KANSALLINEN KOULUTUKSEN ARVIOINTIKESKUS
NATIONELLA CENTRET FÖR UTBILDNINGSUTVÄRDERING
FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF HAAGA-HELIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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5 Benchlearning

- Högskolans självvärdering

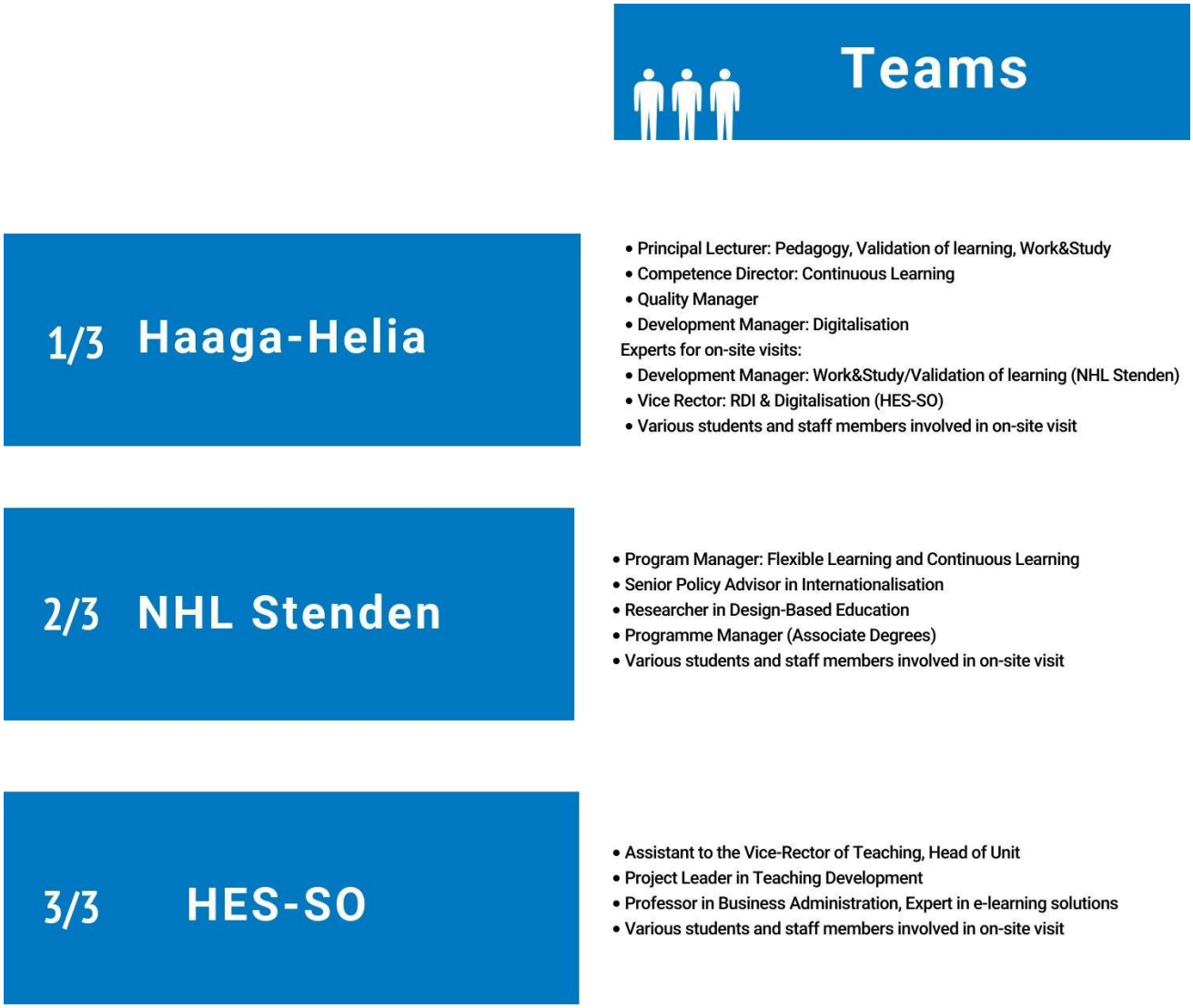
Starting the process and choosing partners

The process started as a mission set by the Management Group, to establish a co-creational dimension of institutional learning with selected international partners. Therefore, we decided to incorporate a process of international benchlearning in the context of the forthcoming quality audit. Our Principal Lecturer responsible for Validation of Learning, together with our Competence Director of Continuous Learning were assigned to plan and implement the process and to assemble a group of experts for the process.

The Quality Assurance Services recruited international partners, with the help of experts in International Affairs. NHL Stenden and HES-SO were chosen for the process due to their long-standing partnerships and corresponding profiles with Haaga-Helia.

NHL Stenden UAS in the Netherlands has developed continuous learning to combine work and study, and to insightfully implement design thinking in education. Moreover, it had expressed interest in RDI collaboration on relevant topics.

HES-SO in Switzerland has created an interesting, extensive digital strategy (2021-24) and is developing digital offering through a specific CyberLearn E-learning Center. Expertise of HES-SO was found valuable also in the field of didactic solutions in e-learning.



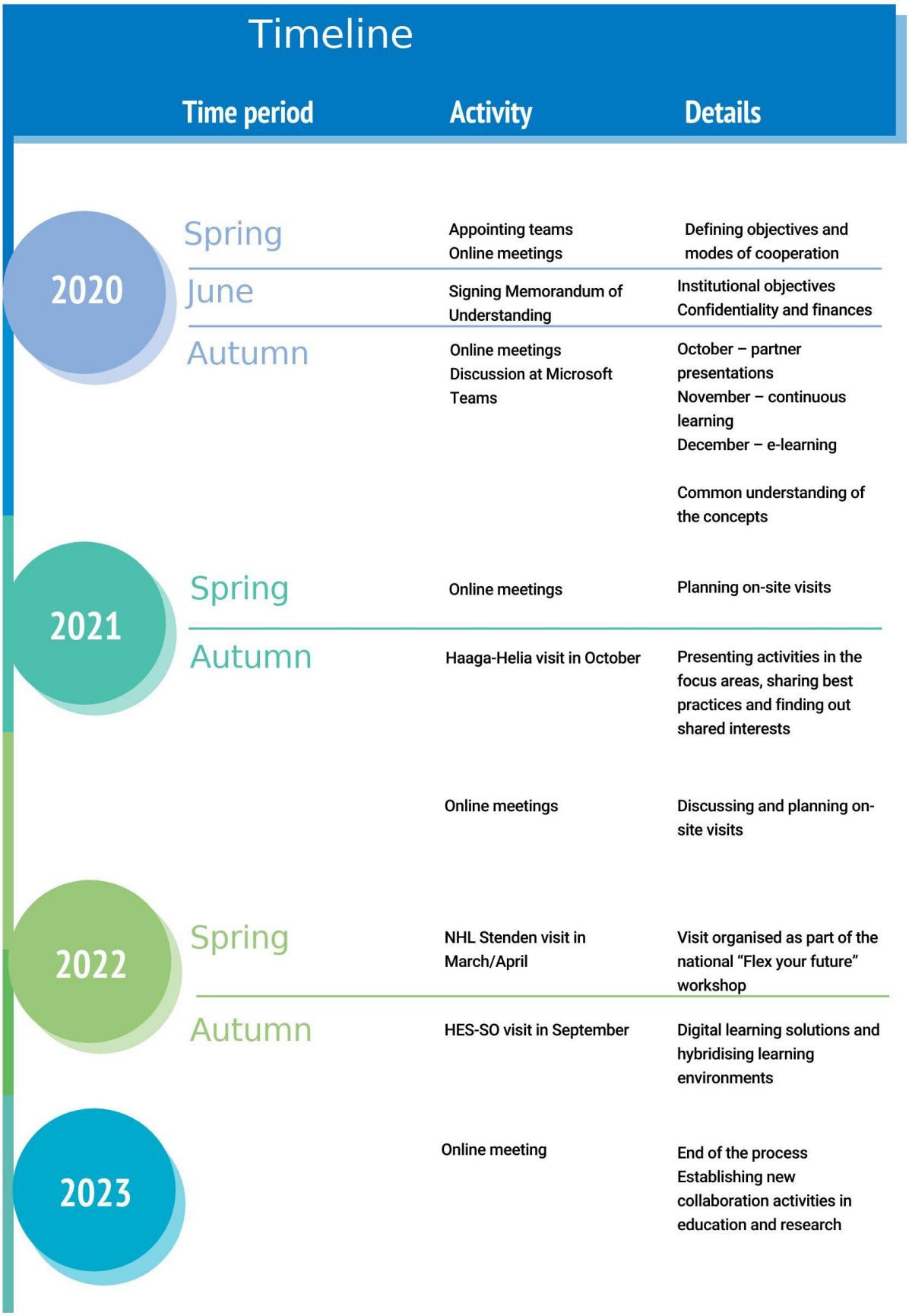
Picture 30. Participants in the benchlearning

Focus on continuous learning and e-learning

The benchlearning process was positioned in two key fields of development: continuous learning and e-learning that also entwine, in view of increasing demands of flexibility and affordability of education. Our objectives of benchlearning were defined as follows:

- to fulfil the expectations of the national audit, with an international dimension of co-creational learning and sharing best practices
- to gain insights into continuous learning, with emphasis on aspects of virtual and hybrid implementations and the overarching objective of enhancing e-learning opportunities
- to implement these insights into strategy and operations of Haaga-Helia
- to enhance research cooperation with selected partners on areas of shared interests.

The benchlearning process was initiated in spring 2020 and it will continue until the quality audit and further. In addition to the two main topics, cooperation in RDI and mobility is discussed throughout the process.



Picture 31. Progress of the benchlearning

Results

The choice of focus areas was successful as the topics selected prior to the pandemic became even more relevant during it. The project has enhanced inter-institutional cooperation and sharing best practices, with ideas for future research collaboration. Observations available at this stage are compiled in the table below, with the overarching observation that similarities outnumber dissimilarities in the three institutions, and that the pandemic has made endeavours to forward continuous learning and e-learning even more important than before. Benchlearning has been a rewarding learning process, even though the travel restrictions forced us to find online solutions for exchanges. Our team members have published their positive insights into the benchlearning process.

GOOD PRACTICES		
HAAGA-HELIA	**NHL STENDEN**	**HES-SO**
• Open UAS courses online, attracting working students • Process and shared practices for validation and work-integrated learning • Competence demonstration widely available • Micro-credentials to boost employability • Hybrid solutions encouraged • Digipeda mentor support • Systematic feedback collection • Quality criteria for online implementations • Creative didactic solutions encouraged • Peer learning opportunities • Low hierarchy helps communication	• Quality Scan tool for developing quality system • Two pillars of flexibilisation: personalised learning and co-creation • Ateliers as physical and pedagogical workspaces • Design Based Education as a pedagogical principle and a research object (integrated educational development) • Clear interconnected research areas, interfaces between areas bringing added value • Quality system, RDI and pedagogics integrated with design thinking and linked to strategy • InnovationLab supports digitalisation of teaching	• E-learning organised through CyberLearn • E-learning aligning with community of practice, enhancing collaborative learning • InnoKick's multidisciplinary student teams solving real-life business challenges • Simulations, gamification and VR environments widely used • Blended learning encouraged • Help from learning designers

HOW WE PLAN TO APPLY GOOD PRACTICES FROM OUR PARTNERS
• Ensuring that the development of our practices relates to pedagogical strategy and RDI • Spreading design thinking approach from course design to cover whole Haaga-Helia • Increasing cooperation between vocational teacher education and degree education • Applying the “atelier” concept to progressive inquiry where practice and theory are combined • Encouraging student engagement in learning design • Providing lecturers with guidelines to blended and e-learning • Fostering an interdisciplinary approach in curriculum design and implementation • Applying gamification to engage students in learning processes

Audit team's feedback

Continuous learning is a strategic goal of Haaga-Helia

Continuous learning is a strategic field for Haaga-Helia. According to the self-assessment report, Haaga-Helia aims at students to take ownership of their learning paths while teachers serve as instructors and facilitators, contributing to the region through continuous learning and enhanced employability. The interviews confirmed that the new module structure enables flexible study paths, allowing for the creation of new degree programs or program components tailored to new target groups without the need to alter Haaga-Helia's operating license. Digitalization is leveraged in teaching and guidance, such as through Work&Study pathways or Open UAS, to benefit all potential groups rather than just those seeking to increase their educational level. The auditors encourage Haaga-Helia to further develop different forms of continuous learning on a more systematic basis to foster lifelong learning, i.e., in specialisation studies and other further training. The audit team see the concept of RPL as well as the Work&Study model as a promising example of how to establish continuous learning as a regular learning experience for those who want to gain further competences and knowledge in a specific field. The Work&Study model widens the range and diversity of education.