

# AUDIT OF HäME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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## 4.1 An evaluation area selected by the HEI

### - Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

The **Design Factory** was selected as a context central to HAMK's strategy to be developed. The DF is visualised in the HAMK Vision 2030 at the crossroads of the Internationalisation and Entrepreneurship and Cooperation focus areas for the year 2021. HAMK DF was established, based on co-operation with Aalto University, as an instrument to support the transformation of HAMK to become an international, active, and modern higher education community, as well as, facilitating co-creation with businesses, the public and third sector.

The international and global collaboration activities with other HEIs and industry in the context of the Design Factory were chosen as the objective of the assessment. Benchlearning with other design factories were chosen as a means to develop international and collaboration activities of the HAMK Design Factory. During the writing of this report there were 34 other design factories that could function as benchlearning partners. inno.space Design Factory Mannheim was selected as the benchlearning partner organisation based on positive experiences gained from international collaboration. The inno.space Design Factory has participated actively in the international activities of the Design Factory Global Network (DFGN) and SUGAR network.

#### **Strengths**

Top management support

Design Factory studies are included in the curriculum of HAMK degree programmes

Opportunity to create new courses and award credits for Design Factory studies

A large number of students participate in Design Factory courses and workshops

#### **Enhancement areas**

International courses organised with other design factories

More active involvement with Design Factory Global Network events and activities

Partnering with international companies and organisations

SUGAR network and 9 months academic programme collaboration

As a result of an online workshop, the strengths and enhancement areas for benchlearning were identified by staff from the HAMK DF and inno.space DF Mannheim.

Top management support and making Design Factory concept visible in the HAMK strategy and vision were perceived as important strengths of the HAMK DF. The inclusion of DF studies in the curriculum in HAMK degree programmes (Bioeconomy Engineering, Sustainable Development, Smart and Sustainable Design) was perceived as an important enabler for involving and attracting students to DF courses. The possibility to create new courses and to award credits for students participating in DF activities were also perceived as strengths of the HAMK DF compared to some other design factories. These strengths were considered to enable large numbers of students participate in DF courses and workshops yearly at HAMK DF.

In contrast, enhancement areas targeted for benchlearning were related to the internationalisation of HAMK DF. This included areas such as organising international courses with other design factories, becoming more actively involved and benefitting from the DFGN, partnering with international companies and organisations, and finally learning more about the opportunities provided by joining the SUGAR network and participating in the 9-month-long academic programmes.

Benchlearning was found to be a good method to practice continuously learning from other design factories and has inspired the staff to organise future visits and co-host international activities with other design factories.

## 4.1 Design Factory

### - Auditointiryhmän arvio

#### Design Factory shows promise in bringing strategic goals to life

HAMK has chosen Design Factory as a voluntary evaluation area of the audit. It wishes to further strengthen its role and desire to become a strong and modern higher education institution, as laid down in HAMK's Vision 2030 at the crossroads of internationalisation and wants to learn from others in this respect. HAMK Design Factory is the outcome of a co-operation with Aalto University and serves as an important instrument to support the transformation, HAMK's Design Factory facilitates co-creation with businesses, the public and the third sector. Design Factory, its methods and practices are equally relevant for making HAMK an inspiring hub for innovation, experimental learning and interaction between students and representatives from business life.

As an interdisciplinary product for service design and a learning platform uniting students, teachers, researchers and stakeholders Design Factory is a strategic focus area. Design Factory brings diverse perspectives together into a dialogue and put the customer and the user (of services) with the human aspects at the core of the strategy through design thinking.

As Design Factory's goal was described earlier and elaborated further in the audit interviews, what makes Design Factory unique is the design thinking as its core, as well as the nature of Design Factory as an evolving concept, which is never finished, complete or ready, rather inviting to explore, experiment and engage with empathy. In the interviews, the value of Design Factory was described as follows: "No other person can give you the right answers and solutions beforehand, rather one needs to explore and experiment to find what works and adapt accordingly. In doing so, one needs to use empathy, for the students that are the centre of the activities, the teacher-facilitators and other stakeholders involved in the learning environment." Therefore, Design Factory and its staff invite everyone to use one's inner guide when working with people and to try to consider and see issues from others' perspectives, helping one to arrive at solutions that are good from the perspective of those people involved.

These sentences reflect well on design thinking, which inspires Design Factory activities, as the core of design thinking is the aspiration and attempt to put empathy at the heart of RDI work. This is an ambitious and interesting starting point also from an international and multi-disciplinary perspective.

## Design Factory is seen as a joint venture with multiple benefits

During the audit visit, Design Factory was discussed in interviews with various groups of teachers and students. Design Factory enjoys the support of HAMK management and students alike, and it has also great potential for becoming both internationalised and localised (through curricula across various departments). The feedback was considerably positive and described Design Factory as one of the best HAMK innovations in the past years. To fully exploit the benefits that emerge through cooperation with other departments, Design Factory methods and thinking should be consistently integrated into course activities across HAMK.

The audit team was impressed by, how Design Factory and its methodologies are already integrated into the Bio economy Engineering, Sustainable Development, Smart and Sustainable Design courses, and they represent the great practical use of the skills and knowledge obtained in students' main course. Therefore, integrating it into more modules would be strongly encouraged. This could also encourage further multidisciplinary projects and encourage people with different backgrounds to develop solutions together.

## Design Factory of interest both for regional and international networks

Design Factory was recognised as a good medium for creating connections in business and making potential internship opportunities for students and recent graduates. Students are offered the opportunity to find new solutions and experiment as part of the module teaching. The atmosphere that this part of the HAMK was offering to its staff and students encouraged them to develop cooperation with EU programmes and offer a good platform for further development.

More cooperation with colleagues from regional and international network is encouraged, such as the currently running RUN EU alliance, aiming at jointly developing cutting-edge teaching, learning and research between seven regional universities across Europe, to meet the future competence needs. Over the course of the three-year project, RUN-EU seeks to deliver short and

flexible student and staff mobility measures, as well as to create research collaboration and research groups, introducing doctoral paths, planning and implementing double and joint degrees, and also building joint administrative structures. So far, mainly short-term cooperation activities and measures were created in the past years, focusing on one case or task. Changing the focus to more long-term cooperation with industry partners could significantly benefit both sides.

## The Design Factory bears the potential of becoming the unique selling point for all courses

In the interviews, the audit team heard how closely integrated into mainstream activity Design Factory already is, as it is currently embedded in almost every study programme, and every course includes at least one course in Design Factory.

Design Factory clearly has already been a great investment for HAMK's students and staff. There is more space however for better communicating all the benefits that Design Factory can offer to students, staff, as well as the local business community and societal stakeholders. Students are already aware of the existence of Design Factory, though some were not sure about how they can get involved and what they can expect from the experience. Further development of this communication could greatly help further involvement and engagement of more students and staff on new projects.