

# AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

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## 1.4 The HEI's examples of successful enhancement activities

### - HEI's self-assessment

#### University of Helsinki Teachers' Academy – A network of distinguished teachers

The purpose of the [Teachers' Academy](#), founded in 2013, is to promote the status and development of teaching in the academic community and to enhance the quality of teaching.

Members of the teaching and research staff may apply for a fellowship in the academy in a call for applications arranged every other year. Appointment as a fellow to the Teachers' Academy is the UH's highest recognition of teaching merits and expertise in the field of teaching. Teachers selected for the fellowship are appointed as members of the Teachers' Academy, in addition to which both they and their home units receive a three-year grant for the development of teaching. The fellows serve as teachers, members of steering groups or directors of the UH's degree programmes, or as vice-deans for academic affairs.

#### The UniHow framework supports student learning and the development of teaching in the degree programmes

UniHow is an application developed at the UH to support students' reflection on their learning and the teaching development efforts of degree programmes. The operating logic and content of the

system draw on research in the field of university pedagogy focusing on the quality of education and student feedback. As some parts of the application are still under development, the service will become more extensive in the future. The current situation of the service is as follows:

- The HowULearn survey is used at the bachelor's and master's levels to systematically collect student data.
- The HowUStudy course-specific survey is currently being tested and will be deployed during the academic year 2021–2022.
- The HowULearnPhD survey for doctoral students and the HowUTeach survey for teachers are under development.

Thanks to their research-based nature, the data collected through UniHow can be extensively applied. With the survey data, it is possible to 1) provide students with feedback to support their learning, 2) offer degree programmes pedagogical support for their teaching development efforts, and 3) conduct detailed further analyses and make use of the data in research.

The key objective of UniHow is to support an interactive feedback culture and, in the development of teaching in the degree programmes, to draw attention to the qualities of good learning and teaching, and the ways in which they are connected to students' learning processes and learning outcomes.

## The status report form as a tool in the annual follow-up of degree programmes

The current status report form is an aid for self-evaluation, development, documentation and reporting in the degree programmes.

It is a digital tool for the documentation of discussions focusing on the current status of degree programmes that forms a part of their annual follow-up process. The status reports and plans for measures to be taken are at the disposal of the steering groups of bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes. The form also includes reporting functions that support monitoring.

## Senior lecturers in university pedagogy promote the quality of research-based teaching and learning

The senior lecturers in university pedagogy at the Centre for University Teaching and Learning work on the campuses, providing pedagogical support to degree programme steering groups and teachers. They provide basic- and intermediate-level education in university pedagogy, participate in teaching development projects, organise training and workshops, conduct research in university pedagogy, support the research-based development of teaching and learning, disseminate information on pedagogical issues, are responsible for implementing the HowULearn surveys for degree programmes, and participate in the development of the UniHow feedback

system. They also assist the degree programmes in processing the HowULearn survey results and conduct detailed analyses of these results when necessary.

The specialists in university pedagogy are strongly connected to quality management (student feedback in particular). One senior lecturer in university pedagogy bears special responsibility for the quality of education and student feedback.

## Research-based support for an intervention course promoting student wellbeing

A web-based, eight-week intervention course was built for students of the UH to promote both students' wellbeing as well as their learning and study skills. The basis of the intervention course was to promote psychological flexibility and students' study skills with the help of peer support and reflection.

This course was offered as a voluntary course to all students at the UH twice during the academic year 2020–2021. It was advertised in the autumn of 2020 through social media and by student organisations and programme directors at a number of faculties of the UH. Altogether 566 students enrolled in the course.

Of the 256 students who enrolled in the second course, 170 students voluntarily participated in a study focusing on two lecturers in pedagogy. The students answered questionnaires which included all study measures simultaneously with the participants in the first group and thus served as the control group. The effect of this course will be measured with multiple datasets, including questionnaire data, reflective journals and physiological data on wellbeing with a longitudinal experimental design. This research very strictly follows the ethical guidelines drawn up by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity. The results of this study are expected to be published in autumn 2021 at the latest.

See the published [article](#) by Henna Asikainen and Nina Katajavuori on a course designed to support students' coping and wellbeing.