

AUDIT OF VAASA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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1.1 The planning of education

- Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

VAMK's strategy and emphases of the education reflect the profile of the region

Our ambition to be the main partner in expertise is crystallised in VAMK's vision and mission. We want to be an interesting and creative partner, a link between the working life and the students. In our strategy, the competence that profiles us describes well our status as a partner of the operators in the international energy cluster in the region. This export industry, significant in the Finnish scale, gives VAMK a unique position together with a task to take care that we enhance our education with one eye continuously on the needs of the working life. The Vaasa region and its economic life is international and multicultural, and this can be seen not only in VAMK's strategy and emphases, but also in those of the entire region, as well as in the population of the city. Last year, students from 44 countries were studying at VAMK. They accounted for 13% of the total number of students. In addition to strong engineering, the region requires expertise in business administration and health care and social services to develop its services and maintain its vitality. VAMK as a HEI contributes to the implementation of the regional [strategy of Ostrobothnia](#) (in Finnish), which envisions an Ostrobothnia with New Energy. The Ostrobothnia strategy describes the regional characteristics and the vision, towards which the actors in the region, VAMK included with its own activities, are working.

Cooperation with Working Life

[The Regional Council of Ostrobothnia](#), the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment and Pohjanmaa TE office are our key partners when anticipating the need for

qualified work force to enhance the vitality of the region. Active working life partnership materialises on several levels. VAMK has signed cooperation agreements with eleven most important employers in the region. The areas of cooperation and contact persons are named in these agreements. Every year we invite our teaching staff and working life partners to discuss and co-develop at meetings and workshops. This cooperation binds the RDI activities, commissions from working life and these topics to development needs arising from the working life and helps us to utilize the latest knowledge from working life when we plan our education. With this operation model, we wish to integrate RDI more into the instruction and get more volume and doers into RDI activities. In the Health Care and Social Services and in the Business Information Technology the advisory committees are active in bringing their views into curriculum planning. Along with changes in work, the significance of continuous learning increases even more. VAMK has prepared for this by recruiting new employees to develop continuous learning possibilities at VAMK. Our objective is to increase our own provision of open education but also in cooperation with other operators.

Students involved in the Planning of Education

Being a channel for both students and working life means listening to the wishes and needs of both and aiming to implement them. We agree with Vamok, the Student Union every year on measures that support the students' possibilities to participate and to be heard in the enhancement of education. Vamok appoints student representatives to bodies and work groups and for example in degree programme meetings. A fresh view of the skills provided by the education is received from graduates and alumni who already have experience from the working life.

Versatile Learning Environments and Methods Support the Attainment of Learning Outcomes

Palosaari in Vaasa is the location of the joint technology laboratory [Technobothnia](#), co-owned by three HEIs: VAMK, Vaasa University and Novia UAS. In addition to laboratory assignments for students, training in electrical engineering and robotics for companies is also arranged. The simulation facilities for health care and social services, jointly used by VAMK and Novia, are housed in the Alere building on the campus. This close cooperation provides students with an excellent opportunity to complete studies in health care and social services in Finnish and in Swedish. The equipment and software used in the instruction and simulations both in [Technobothnia](#) and in [Alere](#) are modern and the same as used in working life. The teachers choose the teaching methods used in courses based on their expertise and experience. When planning the course, the teachers regard the internationality and the regional impact.

Curriculum Planning and Quantitative Planning of Studies

In the curriculum planning, the starting point comes from the National Qualifications Framework, in which UAS Bachelor's degrees are defined to be at Level 6, and UAS Master's degrees at Level 7. The studies are measured in accordance with the ECTS-system, based on learning

outcomes and the student's workload. The curricula are drawn up according to the annual planning cycle and they are approved by the Management Team. The learning outcomes are assessed on a five-step scale and the student's average workload is twenty-seven (27) hours per credit. The students can give feedback on the workload of each course in the final feedback of the course.

VAMK's Radar (in Finnish Tutka) survey has revealed that some students' workload can vary greatly on courses and during the academic year. This problem has been addressed by scheduling and improving the planning process. Our benchlearning project focused on enhancing the thesis process. As a result of the project, we have rescheduled the thesis process. The benchlearning project is described in Chapter 5. The new student administration system Peppi, recently introduced at VAMK, will facilitate this work.

Strengths

Planning of education meets the needs of working life

Utilising international and multicultural working and learning environment in the planning of education

Cooperation between HEIs in Vaasa and with secondary education institutions

Enhancement areas

Increasing the provision of continuous learning anticipatorily to meet the future needs

Increasing RDI and integration into education

Teachers' cooperation in planning the workload of the simultaneously running courses