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## Service Design as the 'New Normal' at Laurea UAS

Laurea University of Applied Sciences in southern Finland has adopted service design and co-creative approaches as its strategic emphasis, for both the development of the university's own processes and activities as well as incorporating them into education and RDI activities. Both staff and students are expected to embrace service design thinking and apply co-creative methods for developing new activities.

Service design nicely supports the institution's regional development efforts. Having recently celebrated its tenth anniversary, the global pioneer master's degree in service design (a business administration degree in service innovation and design) continues to be one of the most popular degrees granted at Laurea. Good experiences with service design education as well as societal needs have paved the way for academic service design studies on a wider front. All told, service design has become the 'new normal' at Laurea.

Besides the full master's and bachelor's degrees in service design, the subject forms a compulsory element of every Laurea degree. Every year, over one thousand students are adopting a design mindset and learn service design as part of their degrees in fields such as business management,

healthcare management, hospitality management, IT and safety, and security and risk management, just to name a few.

All students get an opportunity to immerse themselves in practical service design for at least 10 ECTs (equating to about 270 hours of student work), with many completing even more. The compulsory study units take many forms: Service design courses are run as participatory, campus-based units, as intensive implementations (such as sprints and hackathons), or as full online studies.

One service business management student summarised the intensive study unit as follows: "I learned a lot in working in a multicultural team and was surprised to see how much we achieved in such a short time. I am now able to understand things from the service

users' point of view and know that service design definitely helps."

Laurea, a long-time SDN Academic member, is regionally well-networked and most learning environments take place in real work-life contexts, based on the 'Learning by Developing' study model. This approach is an excellent match with the participatory and co-creative nature of service design. As a result, the service design implementations focus on applying co-creative problem-solving in real projects for external and internal partners. Students follow iterative processes by researching the service context for deep customer insights, followed by ideation, testing, and finally documenting the prototype for implementation. A large variety of multidisciplinary service design projects have been carried out for regional partners in the past years.



Student team ideating for a design challenge during a Finnish-Belgian partner exchange project