

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

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Publikationsår **2023**, NCU:s publikation **7:2023**

Språk **Engelska**

ISBN **978-952-206-789-0 pdf**

1.2 The implementation of education

- Högskolans självvärdering

Fair and appropriate student selection and flexible study paths

UEF follows national guidelines in student selection processes having clear selection criteria and common guidelines aligned with the Council for Teaching and Guidance. The university is actively involved in a national development project to provide a clear and smooth route to university studies.

The admissions routes and selection criteria are published beforehand on the opintopolku.fi portal, which is open to all. The selection process has been developed, in particular by expanding Open University routes and opening up multi-modal training to meet the needs of working life. The number applicants applying via an Open University route has increased, and the number of people admitted through the route has risen sharply.

The selection criteria for doctoral programmes and the guidelines for research proposals have been refined and are open to applicants, and application deadlines and English language requirements have been harmonised.

Students can apply to the University of Eastern Finland's Board of Appeals for an appeal against the decision if they are dissatisfied with the student selection.

Students have flexibility to change their major subject inside the university, and an elective minor study right allows for individual combinations of skills. It is also possible to transfer from university to another within the same major/field as a so-called transfer student based on the selection criteria set by each university.

A flexible personal study plan (PSP) process allows students to take an active role in their own learning and the learning process. Instructions on the recognition of competencies have been outlined and, where necessary, specified at the faculty level and the documentation is openly available. The broad elective study right also encourages students to consider different options for their own study path.

The university has extensive educational cooperation with various higher education institutions. There are many types of educational cooperation. For example, one higher education institution may offer another institution courses that are compulsory in their degree structures, or they may jointly offer a wide range of elective courses for all.

Connections with working life in education

Links with working life are created and maintained through working life days, career guidance, expert lectures on working life, traineeships and thesis work in companies. There are compulsory traineeships for studies in professional fields e.g. pharmacy and teacher training. In addition, the faculties strongly support generalist disciplines. The [Teacher Training Schools](#) provide most teacher training at the university and they are involved in a network that ensures the needs of teacher training in other training locations. Traineeships as part of undergraduate degrees support the formation of connections with working life. The degree structures of international master's programmes have been strengthened to include a traineeship component.

The student organisations have been offered training and coaching in creating working life events (paid by the university) to strengthen the engagement and expertise in building cooperation with working life from a view of the student organisations.

In doctoral studies, the Academic Working Life Skills course allows students to gain skills through relevant courses connected to working life and for example, by participating in academic events and trainings.

Investing in study support and student well-being

UEF has a well-established tutor process that starts when a student is accepted into the university. The student is assigned their own student and staff tutor who offer guidance in both study-related matters and in getting used to the university and student life. Teachers responsible for personal study plans in process help each student to take their individual studying pathway. The Student Union is heavily involved in the development of peer tutoring and orientation during the initial guidance. The university has invested in student guidance by developing the Everyone Gives Guidance model and the Digistartti orientation package.

Students receive feedback on their learning outcomes through several procedures at the group and individual levels. Feedback can be related to an exam or assignment or portfolio, or it can be verbal feedback in a learning situation. Cumulative learning feedback is applied for example in pharmacy and biomedicine.

Student progress data is available at the faculty/department/subject level for the monitoring of degrees. Digital tools for systematic tracking of students' progress have been developed to identify drop-outs at the subject/departmental level and get them back into education or, if necessary, referred to the necessary support and guidance services. Analysis of study paths has been piloted, and good practices of them are shared through the pedagogical leaders network, for example.

In doctoral studies, the university ensures that each doctoral student has at least two supervisors who provide support for the advancement of studies and learning. The doctoral programme coordinators also provide support and guidance throughout doctoral studies.

Special attention has been paid to student well-being. The university has participated in several key projects of the Ministry of Education and Culture to develop students' guidance and well-being. The most significant of these are the reform of initial guidance and the investments made in student well-being during and after the coronavirus pandemic, such as a resource for student psychologists and sports advisers. The university hired five well-being coordinators in spring 2021. In addition, well-being coordinators contacted all students during the coronavirus pandemic to reach out to those who needed special support in their studies, provided them with peer support, and referred them to other services if necessary. The university hired 44 teaching assistants for the departments/units in autumn 2021 to support teachers and students in changes in the organisation of teaching.

Through its [Bridges I and II projects](#), the university has implemented several measures in cooperation with the Student Union to support student well-being. The most extensive of these have been the creation of the [Student2Student](#) operating model and the recruitment of a third student psychologist.

The university has also renewed several of its guidelines on student well-being, including the early intervention model. The university has shared guidelines and recommendations in Kamu to ensure equal treatment of students in terms of student admissions, enrollment, tuition fees and scholarships, recognition and accreditation of competencies, and applying for extra time.

The university has an Equal Opportunities Committee, which includes representatives of staff organisations, the Student Union, and the employer. It has prepared an Equality and Equal Opportunities Plan, which describes the current situation regarding gender equality and equal opportunities at the university and measures intended to implement and promote gender equality and equal opportunities among staff and students.

Strengths

Extensive connections between degrees and working life

Enhancement areas

Systematic monitoring of study progress and development of pathway analysis to identify drop-outs

Significant investment in student well-being

The need to improve the use of personnel and facilities resources to cope with the growing number of students

Initial guidance (including Digistartti)

Development and harmonisation of guidance counselling and training

Good e-learning support services

Monitoring the supervision of doctoral dissertation work

Consolidating the utilisation of open learning materials