

AUDIT OF VAASA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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1.4 The HEI's examples of successful enhancement activities

- HEI's self-assessment

Student Guidance Process

VAMK has developed an [operation model for group tutoring](#), the objective of which is to follow up the progress of the student's studies and intervene at an early stage if the studies seem to be delayed. In this model, teachers, the group tutor and the student counsellor cooperate. The teachers follow up the progress of the groups they teach, especially the first-year students, and inform the group tutor if there are students that seem to have difficulties with their studies. The group tutor looks into the situation and if necessary, contacts the student counsellor. The student can easily make an appointment with the student counsellor online. The guidance process has been regarded important at VAMK to address the situations where a student is in a danger to fall behind or even drop out.

Cooperation between HEIs in Vaasa in a Unique Learning Environment

The HEIs in Vaasa cooperate to provide their students with various alternatives in studies. The Flexible Study Right offers VAMK students studies from Vaasa University, Novia UAS and Åbo Akademi University, Hanken School of Economics and Helsinki University Vaasa Unit for Legal Studies. Technobothnia is a joint technology laboratory co-owned by VAMK, Vaasa University and Novia UAS. The Alere building houses modern simulation facilities for students of Health Care

and Social Sciences at VAMK and Novia. With simulations, the instruction has taken a more concrete form. In a simulation, the student is in a situation emulating real life and needs to seek solutions in many different ways. This enhances applying the learned knowledge in practice.

There is cooperation between VAMK and Novia in the advanced studies for students of Juridical Administration and in Health Care and Social Services in multilingual education and for example, in specialisation studies. In Electrical Engineering and Information Technology, VAMK and Vaasa University implement the two first study years in cooperation. In language teaching, VAMK and Novia have had an externally funded Tandem course in Finnish and Swedish for seven years now. West Coast Startup, a joint business incubator for VAMK and Vaasa University, operates in the Design Centre Muova. The purpose is to help students and staff to start up a business.

Examples of wide cooperation between HEIs:

- [Flexible study right between HEIs](#)
- [Technobothnia joint laboratory](#)
- [Alere simulation facilities](#)
- [E-commerce course organised by Vaasa Entrepreneurship Society for students of VAMK and Vaasa University](#)
- [Tandem course VAMK- Novia](#)

International Cooperation Enriches the Instruction

International cooperation networks at their best bring substance, cultural competence and international teamwork, either face-to-face or distant, into students' lives. Currently we are testing IOL studies with our Dutch partner.

Examples of international cooperation:

- [Cooperation with universities in Siberia](#)
- [Cooperation with Hogeschool AVANS](#)
- [Mindful Managers project to enhance managership in the public sector](#)

Cooperation with Finn Power as an Example of Working Life Cooperation

The cooperation with Finn Power started in 2014 on the initiative of R&D Manager Esko Petäjä, the company's Product Development Manager. What is new in this cooperation is the integration of an entire product development course into the activities of an R&D company engaged in export operations. The company arranges an annual product development competition, based on a real product development need in the company. The company appoints four to six mentors who guide and give feedback to the student teams during the project.

The product course implemented as a product development competition has been a great

success. The students have received guidance from professionals in the field, and they have been extremely motivated every year; therefore, the results have also been good. The company has also rewarded the teams that have succeeded best. The feedback received from all participants of the projects has been positive and honest, which encourages us to continue with the projects. According to the mentors, the concrete advantages and solutions to the given challenges have improved over the years. The students have been satisfied with being able to work with professionals and they have learnt much during the projects. VAMK benefits from this kind of activity where learning takes place in real life assignments. So far, approximately 190 VAMK students have participated in these projects. In 2019, VAMK chose Finn Power the Key Partner of the Year. The Key Partner award is given to an operator who has shown excellent cooperation skills, commitment and insight in the cooperation with VAMK.