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FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF METROPOLIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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3.2 Supporting the competence development and well-being of the staff

- Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

Competence needs are identified in dialogue based on strategy objectives

Personnel's competence needs are discussed in an **ongoing dialogue** in conjunction with the strategy process and the planning of operations as well as in permanent groups established for management (leadership forum, superior forum, unit management teams). They identify strategic needs (such as supervisory work with a coaching approach, sustainable development competence) and needs arisen from changes in the operating environment (e.g. teachers' digital skills and the practices of hybrid work). Sector-specific and substance-related competence needs are identified in connection with the units' and teams' annual objective setting and operations planning. In Education, the networks for pedagogic staff members, digital mentors and guidance assemble information on pedagogic needs and needs related to guidance competence.

The needs are specified further and transformed into development plans as part of operations management. These plans find their concrete form on the level of employees in **development discussions**. Metropolia has renewed its development discussions by switching from one annual performance and development discussion to the practice of two separate discussions. The autumn target and performance review include the targets for the past period and the upcoming period, performance and the related strengths and development needs. The spring development

discussion focuses on the factors motivating the employee, their well-being as well as professional competence and development needs.

The most important method of competence development is **learning on the job.** Professional development arises from meaningful job duties, international mobility, job rotation and career orientation. In addition to degree teaching, the teaching staff can work in the education solutions within Continuing Education and Enterprise Services and in RDI projects, for example. This is also in line with the RDIL operating model (see e.g. 2.1). Employees learn from colleagues in both daily work and regular peer forums (e.g. the leadership forum and sparring forums for superiors). Competence development is supported through internal and external **coaching and training**. The units are responsible for procuring competence related to their own operations and substance. Training that supports key competencies (e.g. the Digiope coaching to develop the digital competence of teaching staff, project management training, sustainable development) is provided in a centralised manner. A policy is in place for supporting employees' independent training, and Metropolia's shared principles have been established, reviewed jointly and communicated to the superiors.

Proactive planning of recruitment

Metropolia's units can carry out recruitment that is necessary and in line with their confirmed budget by means of **proactive resource planning**. Proactive planning is linked to other annual planning and budgeting. This provides a shared and open view into HR planning matters. It helps direct the use of resources in such a way that it becomes more systematic and makes the permission processes of recruitment lighter. The units are supported in resource planning and recruitment by the designated HR partner and finance controller. The principles and operating practices of recruitment are described in the OMA intranet. As a rule, the positions are also opened for internal recruitment and internal applicants are interviewed, if possible.

Metropolia builds a sustainable way to work with balanced work requirements and resources.

At Metropolia, the proactive enhancement of well-being at work is intertwined with finding balance between the available work resources and the requirements inherent in everyday work. The main enablers in the development of workplace well-being are the superiors and the management with the support of HR but it is most important to involve all the teams and individuals themselves in the development work. Because the quality of supervisory work has a profound impact on workplace well-being, HR has launched regular sparring forums, coaching and peer activities to support the superiors as well as increased HR business partner services available to superiors. The main tool to monitor and develop employee experience and workplace well-being is the annual People Power personnel survey. Metropolia has invested in the *overall development of the* employee *experience* – and well-being at work – by ensuring that the People Power results are processed together and prioritized into 1-3 development measures on all

organisational levels: teams, units and Metropolia. As a result of this process, the digital People Power reporting system has more than 100 different development measures which all aim to enhance everyday work conditions and well-being at work.

Metropolia's workplace well-being services can be roughly divided into more permanent type of **basic services** (see Table 1) **and more situational or changing well-being services** (interventions).

Basic workplace well-being services
Early/active support model: • OMA intranet materials, operating instructions • The Sirius tool for identifying risks to and monitoring work ability • Guidance and coaching for superiors on the application of early support
Services in accordance with *the occupational health action plan* which are more extensive than the statutory services: • Medical examinations; services provided by an occupational health physician, nurse, psychologist, and physical therapist; laboratory tests, imaging, mental health chat and sparring • Tripartite occupational health consultations (the person in question, their superior, HR and an occupational health physician) • Seeking solutions: changes in the person's work arrangements, rehabilitation, partial sick leave, work try-outs, alternative duties • Workplace surveys conducted by the occupational health services and the required corrective measures
Monitoring well-being at work: Regular mapping of the employee experience through the People Power personnel survey and the subsequent Results for action process, in which the development needs arising from the results are prioritized jointly, and development measures are agreed for them on all levels (Metropolia, units and teams), and the realization of the measures is monitored.
Working time solutions supporting well-being: • flextime, work hours bank, partial exchange of holiday bonus to time off, flexi-leave (administration and support services personnel) • part-time work and unpaid time off (e.g. study leave) • remote work option (the general policy is 50% of the working time)
Personnel benefits supporting well-being: • Smartum Plus benefits (massage, commute, exercise, and culture) • Zone exercise services, Break Pro application for exercise breaks during work, exercise facilities on campuses • Anniversary gifts, campus lunchroom, personnel events, informal coffee break meetings • Recreational subsidy granted by units

Table 1 Basic workplace well-being services

The more ***situational or changing services*** (situation-specific interventions and pilots) include *supervision/coaching for groups* during the pandemic*, short-term psychotherapy* and the low-threshold *Auntie* service being launched to support good mental health and stress management. Superiors and experts have been supported by means of the virtual *Onnistu hybridityössä* (Successful hybrid work) learning path. In addition, superiors have been provided with a regular *sparring forum*, and the team leaders have crafted their jobs in *Tiiminvetäjien työn muotoilu* (Job Crafting for Team leaders) program.

Metropolia offers a wealth of services, models, and instructions on workplace wellbeing in a centralized manner. Their application and monitoring are the responsibility of the management and superiors of each unit. The HR partners assigned to the units could in future have a larger role in supporting the units. There are also plans for a 'sounding board,' consisting of representatives of HR and the units, to promote the dissemination of information, dialogue, and joint development.

The objectives and activities of equal and non-discriminating treatment are described in the Equality and non-discrimination plan that is updated bi-annually. The plan is drawn up by a working group consisting of Metropolia's union representatives and the representatives of the occupational safety and health service, various personnel groups as well as students and HR. The measures in the plan and their implementation have been incorporated in HEI's daily activities. The responsibility for implementing the measures is divided in accordance with management responsibilities. The success of the equality and non-discrimination work is the responsibility of the university community as a whole – every member of the community is responsible for their own conduct and actions. In 2021, a permanent equality and non-discrimination group was established to monitor the realization of the plan.

Strengths	**Enhancement areas**
Flexible solutions for balancing work, family, and leisure in various stages of life. E.g. flextime, a work hour bank, partial exchange of holiday bonuses with time off, and opportunities provided by hybrid work.	The identification of competence needs on various levels should be made more systematic by modelling or by describing the sources of identification and the process itself in greater detail. Unit- and team-specific, more systematic identification of competence needs might require some clarification and centralized support in the future.
A sound process increases the transparency and fairness of recruitment as the process implementation is harmonised in various parts of the organization in accordance with the agreed policies.	The development of proactive resource planning and related tools in connection with annual planning.
The process prioritising the results of the personnel survey (People Power) and converting them jointly into development measures regarding the team, unit, and company (the implementation of which is monitored in the Cixtranet system) is strong and functions well.	The units do not have resources expressly designated for well-being at work. Rather, launching and monitoring the operations is largely the responsibility of the busy superiors in each unit.

In the future, instead of focusing on the basic recruitment process, more attention should be paid to applicant communication and the development of employer image and visibility. This would help recruit the best possible experts for each position. Internal employer image should also be improved.

Organization of induction

3.2 Supporting the competence development and well-being of the staff

- Auditointiryhmän arvio

Metropolia’s management supports the development and well-being of its staff

Improving staff’s well-being at work is an essential strategic value at Metropolia. It became apparent during the audit visit and in the self-evaluation report that management supports the development and well-being of its staff in many different ways. The active support model aims to promote the well-being and health of employees, prevent the loss of ability to work, increase the functionality of working communities and positively impact the work atmosphere.

The competence management needs of staff are identified in individual development and performance discussions twice a year, which also address the well-being of staff. In order to develop the required and desired competencies in the best possible way, numerous measures are taken. Besides on-the-job training, a large variety of external and internal coaching and training is offered, as well as the possibility to learn from colleagues in regular peer forums.

Metropolia offers comprehensive occupational health care services, the possibility of flexible working hours, and many benefits, such as exercise possibilities, massage, culture and recreational subsidies granted by units. The situational services include short-term psychotherapy, coaching for groups during the pandemic and stress management. The well-being of staff at work is monitored and developed with a People Power survey.

Metropolia has an equality and non-discrimination plan, which addresses principles guiding equality and non-discrimination, objectives of equality and equal opportunities work, monitoring of the plan and annual calendar. Metropolia has good promotional material on these issues.

Metropolia pursues a proactive and transparent personnel recruiting and development system

Metropolia's goal is to work in a people-oriented way and to create an organisational culture that values dialogue and diversity. The new position of a dialogue manager underlines these intentions. Metropolia pursues a proactive resource planning system. Based on the confirmed budget supported by the HR partner and finance controller, the units can recruit suitable personnel to achieve the strategic goals. Vacant positions at Metropolia are published in the OMA intranet job advertisement section for internal recruitment and on Metropolia's website for external recruitment. In spring 2022, the recruitment process was made more transparent.

The hiring supervisor has an overview of the ongoing recruitment process and can view applications directly in the system ('TalentAdore' system). Metropolia's equality plan states that recruitment must strive for openness and transparency on all levels. At the same time, job applications and applicants' information received by Metropolia are treated with the utmost confidentiality. The remuneration of employees, as far as observable, seems appropriate.

In order to develop the required and desired competencies in the best possible way, numerous measures are taken. Besides on-the-job training, a great variety of external and internal coaching and training is offered, as well as the possibility to learn from colleagues in regular peer forums. The audit team supports the efforts to increase resources to identify competences needed on various levels in more detail and systematically. Although Metropolia has done good branding work and is an attractive employer, there is still room for improvement. Metropolia should improve external perception and visibility to gain the best national and international applicants, as Finland has intense competition for the workforce. As part of staff competence development, Metropolia should identify needed competences, especially in the new strategic innovation hubs, where a new way of thinking and acting is required. Due to the impressive quality and quantity of external connections in the field of research, teaching and third mission, the prospects for these endeavours should be good.