KANSALLINEN KOULUTUKSEN ARVIOINTIKESKUS
NATIONELLA CENTRET FÖR UTBILDNINGSUTVÄRDERING
FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OULU

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1.4 The HEI’s examples of successful enhancement activities

- Högskolans självvärdering

UNIC Opened Courses—virtual courses offered in the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine

The UO offers some of its virtual courses taught in English to the UNIC European University Alliance through the Opened Courses initiative. The idea of the initiative is to smoothen cross-institutional studying and mobility by allowing students to take courses also from other UNIC partner universities’ offer. During the Academic Year 2022–23, the UO is providing altogether 29 courses on the common Opened Courses list.

In autumn 2022, two faculties stood out by offering such popular courses that they were quickly “sold out” and not all willing students could be accommodated. Two courses were organised by the Faculty of Humanities: Saami Culture and Nordic Mythology. In the Faculty of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine the best-selling course was called Molecular, cell biological and genetic aspects of diseases. Both faculties traditionally do not receive nor send that many physical exchange students, so the new virtual mobility component has been seen as a great way to boost mobility and internationalise the curriculum.

The Worlds Happiest Student course

The “Worlds Happiest Student” course is made by students for students in close cooperation with figures in working life as well as people with expertise in the fields of interest. The course consisted of 10 live lectures that took place on the Linnanmaa campus. The lecturers were divided into two groups: celebrities or well-known people with interesting stories from their life and experts who knitted these experiences together with theory. The overall aim of the course was to help students learn about and develop their self-knowledge and self-management. In the bigger picture, these skills have been noted to have a large impact on students’ day-to-day life and help strengthen their well-being. Along with the full course and its credits the lectures were also open to the public. This made it possible for students to take part in some of the lectures if the course otherwise would not fit their schedules. The course had its first run in the autumn of 2022 and received widespread interest from working-life actors and the student population. Based on these results the working group aims to make the course a reoccurring theme in the study year in Oulu.

The Chaperone Programme in the Faculty of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine

The Chaperone Programme is a part of orientation studies offered to first-year biochemistry students. The chaperones are researchers, who voluntarily present their scientific know-how through organised hands-on and demonstration sessions of research work for biochemistry bachelor’s degree freshmen students. This way the new students can see very early in their studies what research work is and what they will learn and do later during their studies and working life. This is the time when freshmen can have a peak in the laboratory environment, get a passionate introduction to research work by early-stage researchers, and discover the topics for their future scientific interests. Simultaneously the chaperone programme provides an opportunity for doctoral and post-doctoral researchers to communicate their research for yet not a professional audience which is a critical skill in academic training. Students enjoy the chaperone programme and even several years later they refer to it as one of the most memorable experiences during their first year of studies.

Curriculum mapping and the use of Learning Opportunities, Objectives, and Outcomes (LOOOP) platform

The Degree Programme of Medicine uses a curriculum mapping tool LOOOP, designed and provided by Charité University in Berlin. The objective of curriculum mapping is to add transparency to the curriculum and link together the following aspects: what is being taught (contents, competencies, objectives), how it is being taught (teaching methods and resources), when it is taught (in relation to other studies), and how learning is measured (evaluation). LOOOP can be accessed by 4 different parties, teachers, education designers, administration, and

students, who all use and benefit from curriculum mapping differently. In addition, LOOOP can be used as a tool for accreditation, education research and recognition of studies. A curriculum mapping tool differs from other education related information systems in that it is the only place where all information is available for all parties. In addition, the information includes the level of individual teaching events as well as the national level, which is not gathered anywhere else. The LOOOP tool also allows exploring the relations between the different levels (teaching event, course, year, degree programme, the national level).

The Oulu Business School Assurance of Learning (AoL) process

At the Oulu Business School (OBS), the Assurance of Learning (AoL) process is a normal element of the continuous development of curricula, utilising the AACSB Business Accreditation guidelines. The learning goals have been defined for each degree programme based on the school's mission, professional requirements, and work life expectations. These goals are used as the starting points for programme development and are systematically and continuously assessed and revised.

Within the AoL process, programme management is defined explicitly. The Dean of Education and the B.Sc., M.Sc., D.Sc. and EMBA Programme Directors have a central role in the AoL process. The programme Directors oversee the implementation of the AoL process with the help of the Programme Committees. The Programme Committees' work is based on collected and analysed AoL data, as well as related data (work life feedback and surveys, university-level surveys for graduates, and student surveys and course feedback, etc.). Based on this, the annual AoL system and curriculum development plans are formulated by the Programme Committee. These plans are further approved by the OBS Education Committee that is ultimately responsible for the AoL process and curriculum development. The OBS Education Committee meets monthly and is chaired by the Dean of Education, with Programme Directors and two student representatives as members.

The curricula at OBS are renewed in two-year cycles, allowing for major structural changes every second year and other improvements to courses, teaching methods and the AoL system on an annual basis. The OBS curriculum management process is organised in steps starting from the definition of the OBS mission and proceeding towards programme portfolio planning, the definition of learning goals, aligning the curricula, defining the assessment methods, collecting, and analysing the evidence and determining the appropriate actions for improvement.

Cooperation with working life in Faculty of Education and Psychology

Cooperation with working life is essential in every teacher education programme. During their bachelor's and master's studies, students have several teacher training periods starting from their first year, and these periods form a continuum where the student teachers get more responsibility and strengthen their identity. Training periods are carried out, for instance, in teacher training schools, early childhood education and care (ECEC) centres, special schools,

different educational and training organisations and enterprises. Cooperation with working life is integrated also in other studies and programmes, not only teacher education or courses that include teacher training. The faculty communicates on a regular basis with its stakeholders to improve students' opportunities to conduct their study projects and master's theses in cooperation with working life. In recent years, the faculty has organised meetings where students have had chances to meet the school principals and administrators of ECEC centres.