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**To cite this Article / Käytä viittauksessa alkuperäistä lähdettä:**

Koskiranta, T. 2017. Coaching master's degree students. Teoksessa Saraketo, H & Nevalainen, T (toim.) Theories and experiences on team learning – Academic adventures in Proakatemia. Tampere: TAMK University of Applied Sciences, 50-54.

URL: <http://julkaisut.tamk.fi/PDF-tiedostot-web/B/90-Theories-and-experiences-on-team-learning-Academic-adventures-in-Proakatemia.pdf>



# COACHING MASTER'S DEGREE STUDENTS

PROAKATEMIA'S MASTER'S DEGREE IN  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP





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**P**roakatemia's Master's degree programme in Entrepreneurship was started in 2013, and since then three groups have graduated with good success. The programme is targeted for entrepreneurs and experts working in highly intrapreneurial jobs. The aim of the programme is to develop students' skills and knowhow in entrepreneurship, but also to see this development in practice in their companies.

The scope of the degree is 90 ECTS credits and it is designed to be studied alongside work. The completion time is 1,5 years. The studies consist of

- \* common, mandatory advanced professional studies (change management and leadership, entrepreneurship and competitive advantage, business development, business networking, global business skills) 50 credits
- \* free-choice studies 10 credits
- \* master's thesis 30 credits.

The programme has been designed with the most contemporary learning theories, allowing participants to apply knowledge to their particular context.

In the Master's degree we apply methods used in Proakatemia. The programme consists of four three-day mandatory intensive periods in rural Finland, one week period abroad and individual and flexible distance learning phases.

*“The learning process is based on team learning, coaching and applying knowledge into practice.”*

Students read a lot of business literature and publications, use different kind of online sources, participate in lectures of top experts and learn from each other's experiences.

During intensive periods students focus on dialogue, sharing the knowledge and creating new knowledge and models together. Coaches facilitate the learning process and give short lectures. Students also practice using different kinds of business development and design tools. All the students are responsible for their team's learning by making progress in their own studies and sharing this new knowledge and experiences for the other ones. Co-operation is built on trust between students and coaches. As described in “Basics of team learning and coaching” (earlier in this publication), students do their learning contract, they have their own learning cells, they do challenges and innovations, and they use Motorola as a feedback tool. And yes, we don't do any exams, either. As in the bachelor's degree, students write reflective essays.

## COACHING IN MASTER'S DEGREE

In the Master's degree, coaching is used for facilitating learning and change. Coaches want to inspire students and kindle the passion of learning. They build the trust and atmosphere at the beginning and challenge students to give and get more from the learning process. They also want to see the change and development in practice.

A group has two coaches, the one being more in a role of a team coach and the other one more in a role of a business coach. As described in the article "Basics of the Theory" (Nevalainen et al. earlier in this publication), instead of focusing on the delivery of a specific content matter or appearing 'scholarly' or 'teacherlike', the team coach focuses on the results of the team members' actions and learning. The business coach's focus is more in business expertise and helping students to develop their businesses and companies during the learning process.

Most of the Master's students have graduated from programmes other than Proakatemia. Usually it takes some time to get used to a different approach to learning, need for high self-discipline and taking responsibility for the learning of the whole team. According to feedback, the most highly valued and appreciated things in our programme include learning from each other, sharing the knowledge, inspiration and enthusiasm you get from the other ones, supporting each other, high standards for learning.

Many students describe how, for the first time in their lives, they understand what learning is about. They get passionate about learning. They change many things in their business

practices. And they even are sad when studies are over and they graduate.

Results of this degree programme are good. Most of the students graduate on time, and only few of them have dropped out, which is quite a miracle when you are running your own business at the same time. They do excellent theses. We see a huge personal growth during the studies. We have witnessed businesses that grow; companies that change their business model entirely. Some students have also bought a company, some of them have sold one. In any case, it's all about the capability and desire to design and find your own path. Like W.B. Yeats has said,

*“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”*