

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

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2.4 The HEI's examples of successful enhancement activities

- Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

The objective of UTU is to bring about positive development in society through conscious efforts. At UTU, the Academy of Finland funded flagship projects are one successful example on the largest scale. For example, the [INVEST](#) flagship aims at providing a new model for the welfare state that is more equal, better targeted to problem groups, more anticipatory as well as economically and socially sustainable. It is based on multi-disciplinary expertise and co-operation in social sciences, education and medicine for creating interventions, policies, and social innovations. INVEST uses rigorous methods and impact assessment indicators to evaluate research and impact as well as to make use of professionals to implement systematic communiques on its results. This is done in order to raise awareness, set trends, create opportunities for trans- and cross-disciplinary collaboration and educate the next generation experts. Hence, the pathways for societal and social change are multiple. By 2022, over 0,5M children in Finland were reached through INVEST intervention programmes. Among others, these included the KiVa Antibullying programme that has reached 40% of school-aged children and the Voimaperheet mental health support programme for families that has reached one third of the population.

UTU aims for successful collaborations and partnerships with external organisations. Among its faculties, Turku School of Economics (TSE) has had long-lasting connections with the private sector since its establishment. Its strengths lie in its systematic approach to company

collaboration. TSE has dedicated resources for the facilitation, monitoring, and supporting of the financing activities through the [Centre for Collaborative Research](#). Also, the whole of TSE from individual experts to the leaders are actively engaged in building, maintaining and utilising their company connections in the realisation of the Strategy. In 2021, TSE collaborated with more than 480 companies in education (240+), research (150+), innovation and development (190+), and TSE planning and development (18) activities. 31% of the collaboration took place with large companies and 69% with small and medium-sized companies. Head offices of the companies were in Southwest Finland (37%), 9% in Satakunta region, and 54% in other areas of Finland.

Stakeholder collaboration takes several field specific forms to support education and research. One example is the faculty of humanities that has signed a co-operation agreement with the Turku Museum Centre. Within the agreement, the faculty and the museum deepen project co-operation, for example, by arranging workshops and student internships. Another example is the recently established Faculty of Technology that has established an [Industry Affiliates Program \(IAP\)](#), a dedicated partnership programme of the Faculty, which facilitates the creation and development of a collaboration network between the Faculty and companies. Through IAP, the Faculty supports its researchers in business co-operation, promoting the creation and maintenance of contacts, and improves the visibility of the Faculty in the wide the business world. The themed events introduce the Faculty's various research and education fields, serve as networking events for researchers and companies, and as a discussion forum for general academia-industry collaboration topics, such as the general terms and best practices in contracted thesis work. A separate portal is provided for companies to introduce the Faculty's students to internships, master's thesis topics, and other relevant job opportunities in the industry. The collaboration is supported via permanent positions (e.g. head of corporate collaboration; education manager) to ensure that research opportunities in the industry are identified and connected with right research groups, and that the industry needs for skills and knowledge are taken into consideration in the development of courses and degree programmes.

Creating impact necessitates different forms of societal interaction, including introducing different forms of communication with stakeholders as well as creating presence in media and public debate. This also requires preparedness from UTU members to engage with the public. For example, the Faculty of Law has established [the Researcher in Spotlight](#), a series which introduces the researchers of the Faculty on the UTU website. The Faculty of Education has a communication plan developed by Faculty's communications working group. The Faculty of Education has been active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. It has also introduced EDutu Forum which is a collaborative forum for leaders in education in the Southwest Finland and Satakunta regions and the Faculty of Education. Interaction enables UTU to also boost citizen science to mobilise and involve the public in research. For example, the Biodiversity Unit at the Faculty of Science maintains sites where the general public can get to know nature. The Punkkilive.fi service, developed in co-operation with Pfizer, encourages citizens to report their own tick observations to researchers through a browser-based service.