

AUDIT OF VAASA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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3.4 The HEI's examples of successful enhancement activities

- HEI's self-assessment

Dialogical and Participatory Strategy Process

The strategy process was started at VAMK UAS in the autumn of 2018 with an idea to create a strategy that secures the economy of the UAS and gives added value to the regional working life. The focus was on developing the education process that is working- life oriented and that supports the students' graduation. The work started with a joint workshop for the Management and the Board. Participating in the process have been staff, students, and ten of our most important working life partners. The dialogical process was implemented by using a joint dashboard for initial surveys and to follow up the progress of work. Participants could access the input given by others, comment on them and make additional questions. After round 2 in February 2019, we had the initial emphases for the strategy, vision, missions and values. The Board approved the strategy on 23 March 2019 to be further developed.

Led by the President, the strategy work has continued by specifying the enhancement areas, indicators and values. These are a basis for the 2021 budget, and they have been discussed in teams and degree programmes staff when preparing the action plans. The strategy is available in form of a strategy leaflets and on our website. The work continues. After finishing an efficient and updated indicator follow-up, and thus able to assess the impact of our strategy, we can move on to the following plan- do - check- act round.

Processing the Results of the Staff Survey

The well-being of the staff is followed up with an annual staff survey (Työyhteisöviire), which highlights the strengths and enhancement areas. The results and answers of each team are dealt with in teams. The discussions have clarified and revealed reasons for certain results and has helped with devising enhancement measures. Last year the most supported statement in the survey was that we do meaningful work at VAMK. According to our staff, the most important enhancement area was the improvement of activities with regard to our competitors. The expert in HR affairs summons discussion meetings. She presents the enhancement proposals to the Management team to be decided. The next follow-up on the implementation of the enhancement activities will be in the Management team meeting April 2021. The trend of the results shows how well the enhancement activities have succeeded.

VAMK – Vamok Cooperation

For years, we have developed our cooperation with the student union so that it is an essential part of VAMK's activities and its enhancement. A sign of this is the agreement signed annually with the student union, which covers, for example, the organisation of tutor activities with related training, services for and integration of international students, cooperation in marketing and recruiting, and the training of meeting representatives for work groups and bodies. To promote studies, Vamok participates in administering the encouragement systems, in which every student who completes 55 credits receives an overall badge. Vamok also activates its members to give feedback and participates in self-assessment in the audit and in other audit-related tasks. Vamok arranges Top Teacher -vote every year, in which teachers are rewarded and their best practices are presented. The organisation of sports activities for students is also one of Vamok's task. The cooperation is regarded as important and the President meets the Board of Vamok regularly.

Staff's Working Life Periods

Teachers' working life periods have proved to be a good way to enhance the staff's competence. These have been arranged at VAMK for years but now we invest in it and encourage the staff more strongly and in a more goal-oriented way than previously. The possibilities of working life periods are discussed with working life partners in annual meetings. Working life periods are also discussed in teachers' appraisal discussions; next year the aim is two to three working life periods in a year per unit. The purpose is also to enable long-term working life periods with special arrangements.

Results of Tutka Survey Support Group Tutoring

There are three different Tutka Student surveys on study-related matters: for first -year students, for second- year students and for third -year students. The Quality Manager draws up the

questionnaires and sends tutor teachers the links to the surveys to be forwarded to their respective groups. The results are examined on the UAS level, unit level, degree programme level and group level. The Quality Manager presents the summaries to the Management Team and submits the results of each degree programme to the Head of the Degree Programme and group results to teacher tutors. This way we will get a good notion of the students' opinion of the study-related matters. The aim is that each tutor teacher goes through the results with the group and gives feedback- on- feedback to the students.