers guidance needs to be clearly improved, which entails understanding the needs of international students in order for the services to cater for the actual challenges that students face.

## HOLISTIC APPROACH TO POLICY-MAKING

If in Finland we are to involve international actors in working life and society as a whole, structural barriers stopping this happening need to be removed. Over the years, far too much time has been spent in debating and arguing over whose responsibility it is to look after certain parts of the integration process. Policy-making needs to be made more holistic and the different stakeholders involved must assume their share of responsibilities. The issues that need to be looked at holistically include housing allocation, municipal services for immigrants, employment policy and integration policy, which includes resources for language studies.

On one hand, the policy in Finland has been to support the recruitment and integration of international students. The Strategy for Internationalisation of Higher Education set a goal of 8% of international students by 2020 and the Government Integration Programme 2012–2015 calls for measures for better integration through improved language and culture studies as well as employment opportunities. On the other hand, employers hold attitudes that slow down the process of finding meaningful employment for international students. This clearly requires an attempt to move from a conventional thinking model of what international talent means. A study looking into the skillset of international students, highlights how the understanding of international competences should be extended to include productivity, resilience and curiosity and not be limited to language skills, cultural knowledge and tolerance (Hidden Competences, 2013, 21).

## THE WAY FORWARD

International students play a significant part in promoting the internationalisation of higher education in Finland. Given the current political situation and the possibility of decreased numbers of international students in Finland, an outcome of the introduction of tuition fees, drastic measures to ensure their integration need to be taken. Whether international students make Finland their home country is not entirely up to the individual. Unless the two key issues of language and employment are taken seriously and coupled with active measures, Finland will keep failing to hold onto the foreigners who have come to the country for their studies and expect to reciprocate by finding employment.

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# SUPPORTING THE INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INTO FINNISH HIGHER EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

Ulla Weijo

As a result of the increasing number of foreign-language degree programmes, higher education institutions have a new task; supporting the integration of international students into Finnish higher education and society. In the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015, among the objectives set by the Ministry of Education and Culture are the supporting of a multicultural society and the development of a genuinely international higher education community. The strategy also sets out targets for the number of foreign degree students (20,000) and the proportion of foreign nationals in graduate schools (20%). (Ministry of Education, 2009). Further, “higher education institutions promote the smooth progress of studies and access to employment of non-Finnish and immigrant experts by taking into account the effects of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds when organising the education and required support services, and by developing well-functioning practices for the recognition and further development of competence acquired elsewhere”. (ibid., 46)

In many European countries including Finland, demographic changes are causing an increasing need to recruit foreign workers and therefore work-related immigration is an important topic in national and local discussions. One of the targets of the previous government was for immigrants and individuals with a migrant background to access education proportionally at the same rate as the mainstream population.

The decisive point of the economic footprint of an international student is whether they stay in the country to work after their graduation or whether they move somewhere else. According to Statistics Finland, just under a half (46%) of international students who graduated in Finland in 2011 were employed in Finland a year after, 6% continued studying, 18% remained in Finland for other reasons and 31% left the country. The number of students remaining in Finland is relatively high, compared, for example, to the premises made in the calculations in Germany and the Netherlands. The figures of Statistics Finland only describe the situation a year after graduation, however. The situation may be different after several years. Neither do the numbers tell us if people have been able to find work at their level of education (CIMO, 2014).

Discussion about additional services needed by international students also involves discussion about the integration of non-Finnish students into education and in the Finnish world of work. Better student services contribute to the commitment to studies, advancement of studies and employability. The delivery of these objectives requires joint efforts and regional cooperation by all stakeholders. Development of tutoring and guidance services is an important tool to promote the commitment to studies, prevent discontinuation of studies and enhance graduation within the scheduled period of study (e.g. orientation to studies at UAS, to the academic culture, to the multicultural community). Discussion about additional services needed by international students inevitably involves discussion about the integration of non-Finnish students in education and in the Finnish world of work.

The 2013–2016 international strategy of Lahti University of Applied Sciences also recognises the importance of support services and the integration of foreign students in education, Finnish society and the world of work. At Lahti University of Applied Sciences, the number of non-Finnish degree students is approximately 350.

## PROJECTS OF SUPPORTING IMMIGRATION AT LAHTI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

In the 2009–2015 period, Lahti University of Applied Sciences has implemented various projects aimed at

- internationalising the content of its programmes (not translation into English)
- the provision of support services for students of different cultural backgrounds
- supporting the mutual integration of Finnish and non-Finnish students
- increasing the provision of additional support and guidance needed to improve employment of non-Finnish students

The following projects have supported student integration and developed various services and guidance for students at Lahti University of Applied Sciences, HERA International (Helsinki Research and Education Area), Lahti

University Consortium, Metropolia UAS and FUAS (Federation of Universities of Applied Sciences; HAMK, Laurea, and Lahti).

- **UrbanEnviro** (European Social Fund (ESF); Lahti University Consortium) outputs include the Puhutaan suomeksi ('Say it in Finnish') campaign, joint orientation, the [studyinlahti.fi](http://studyinlahti.fi) website and the pilot project for the International Coffee and Friendship Family concept.
- **HERA International** (Helsinki Research and Education Area) outputs to Lahti region (Päijät-Häme) include regional marketing, HR development and welcoming weeks.
- **Hera Competence** (Metropolia and FUAS universities) – development of introductory studies for students with a migrant background, marketing, development of the Finnish language offering and development of multicultural skills.
- **FUAS spreadhead** – development of a project, career and recruitment model and reflections on the problematics of the Finnish language.
- **Access to Success** (Esteettä eteenpäin) (HAMK) – modelling and development of entrance examination practices.
- **GetEmployed** (ESF; Lahti UAS) aimed at supporting the employability of international degree students studying at Lahti University of Applied Sciences. Outputs include a mentoring programme, an alumni network and a workplace-oriented Finnish language course.

## STAGE MODEL 1–8

The UrbanEnviro project (an ESF project, Lahti University Consortium) included a component on international support services aimed at formulating a joint vision and cooperation model between the operators. The aim of the sub-project for Lahti UAS was to clarify the aims and processes, describe the actions and clarify the roles of different actors in each service area in the region and develop a common service provider model for to region. Developing services normally means unifying processes and quality improvement.

The sub-project for Lahti UAS created a model, which identifies eight stages in the provision of services needed by non-Finnish degree students. The process covers services from the marketing stage to post-graduation placement. The aim has been to identify, for each stage, the actors within the UAS who have actual responsibility for them at faculties and in joint organisational services. The needs and responsibilities of service provision have been clarified by determining the responsible parties for subsequent projects and different functions.

Services related to this model have been developed further by other projects. The model has provided a framework for longer-term development and clarified service needs within Lahti UAS.

### Services for foreign degree students, step by step

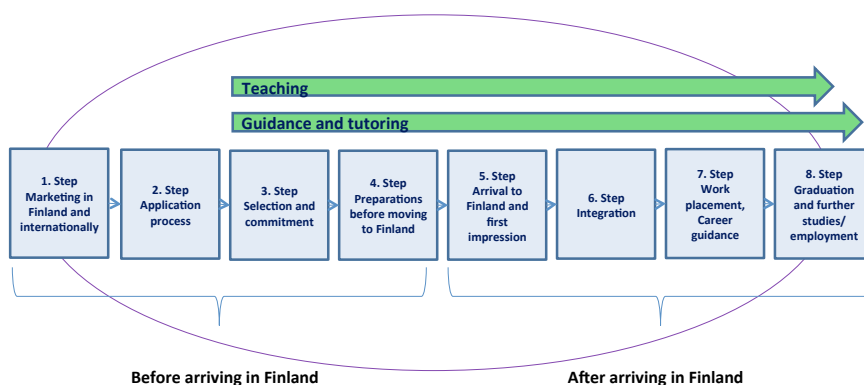


Figure 1. Stage Model 1–8 for Service Provision

## 1<sup>ST</sup> STAGE: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL MARKETING

The first stage includes the determination of target countries and groups, decisions on entrance examination countries, and the selection of suitable marketing methods. Critical questions at this stage are the following: Who are foreign-language programmes targeted at and what kind of student populations are being sought (target countries)? Who has overall responsibility for the marketing of foreign-language programmes? What skills are available in house? The effects of tuition fees -what are the plans for these effects?



International trade fairs, national school visits, the CIMO network, websites ([www.lamk.fi](http://www.lamk.fi), [www.studyinlahti.fi](http://www.studyinlahti.fi)) and brochure materials are the main tools in marketing. The FINNIPS network also plays a central role in the promotion of education. The roles and responsibilities of FINNIPS and other organisations involved in international marketing need to be further discussed.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> STAGE: APPLICATION

The second stage is the application stage. The centralised application system works well, and there are now several years' experience of it. Participation in the formulation of FINNIPS entrance exams and their delivery in the target countries (accumulation of knowledge) is a solution taken at the national level and, in my view, to a single university of applied sciences it provides significant value from the network to the recruitment process. The services of the Lahti UAS Admission Services together with the FINNIPS network and the entrance exams abroad are central services at this stage.

## 3<sup>RD</sup> STAGE: ADMISSION AND COMMITMENT

This stage involves ensuring students' commitment so that they will accept a place at Lahti UAS and eventually end up there. This is an important stage, but the UAS does not have a named coordinator for it. Admission letters and the 'How to study at Lahti University of Applied Sciences' mobile guide are part of the service and support measures of this stage. From the guidance counselling point of view, guidance and introduction to Finland should start at this stage, along with introduction to studying in Finland.

## 4<sup>TH</sup> STAGE: PREPARATIONS BEFORE RELOCATION TO FINLAND

Key questions of this stage involve the distribution of the right information to the right partners, guiding students towards studies at the UAS and gaining their commitment to it. Who is responsible for guidance once a student has been accepted but the studies have not yet started/he or she has not yet arrived in Finland? Who takes care of relocation and visa matters, how is accommodation organised? Email contact by tutors starts and has to be taken care of. These are the questions to be asked and answered at this stage.

## 5<sup>TH</sup> STAGE: ARRIVAL

A positive first impression and the provision of essential information are important matters at this stage. This is perhaps the stage that has required the most attention in terms of activities and services developed by various higher education institutions. At Lahti, this includes reception by peer tutors, joint orientation week of foreign-language programmes, programme-specific orientation periods, a cruise on Vesijärvi and an evening reception by the City of Lahti.

Models have been obtained by comparing the exchange student processes, and similarly, good practices have been transferred to services offered to exchange students. There have been efforts to implement some of the activities jointly, such as the reception by the city administration. This has also improved the institution's visibility in the region.

## 6<sup>TH</sup> STAGE: INTEGRATION

The sixth, seventh and eighth stages are aimed at ensuring students' integration in Finland, in the education and learning environment, and later in the Finnish world of work. They overlap a lot. The most important thing is to offer opportunities for learning Finnish and building local contacts. Critical questions include: The development of Finnish language offering at Lahti UAS? Who is actually responsible for integration support functions? Who is responsible for the coordination of the Finnish language? Who is responsible for the coordination of regional cooperation?

The Finnish language course offering has been developed within Lahti UAS and in regional cooperation; The Puhutaan suomeksi! ('Say it in Finnish') campaign and workplace-oriented Finnish language courses.

Overall, the student should be helped to:

- recognise his/her own competences and create professional goals and professional identity
- get to know the practices and the rules of Finnish working life
- get familiar with the different job portals and utilise social media in job search
- give an elevator pitch, draw up documents such as an application and CV and gain knowledge on how to act in job applying processes
- create useful contacts and networks for the future career

Other development work includes the Friendship Family Programme, Lahti Student Union's activities and other student activities within faculties. Tutoring plays an important role in this.

There are, however, still questions to be answered. How to ensure the building of local contacts? How important is peer tutoring to foreign degree students' adapting to life in Finland? What can tutors do to help new students integrate faster and more permanently? How can the UAS (international services, degree programmes) support tutors in this effort? Finnish language courses can also promote foreign students' networking in the local area. The main objective is to get foreign students to believe and trust in their employment opportunities in Finland, and to support them by a variety of different means.

## 7<sup>TH</sup> STAGE: WORK PLACEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Consideration of the special needs of foreign students in the development of work placement and employment support services is fundamentally important. Good experiences have been gained in supporting faculties' own activities, development of a mentoring programme and the launch of alumni activities. All these activities took place in the ESF's 'Get employed!' project where different actions were implemented partly together with HAMK University of Applied Sciences.

The 'Get employed!' project implemented the regional immigration policy and the strategic programme through simple concrete steps, which support the employability of our international students. By networking, the various actors will receive support to expand their operations, expertise and competence levels and to enhance their competitiveness. The network can be used to boost counselling, training, marketing and the dissemination of general and appropriate information. Networking will also increase cooperation between the actors outside the Lahti Region. The aim of the operations is to further strengthen contact between employers, international students and higher education institutes, and of course to promote the know-how of international students.

## 8<sup>TH</sup> STAGE: GRADUATION AND CAREER PLACEMENT

There are a great number of international degree students at our higher education institutions who wish to stay in Finland and in the Lahti region after finishing their studies. Foreign students receive free higher education,

which is why it is important that they be offered support and opportunities for employment in Finland. The higher education institutions have generally started to awaken to developing career services specialised in questions international students face when moving from student status to a graduate seeking a job.

One of the needs highlighted by the projects was support for the employment of foreign students. This has been discussed a lot recently. Projects have developed activities aimed at supporting the integration of foreign students, with special emphasis on the development of Finnish language skills and networking with Finnish people. In addition, more attention is needed to the development of employment support services, so that foreign graduates can find work after graduating from Lahti/Finland.

Then again, employers in for instance Päijät-Häme region should have the ability to utilise international students. International students can offer their know-how and skills for the internationalisation processes of companies and organisations. That is why these two targets, employability and integration, should be considered more closely in the future.

The staff at the Lahti University of Applied Sciences are receiving an increasing number of questions related to career issues and working life from international students. It is important to develop career services for this particular target group, to market international students and their know-how to local employers and to develop and improve local cooperation. Career discussions should take place at different stages to support students' long-term stay in Finland.

How do higher education institutions support students' further study opportunities? Graduates from universities of applied sciences often apply to Master's programmes at Finnish universities. Continuation from Bachelor's level to the universities' Master's programmes is not, however, a seamless process in all the fields of study and therefore cooperation between universities and universities of applied sciences should be enhanced. Overall, more effort is needed to increase regional and national cooperation in terms of education. Furthermore, it should be considered, how the practices and models formulated in various projects are established as permanent activities.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, higher education institutions can do a lot to support the integration of international students into Finnish higher education and society. The key question is how the practices and models formulated in various projects can

be established as permanent activities? How are career services and their necessity viewed by higher education institutions?

The job market and recruitment have changed dramatically in recent years, the role of networks and social media has grown. Foreign students lack networks, which could help them find employment. How can the higher education institutions help them build these networks? In addition, cooperation with businesses and organisations is needed to ensure that students can be offered work experience opportunities in Finnish workplaces, for example through business projects and work placement periods. Finnish language education is being developed and continually increased in foreign-language degree programmes.

Based on the needs at local and national level as well as on the research findings and the results of different projects, the activities carried out should include a mentoring programme for students and local employers, new working life skills courses in English, an alumni network, career events and the development of work placement practices within the institution. In addition, the university should try to increase awareness of international students amongst local employers, changing attitudes towards foreign manpower and generally improving cooperation at a local level. The hiring of foreign graduates of Finnish higher education institutions is left to Finnish employers. Foreign students can also be used as an asset that supports the internationalisation of a region.

Lahti UAS has been taking seriously the integration of foreign students into studies and working life. There have been several activities during the last five years, which have been launched through organisations financing coming mostly from outside, from different projects. By supporting the development of students' working life skills and at the same time increasing the awareness of international talent in the region, Lahti University of Applied Sciences aims at offering international students better opportunities to find work in Finland, particularly in the Päijät-Häme region.

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# SOCIAL INTEGRATION THROUGH DEVELOPING THE COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE OF INTERNATIONAL DEGREE STUDENTS

Helli Kitinoja

The trend seems to be that in the future students will have more choices and education will become a global choice for an increasing number of students. It has also been seen that with globalisation advancing further and the developing world catching up, the major driving force for international degree mobility will weaken. However, global education also means more challenges (Alfranseder, 2013, 178–181; Wächter, 2013, 174–177).

Additional social support mechanisms are needed to allow students to cope with the different cultures and living environment. Through the promotion of credit mobility, the higher education institutions (HEIs) have developed expertise and infrastructure when it comes to the social integration of international degree students. Staff members together with the student unions have learned to take care of international students and have developed the intercultural awareness and competences needed to welcome students from all over the world and from different cultures. As important as academic reasons, university rankings and salary expectations are social integration, quality of life and acceptance by society when international students choose their study destinations (Alfranseder, 2013, 178–181).

Employability fosters social integration after graduation and is also one of the indicators of higher education. However, there is no evidence of any country in Europe systematically analysing employment opportunities in relation to the social profiles of graduates. It is therefore impossible to know whether ethnicity as one of the factors may have an impact on employment after graduation (Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe 2014).

The Finnish Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, launched in 2010, imposed obligations on, for example, cities, municipalities and higher education institutions concerning the promotion of the integration of foreign degree students. The objective of the act is to support and promote integration and make it easier for immigrants to play an active role in Finnish society. The purpose of the act is also to promote gender equality and nondiscrimination and positive interaction between different population groups. Municipalities, employment and economic development offices

and other authorities must provide immigrants with appropriate guidance and advice concerning measures and services promoting integration and working life. The employment and economic development office (TE Office) has launched a preliminary survey to initially assess employment, study and other integration needs and the need for language training and for other measures and services which promote integration. Personal integration plans may also be prepared for immigrants as a joint effort by the municipality, the TE Office and the immigrant. The municipality must also prepare a municipal integration programme either independently or in cooperation with other municipalities (Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration 1386 /30 December 2010).

Seinäjäki University of Applied Sciences (SeAMK) has modelled the guidance and counselling provided for students who are embarking on exchange studies or a traineeship abroad, incoming exchange students and trainees as well as double degree students. The processes are presented in the SeAMK quality manual and the SeAMK guide for study guidance and counselling. Moreover, a separate operational model, i.e. a study guidance and counselling plan, has been prepared to support the overall and social integration of foreign degree students. The plan was prepared based on the instructions provided in the abovementioned act concerning the initial assessment and integration plan prepared for immigrants. At the end of their first academic year, foreign degree students also participate in an annual assessment of the guidance and counselling provided for international studies.

## MULTICULTURAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

The aim of the guidance and counselling of immigrants is to help them with integration and social cohesion. Employment and a sufficiently high level of education are generally seen as a potential basis for income security, and therefore as an instrument for stronger participation in society (Entzinger & Biezeweld, 2003). The Council of the European Union states that high-quality lifelong guidance is a key component of education, training and employability strategies to attain the strategic goal of Europe becoming the world's most dynamic knowledge-based society (Resolution 2004). A few countries in Europe, Finland, Germany and Norway, have indicated that career guidance is important in supporting the social integration of migrants and ethnic minorities (OECD 2004). The challenges of diversity and diversity management lie in the language, bureaucracy and lack of government guidance. Cultural differences that affect working life are differences in public holidays, power distance and

time concept (Kitinoja, 2014). Similar cultural differences can also be seen in education, which is good to bear in mind when planning multicultural guidance and counselling.

One of the best-known descriptions of multicultural counselling competencies is the concept developed by Sue et. al (1996). Based on this description, a culturally competent counsellor has three characteristics: 1) awareness of his/her own values, assumptions and biases, 2) understanding of the worldview of a culturally different client, and 3) an ability to develop appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. Each of these characteristics includes three dimensions: 1) beliefs and attitudes, 2) knowledge, and 3) skills. Based on Launikari (2005), effective intercultural communication needs knowledge of other cultures (Mindset), behavioural skills (Skillset) and special attitudes towards other cultures (Heartset).

The collaborative network of multicultural counselling should include representatives from different professional groups. Examples of these representatives are the local and regional employment officers, individuals and teams in various departments at higher education institutions and other educational institutes, officers from the social welfare system, volunteer-based teams and police officers. Representatives from cultural minorities could be peers who have already integrated into the new society well enough and are thus able to work as role models (Puukari & Launikari, 2005; Lairio, Matinheikki-Kokko & Puukari, 1998).

## MULTICULTURAL STUDY COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE AT SEINÄJOKI UAS

The aim of the guidance and counselling provided for international studies is to ensure that Finnish and foreign students are motivated and committed to completing international studies, advance smoothly in their studies, and have the international resources required for their degree upon graduation. The goal of the guidance and counselling provided for international studies is to comprehensively support the student in the study process, in professional development and in the life situation related to the studies. The guidance is interactive and processbased. The guidance and counselling continue throughout the student's studies and serve as a support structure for the student and the higher education institution. The supervisor is intended to contribute by creating favourable conditions for learning and international studies, thus allowing the student to operate independently (Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences guide for study guidance and counselling 2015).



Guidance and counselling for international studies are primarily personal and usually include the preparation of a personal study and career plan. Guidance may also be given in a group or, for example, by serving as a professional partner with a representative of a foreign higher education institution. The guidance and counselling are persevering and systematic while flexibly accommodating different situations. They are also confidential and professional and require international competence and a cultural sensitivity needed in multicultural situations from the supervisor. International competence constitutes an area of expertise for staff in higher education institutions. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture requires that the training of teaching staff, in particular, also focus on the multiculturalisation of society (Seinäjäki University of Applied Sciences guide for study guidance and counselling 2015).

Based on the target group, guidance and counselling for international studies may be divided into three categories:

1. guidance and counselling for the higher education institution's own students who intend to complete exchange studies or a traineeship abroad
2. guidance and counselling for incoming foreign exchange and degree students (including trainees and double degree students),
3. guidance counselling for students of the higher education institution concerning internationalisation at home.

In terms of content, international study counselling can be divided into contentrelated study counselling (academic counselling) and counselling related to teaching arrangements and support measures for studies (student counselling). Guidance usually refers to practical issues, such as accommodation, funding for studies, visa issues, etc. The distribution of information to students covers various events and topical matters (Seinäjäki University of Applied Sciences guide for study guidance and counselling 2015).

The guidance and counselling process can be examined from the chronological perspective: before, at the beginning of, during and at the end of studies and after graduation. SeAMK units are responsible for systematic guidance and counselling for international studies and for studyrelated information distribution together with International Affairs as well as the students. Together with the units' international coordinators and tutor students, International Affairs receives and provides orientation to foreign students and are responsible for social programme arrangements during the academic year.

The students and International Affairs train tutor students and acquaint them with international operations.

A foreignlanguage education work group has been established for the purpose of coordinating the guidance and counselling provided for foreign degree students in particular. The head of International Affairs serves as the chair of the work group and the experts include heads of foreign language degree programmes, teacher tutors, a representative of Student Services and Admission Services, a sales and marketing representative, a student parson and a student representative as well as any other required experts.

Each foreign degree students is helped to prepare the personal international study plan presented below, to which the head of the degree programme or the tutor teacher, the international coordinator and the student commit. The implementation of the plan is periodically monitored. Moreover, guidance and counselling for international studies must always accommodate any crises or exceptional situations.

# PLAN FOR THE MULTICULTURAL STUDY COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE OF INTERNATIONAL DEGREE STUDENTS AT SEINÄJOKI UAS

## 1. BASIC INFORMATION

### **Personal information:**

Name:

Male/female:

Personal identification code:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Nationality:

Home country:

How long have you been living in Finland?:

### **Degree programme:**

In which degree programme are you studying at Seinäjoki UAS?:

### **Language skills:**

Native language:

Other languages (good-satisfactory-fair):

Language	Speaking skills	Writing skills
Finnish		
Swedish		
English		
Other languages		

### **Family:**

Name of the spouse or other next of kin:

Occupation and place of work:

Children's names and ages:

### **Housing:**

**Transportation:** (car, public transport, cycling, walking):

## 2. EDUCATION

Basic education:

Vocational education:

Higher education studies:

Studies completed in Finland:

If English or Finnish has been the language of study earlier, where and when?

## 3. WORK EXPERIENCE

Earlier employments in the home country:

Employments in Finland:

Practical training placements in Finland:

#### 4. OTHER COMPETENCE AND SKILLS, PERSONAL STRENGTHS

#### 5. HOBBIES

#### 6. PERSONAL OBJECTIVES IN STUDIES

By which date are you planning to graduate?

Finnish language training:

Other studies and practical training:

Partner company/practical training plan:

Employment plan:

#### 7. ACTION PLAN TO REACH THE OBJECTIVES

	Timetable	Persons responsible	Implementation and assessment
ACADEMIC COUNSELLING	implemented in the faculty and degree programme		
STUDENT COUNSELLING			
Orientation			
Information before arrival			
Reception			
Survival Package			
Finding housing			
Sightseeing			
Orientation at the Seinäjoki UAS			
Orientation at the faculty			
Language and culture			
Finnish language course at Seinäjoki UAS			
UUNO virtual Finnish language course			
Finnish language course at Upper secondary school for adults / Adult Education Institute / Civic Institute etc.			
Language practice in hobby clubs			
Friend family meetings – language and culture			
Chatting in Finnish, e.g. at the old people's home – Finnish language practice			
Tutoring			
Guidance for practical training, networking			
Company visits/theme days 4 times a year – organized by the International Office or the Faculty			

Group and team work with a Finnish student in a partner company or practical training placement, assistance with obtaining a placement			
Events organised by Seinäjoki UAS and other organisations such as Chamber of Commerce etc.			
Social programme			
Student International Club			
Concerts, theatre performances and other cultural events			
City reception			
Student Union activities			
Church activities			
Tango Course			
Christmas Party			
ISG (West Finland HEInet)			
Club activities			
Civic institute courses			
Health care services, Insurance			
Services of the student pastor (second-hand shop services etc.)			
Friend family activities			
ADVISING			
Visa and residence permit			
Municipality of residence			
Guidance and assistance for finding a part-time job			
Seinäjoki UAS Intra			
Email			
Facebook			
Seinäjoki UAS website			

8. SPECIAL SUPPORT REQUIRED AND ACTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN AGREED UPON

9. FOLLOW-UP / CHECK-UP OF THE PLAN

10. CONTACT PERSON

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head of Degree  
Programme/Tutor

\_\_\_\_\_  
International Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

## THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MULTICULTURAL STUDY COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE

The implementation of guidance and counselling for international studies as well as studyrelated information distribution is regularly assessed in all areas and at the different stages of the guidance and counselling processes as an element of the quality performance of the entire university of applied sciences. The assessment is implemented from the perspectives of students, staff and stakeholders. This allows SeAMK to ensure the quality and continuous development of its operations.

The following can be considered critical success factors in guidance, counselling and information distribution in the context of international studies (Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences guide for study guidance and counselling 2015):

- correct timing and continuity
- reaching the target
- link to other aspects of studies (interfaces)
- correct, highquality content
- achievement of objectives
- successful interaction.

The quality of guidance and counselling for international studies as well as related information distribution can be monitored using different indicators. Such indicators are usually both quantitative and qualitative. Some of the indicators are specific to the university of applied sciences, while some are employed regionally, nationally and internationally. The indicators can be used to compare the quality of the guidance and counselling provided for international studies within an organisation, but also regionally, nationally and internationally.

International degree students at Seinäjoki UAS have been participating in the survey at the end of their first study year since 2009. The survey contains questions related to the time before and after arrival at Seinäjoki UAS. The response rate has been 43 to 95 per cent. Every year it was found that the most important reason to choose Finland as a study destination was high-quality

education. The experience of respondents was that the word “supporting” describes Seinäjoki UAS very well (in 2015 the result was 4.2 on a scale of 1–5). 89 per cent of respondents in 2015 said that orientation to Seinäjoki UAS and studies as well as information about the school premises were organised quite well or very well. Students were also satisfied with the accommodation assistance by Seinäjoki UAS (74%) and tutor student assistance (68%). One-third of students said that the social programme was not good enough. 95 per cent of respondents said that study counselling and guidance were organised quite well or very well. 89 per cent of the students were searching part-time job besides their studies and 32 per cents of respondents have got some part-time job. One development suggestion was that Seinäjoki UAS should organise more activities for international students and Finnish students so that they could get to know each other better.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the multicultural study counselling and guidance is to help international degree students with their academic studies and with their integration into Finnish society. Diversity management and social support mechanisms are needed in the multidimensional global education area. Employability in Finland after graduation is also one of the aims of higher education. The employability of international degree students also fosters social integration.

Multicultural study counselling and guidance should continue through the whole study process starting from before arrival in Finland and continuing after graduation. The collaborative network of multicultural counselling should include representatives from different professional groups so that all the expertise will be available in the counselling and guidance process. Usually students have their own individual study and learning plan, and it is also recommended to have an individual plan for multicultural study counselling and guidance.

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# THE STORY OF AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN FINLAND

Kwame Afreh

I am Ghanaian and have been living in Finland for the past six years. Before coming to Finland, I completed teacher education in Ghana and taught as a professional teacher in Ghana. I moved to Finland to study Business Information Technology and before my graduation, I worked for almost 1½ years at a Finnish eLearning company called Viope, also known as “the other teacher” with specialisation in automated assessment technology for computer programming and mathematics. I am currently working as a System Specialist at Webropol Oy. Webropol is the developer and supplier of Webropol survey and analysis (Webropol Analytics) software. I am passionate about teaching and dream of going to the classroom with my working life experience in future.

As a student, teacher and working in the private sector, my experience with the eLearning tool seen as “the other teacher” gives me more insight into teaching. Therefore, I can say that I have a fair idea of studies from a pedagogical viewpoint. In this write-up, I intend to share with you why I chose Finland as my destination to continue my education, my studies in Finland, and living and working in Finland.

## WHY FINLAND?

I have been asked over and over again by friends why I chose Finland to study in, but perhaps that is one of the easiest questions I have had to answer. In addition to the overall international recognition of the Finnish educational system, I was fortunate to have had friends here in Finland who also testified to the quality of the Finnish educational system. I have experienced the educational system myself and must say the Finnish educational system is like the Harvard of all educational systems. It will also interest you to know that the Finnish educational system is free. In most cases, you can argue that free means compromising on quality, but Finnish education is top-quality. In addition, Finns are welcoming, trustworthy and open enough to live with. Throughout my stay in Finland, in addition to the education, I also find Finland one of the best places to raise a family compared to most developed countries. If you have any intention of or are already studying in Finland, then I have something to share with you.

## STUDYING IN FINLAND

I enrolled in 2009 as a Business Information Technology (BIT) student at Laurea University of Applied Sciences (UAS). Before then, my concern was finding an educational institute with good programme content, unique teaching methods and a connection with the corporate world as that complements my objectives. In general, I see the Finnish educational system as practically-based and its programme contents are geared towards addressing current environmental and future issues.

Selecting Laurea UAS was perhaps the easiest decision I made because of its unique teaching method “Learning by Developing (LBD).” As the famous Chinese saying goes, “I hear and I forget”. I see and I remember. I do and I understand,” I understand this quote to mean that education or studies continue or never end until put into practice or action. I did not want to learn before starting to practise or learn what the real world was offering. Laurea UAS was a university that was and still is offering education through learning by developing, where students are made to practise what they learn or put what they learn into action. At Laurea UAS, the LBD ensures that students work on real-life projects in almost every course taken either as an individual or team project.

LBD enables student-centric R&D work integrated into learning. The structure of LBD really helped me prepare for a real-world job before my graduation. I had been involved in no less than 20 real-life projects while studying. Therefore, you can imagine that becoming a project manager, for instance, as one of the results of my programme means that I am already coming out prepared. Some argue that what students normally learn in school is mostly 1–10 percent of what the real world will be offering but if this is true, then I guess education should be offering more than just that. I can say that, based on my experience, Finnish institutes really produce graduates who are prepared for the job market. In general, all Finnish institutes have a unique way of delivering education to students.

Moreover, through a series of entrepreneur workshops, a mentoring programme and projects, I had a fair idea of how to start my own business after graduation if I had not been employed. In addition, there are many mentoring or talent-search programmes for international students unless you fail to search or ask.

## TEACHER'S COMPETENCES AND CONNECTIONS TO WORKING LIFE

While studying, one of the most significant observations I made was that most of the lecturers I came into contact with had had some kind of real-life working experience before coming into teaching. This makes it easy for them to track the trends in working life and to direct or turn students towards skilled persons and the most demanding jobs in the corporate world. Again, their teachings always draw the minds of students closer to the practical aspect, as they have first-hand experience. In most countries, one university could boast of having many professors and I am not saying that that is not a good thing, but I guess that if the bridge between these professors and the corporate world is wide, their teaching will end up with the same gap, making it difficult to find jobs.

Again, one positive factor, which makes it even better to study in Finland, is the strong bond I see between companies and the educational institutes. Aside from the fact that companies are willing to offer job placements and projects to students, there is frequent interaction between students and companies especially during career days. For most of the courses, you will have a visiting lecturer from the corporate world and all these in the long run shape you as a student towards what you need in real life.

## MY EDUCATION

As an international student in Finland, your opportunities in job search after graduation are partly limited due to the language barrier but that does not mean you cannot change that. Personally, I think that how well you master your programme, what you do while studying and how well you are able to communicate in Finnish can enhance your job search after graduation. I did quite a lot while studying and that has got me where I am today.

I made it a point to get involved in as many projects or practical courses as possible while studying. I knew it was going to build my confidence and afford me the requisite skills that would land me a job after graduation. I applied for my first internship at Laurea International SIDLab in my first year, went for interview, was not successful but that did not discourage me. Abraham Lincoln lost his job and was defeated for the state legislature in 1832. He failed in business in 1833. In 1838 he was defeated in the race for speaker. He failed to be nominated for Congress in 1843 and again in 1848. He was rejected for land officer in 1849 and for the U.S. Senate in

1854. He failed in his bid for Vice President in 1856 and again for the U.S. Senate in 1858 before being elected in 1860 as President (Abraham Lincoln Online, 2015). Yet he is regarded as one of the greatest presidents America has ever had. Compared to this man, this first setback was nothing to discourage me from searching for more job placements and putting more effort into my studies

I got my first job placement serving as a planning committee member at the Combi2010 Conference organised by Laurea, HAMK UAS, Lahti UAS and Helsinki Metropolia UAS. In my second year, I got 6 months internship at Laurea International SIDLab. This is also something that makes Laurea unique. Laurea UAS has well-established SIDLabs offering job placement for students. I did my last internship at Viope Solutions.

Before graduation, I also applied for and joined the Helsinki Education and Research Area (HERA) Mentoring Programme for international students, the purpose of which was to support and encourage international students to manage their career planning and improve their knowledge of Finnish working life. All in all, before my graduation I attended four interviews and completed three job placements. In addition to these, I also attended many workshops and studied beyond the scope of my programme.

## IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

It is really important to learn the culture of Finns to be able to adapt. Adaptation is important in everyone's life, irrespective of where one finds oneself. Finns in general are reserved people. They are quiet in most places you meet them but open up for conversation when spoken to. It will interest you to know this, especially if you come from a continent like Africa where people are generally outspoken.

As in any other country, learning the Finnish language is an easy way of strengthening your relationship with them. By attending lots of workshops and through job placements, I learnt a lot on how to relate to Finns. As mentioned earlier, Finns are open and easy to communicate with.

I must admit my life would have been much easier if I were fluent in the Finnish language. The language has been my main challenge but this does not mean it is not learnable. I remember that in my first week in Finland I mistakenly bought sugar instead of salt. It was after cooking that I realized I had used sugar for my food instead of salt, but I guess this is normal in the initial stages in places you do not speak the language.

## ENTERING WORKING LIFE

As in most European countries, students in Finland are allowed to work five hours a day while studying. This really helped me a lot since I could not afford to let my parents send me money every year. As an international student, your main priority is studies but I guess most students at some point want to earn money to support their studies. It may not be the same in every city in Finland but at least in Helsinki, I can say that under no circumstance will a student wait for more than six months without getting a casual job. This is not the same in many countries. Even though you may have the right to work as student, finding a job is difficult. This is probably also an issue to consider when selecting a country to study in. In Finland and especially Helsinki, students are most likely to get casual work if they want to.

Finding a job is not as easy for international students as in most countries, but this is one department in which I am proud to say I did not struggle at all. As mentioned earlier, I was involved in a lot of job placements and this was not in vain. I was employed after my third job placement whilst still studying. I had my last job placement at Viope. Viope is a Finnish company that focuses on developing better learning solutions. During my job placement at Viope, I worked on marketing research in Africa, did some telephone sales and fixed bugs. I was employed and initiated the Viope African project. Whilst working at Viope I joined the Helsinki Education and Research Area (HERA) mentoring programme, and through the programme I got employed at my current job as System Specialist at Webropol Oy.

I am a Christian and believe that everything that happens in life is the doing of the Lord but, even with that, I still believe that the hard work I put in my studies has helped make things smooth in my working life.

## CONCLUSION

As an international student in Finland, you will enjoy your studies. In addition, how well you are able to adapt to the Finnish system will enhance your job search as well. There is a saying that when you are in Rome do what the Romans do. Use the opportunities you get with companies or workshops in asking questions that will land you a job.

When I joined the Helsinki Education and Research Area (HERA) mentoring programme, it was one of my objectives to learn what Finnish employers expect from applicants in interviews. There is always general or international way of doing things but in places like this, it is indeed important that you know

how things are done. I once asked my mentor what he looks for in applicant resume and he replied, "I want to see photo of the applicant, short profile description like 2 sentences. Your career objective, how you intend to fill the position with or without experience among other things". In most situations, applicant photo for instance may not be that important or required at all. It is therefore important to learn what is expected of you as an international student when applying for a job.

By my observation, I believe the best time or opportunity for you to get a job is through your internship or thesis work. If you graduate without job and sit home for say 6 months, it reduces the likelihood of getting a job. One thing you need to know or be aware of is that Finnish educational certificate is widely accepted for job search. I know a lot of my Ghanaian friends who moved to Canada after graduation and are working professionally. With Finnish educational certificate, your job search has no limit. I urge you to be resourceful, because when you are resourceful, you become an asset and when you are an asset, you become indispensable. I hope story has or will inspire you to take your next study step.

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## CONCLUSIONS

# CONCLUSIONS

The Editors

In this publication, a wide range of higher education professionals and representatives of HEIs' important interest groups have approached the overarching theme of internationalisation from different angles and depicted visions of both the challenges and opportunities regarding it. Together, the articles draw a picture of the wider framework within which the UASs' international degree programmes and their faculties and students operate. This framework consists of policies, strategies and practices formed, with varying emphases, at global, national, regional and institutional levels. These final remarks touch upon some of these policy lines and continue the contemplation of the concrete measures that UASs should take to meet their internationalisation objectives and to thrive in international competition. Finally, the role of FINNIPS in the further development of international degree programmes and their various activities will be discussed.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FORESIGHT AND STRATEGIC VISION

As brought out in Kaisu Piironen's article in the first chapter, Finland wants to be a country where people always want to learn new things, an endeavour, which is not possible without internationalisation and global connections. Higher education institutes play a central role in enhancing this kind of development with practices that acknowledge the importance of international experts in the process. It is crucially important to create and further develop international networks as no development within education and society in general will ever take place in a vacuum. The industrialisation and development of Finnish society have their roots in international cooperation within business and education, a historical fact that should not be forgotten.

In addition to being actively engaged in international cooperation and global networks, HEIs should also pay attention to the systemic development of the relevance and competitive edge of their international degree programmes. Recognising and reacting to the needs of working life and being able to ensure that the education builds up relevant competences requires future-oriented thinking but, most importantly, also motivation to engage in continuous development. How then, could this be ensured?

Determining the objectives for internationalisation and discussing strategic lines openly might enhance cooperation between the HEIs and working life and ensure the working life relevance of education. In practice, foresight as well as national, regional and local strategic visions are needed to define what international and global cooperation mean in higher education, how international competence can be utilised and how companies can make better use of the international connections, education and research of the Finnish HEIs. Development of future-orientated high-quality international degree programmes, systematic support for the social integration of students and the utilisation of international competence in future-orientated working-life could be an important advance for the Finnish economy and society.

## TUITION FEES HAVE AN EFFECT ON UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES' INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES

As pointed out in various articles in this publication, the number of foreign higher education students has increased significantly within the past ten years. However, maintaining the current level of nearly 20,000 international degree students is not, by any means, self-evident or straightforward. Proposed tuition fees are expected to lead to a decrease in the number of students coming from outside the EU/EEA, which will force higher education institutions to carefully consider not only the objectives of internationalisation, but also the concrete means of keeping up with ever-intensifying global competition.

For the time being, the impact of the tuition fees can only be estimated and evaluated in the light of other countries' experiences. It seems quite clear, however, that the differentiating factors of Finnish higher education need to be thought over and effectively managed and implemented in order to ensure its competitiveness. It is also essential to make sure that along with the high-quality practices, investments are made in the systematic marketing of education.

The proposed tuition fees are, indeed, expected to challenge many of the current practices and change the composition of the student body within higher education institutions. At the same time, the idea of fee-paying education also opens up new possibilities with regard to internationalisation. In the area of education export, new products and services can be developed for the varying needs of different kinds of customers. Any initiatives related to the selling of education require advanced thinking and novel insights about

marketing and the delivery of services. Engaging in education export in its various forms can thus not only widen the HEIs' networks of international partnerships but also necessitate them to develop their marketing measures and develop new kinds of expertise.

## CONTINUOUS EVALUATION OF EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT IS IMPORTANT

Active discussion about the significance of international education and international degree programmes is needed. Studies and calculations on the economic impact of international HE and foreign students in Finland provide a good starting point for discussion that is based on examined, factual information. However, the value of international degree programmes is difficult to measure solely in economic terms and hence, the discussion should also pay attention to the various phenomena and dimensions of international education.

International degree programmes form the basis of the double degree programmes as well as of international student and staff mobility. They are also beneficial for Finnish students when they study and work together with the international students. Furthermore, as highlighted in the articles, international degree programmes function as springboards for education export: the carefully considered contents of international programmes together with internationally-oriented and skilful teachers and lecturers form a good basis for planning the offerings of educational products and services.

## THE DEVELOPMENT WORK WITHIN FINNIPS

How are the themes discussed in the publication connected to FINNIPS and its activities? The national-level decisions, such as the introduction of the application handling fees (see also introduction) have a direct effect on the UASs' international degree programmes and their marketing. The discussion about, and eventually the actual tuition fees will obviously also influence the programmes and require them to take new measures in the quest to attract international degree students. The role of the FINNIPS network amid these kinds of changes is to provide a platform for active discussion about the expected effects on the one hand and the desired lines of action on the other. Considering both the threats and opportunities is a lot more fruitful within the network than when it is done individually at programme or institutional level.

Through FINNIPS, the promotion of the UASs educational offerings can be done efficiently and cost-effectively. In order to maintain the effectiveness,

the selection of the target countries of marketing, which obviously correspond to the range of the exam countries, needs to be re-evaluated in the light of the new fees and procedures shaping the admissions process. In addition to the development of the entry stage of studies, including the entrance exams and marketing efforts, the network will also keep up the discussion on the ways in which the contents of the international degree programmes can be developed. Language studies, working life skills and social integration are focuses, which based on the examples and information provided in the articles, can be followed not only in rhetoric terms but also in concrete practices and studies in the near future. Overall, the FINNIPS network can and will, within all its activities, enhance the development of open and safe environments for internationalisation and learning across cultures.

We wish to express warm thanks to all the writers who have contributed to this publication. The expert articles with their in-depth analysis, future-oriented contemplations, descriptions of good practices and proposals for actions offer a variety of ideas and tools for the development of international UAS education.





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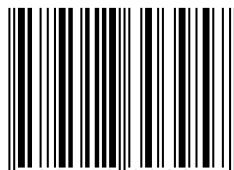
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The Finnish Network for International Programmes (FINNIPS) joins the majority of the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) and their English-taught degree programmes together in cooperation on entrance examinations and in broader terms, on development of international education in Finland. The network's second publication is a cross-section of the various themes and on-going discussions that shape and affect the role and functions of international degree programmes in Finnish UASs.

The topics regarding the quality and economic impact of education as well as the employment and social integration of the foreign higher education students are addressed from various angles in the articles. Overall, the publication seeks to address the most topical questions and map the current challenges related to international UAS education and, at the same time, offer tools and accounts of best practices with regard to the further development of it.

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