

Olga Konstantinova, Patricia Virsinger

**EXPERIENCES OF FOREIGN DEGREE STUDENTS ABOUT STUDYING AND  
FINLAND AS A PLACE OF STUDY**

Foreign degree students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences

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Olga Konstantinova  
Patrícia Virsinger  
Thesis  
Spring 2017  
International Business  
Oulu University of Applied Sciences

## ABSTRACT

Oulu University of Applied Sciences  
Degree Programme in International Business

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Authors: Olga Konstantinova, Patrícia Virsinger

Title of Bachelor's thesis: Experiences of foreign degree students about studying and Finland as a place of study

Supervisor: Outi Sutinen

Term and year of completion: Spring 2017

Number of pages: 117

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The main purpose of this thesis was to determine how satisfied the international degree students are with their overall study experience in Finland, starting with the admission process. In addition, the aim was to find out how the FINNIPS network could develop the study process and support services to guarantee the satisfaction of international students, using their comments and suggestions.

The theoretical part of the thesis discusses service quality and its various models, as well as defines the concept and significance of customer satisfaction. The research was conducted using a customer satisfaction survey, based on a sample of 140 international degree students representing 38 countries and 12 Universities of Applied Sciences.

According to the results of the research, it can be determined that the international degree students are satisfied with the both the technical and functional quality of the services that were provided to them during the admission process. It can also be determined that the international degree students' expectations about various elements of the study process were met. However, the results showed mild dissatisfaction with a few aspects and competences during the studies. The conclusion of this research is that the international students' satisfaction level of the overall study experience and service quality is high.

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Keywords: customer satisfaction, service quality, education, international

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Finland is worldwide known for its perspective towards education that lies at the core of the Finnish welfare society. The Finnish higher education system has been ranked highly in a number of various international comparisons. Moreover, Finland offers equal opportunities of education for people of all origin, genders, economic situations or cultures. As a bilingual country, the language of teaching is usually Finnish or Swedish. However, many Finnish higher educational institutions provide also programmes in English. According to Higher Education in Finland 2016-2017, in total there are over 400 programmes in English to choose from.

Finnish higher education system consists of two sectors: universities and universities of applied sciences (referred from now as UAS). While universities focus more on academic education, one of the main strengths and differences of UASs is the strong cooperation between education and working life. Formerly known as “polytechnics”, there are twenty-six UASs in Finland that provide around hundred English-taught Bachelor’s degree programmes in eight different fields. UASs train future professionals in response to labour market needs and conduct research and development in order to support regional development as well as both local and global societies. During the studies, students participate in various projects in cooperations with companies and industries to deal with the real working life cases, which boosts learning outcomes. By these learning methods Finnish UASs have already achieved a well-known role in the community of international higher education (Kitinoja & Pääskylä & Vanhanen 2015, cited 5.4.2017).

One important aspect of studying in Finland is financing the studies. International students are often required to cover their everyday living costs independently. Moreover, as starting from year 2017 the new non-EU/EEA students will be required to pay tuition fees in English-taught Bachelor’s or Master’s degree programmes. The result is a decline in the number of applicants, just like it did in some other countries that introduced the fees. In order to keep attracting students it is important to know about international students’ experiences of studying in Finland, as well as what motivates them to choose Finland as a place of study.

## 1.1 Importance of internationalization

International mobility is a globally growing phenomenon. The number of international students outside their home countries have increased by 50 per cent between 2005 and 2012 (Hazelkorn 2017, cited 5.4.2017). Once seen only as cultural exchange, internationalization is now an essential part for strengthening the interconnectivity of higher education institutions and countries in a global world. According to Hudzik (2011), one of the main part of internationalization is ensuring that graduates are better prepared as global citizens and, thus, are capable of living and working successfully in the global economy and making an effective and efficient contribution to society. The importance of these objectives motivates governments and higher education institutions (referred from now on as HEI) to make internationalization one of the strategic priorities.

These trends are also reflected in Finland's experience. The Strategy for the Internationalization of HEIs in Finland 2009–2015 emphasized the importance of ensuring *“the development of national strengths through international cooperation.”* According to CIMO (2016), the number of incoming degree students to Finland have been rising since the earlier 2000s. However, in the autumn 2016, after tuition fees have been presented, around 20700 foreign students applied for a study place in one of the English-language higher education programmes in Finland, which is almost 30 per cent less compared to the previous year (CIMO 2016).

Internationalization is strongly connected to the production of new information and the core essence of research and education. Moreover, internationalization impacts many areas of education, such as teaching sessions and cultural and language skills requirements, which consequently lead to more active recruitment of foreign teachers and researches in order to offer more international and high-quality learning environment (Kitinoja & Pääskylä & Vanhanen 2015).

## 1.2 The commissioner

Our commissioner, Finnish Network for International Programmes (referred from now on as FINNIPS) was established in 2009. It is a cooperation network formed by 17 Finnish UASs, which work together over a development of international education in Finland. Altogether, they offer over 40 Bachelor's Degree Programmes in eight different fields that are conducted in English. The main functions of FINNIPS include arranging entrance examinations for the UASs' English-taught degree

programmes in countries outside of Finland, as well as participating in study fairs and exhibitions in order to promote the various study options of the network's UASs and to spread the information about studying in Finland.

The results from the survey, as well as the analysis of the data provide a glimpse on what are the expectations and experiences of the international students currently studying in Finland and how FINNIPS can develop their practices further to keep recruiting and attracting new students, as well as for future development of international education in Finland.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study is to find out more about the overall satisfaction of international degree students already studying in Finland. A customer satisfaction survey is concluded among students who have started their studies in 2013 and later, therefore they haven't graduated yet. This survey is used to get to know more about the motivation of international students interested in studying in Finland. After the data is analyzed, it gives us ideas about what kind of experiences the foreign degree students have had during the entire study process, including application process, expectations and actual experiences, studying and plans after graduation. Based on the results, several development ideas are given which FINNIPS can use later, in order to attract and keep international students.

### **1.4 Research questions**

The following research questions are addressed in the thesis: How satisfied are the international degree students with their overall study experience in Finland? How can FINNIPS develop the whole study process and support services to guarantee the satisfaction of international students? What are the best ways to attract more degree students to Finland after the tuition fees have been introduced?

### **1.5 Previous studies**

According to the StudyPortal's student satisfaction survey 2016, Finland has scored an average rating of 9.1, which places it to the fourth place on the list, ahead of other Nordic countries such as



Sweden and Denmark. International students especially value solid and high-quality education, academic freedom and student-centered support services that Finnish higher education institutions offer. However, the cold temperatures and the lack of daylight during the winter times were considered a negative point of studying in Finland, as well as in other Scandinavian countries (Bolderman 2016, cited 5.4.2017).

In 2014, Finland scored high in many aspects regarding the well-being of international students in the International Student Barometer survey. In total, 6,339 or 36% of all international students in Finland took part in the survey. Almost all the students have said that Finland is a good place to be, as well as it is also a very safe study and living environment, with high-quality facilities and services. A large amount of respondents would recommend studying in Finland to others. Overall learning satisfaction is high and students highly appreciate Finland's effort to include environmental awareness into various levels of society. The surprising finding was the high satisfaction with the quality and costs of accommodation, which is contrarily to negative expectations related to living expenses. The survey has also revealed areas for improvement. The main concern of international students is career planning and future employability after graduation (Närger 2015, cited 5.4.2017).

These surveys were conducted among all international students in Finland, studying different degrees in universities, UASs, as well as exchange students. Although, in our research we focus only on students of UASs, who are doing their bachelor degrees, we can still use the previous data in order to support our ideas.

## 2 SERVICE QUALITY

Quality is an important factor on achieving business competitiveness in today's world. Consumers are becoming more and more demanding and expecting high quality in products and services. In order to be successful, businesses have to build high-quality business image.

Finland has always been known worldwide for the high quality of products, as well as services, such as education. It is perceived as a key factor related to the efficiency and excellence of education, future employment, as well as the equality of individuals. Quality of education has a direct impact on attracting, satisfying and keeping students, therefore it is vital for this thesis.

In this chapter the nature of services and its main characteristics will be discussed first. In order to succeed, it is essential to know more about services, what they are about, and how the quality is created, perceived by the customers and affects the customer satisfaction.

### 2.1 Defining services

A service is a complicated concept, which has many meanings, starting from personal service to a service product. In fact, almost any product in the end can be turned into a service to a customer. For instance, a machine is a physical product, but the way the business treats their customers with a suitable and proper machine is a service (Grönroos 1990, 25).

Kotler and Bloom (1984, 477) define service as *“any activity of benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything.”* Lehtinen (1983, 21) characterizes the concept as *“an activity or a series of activities which take place in interactions with a contact person or a physical machine and which provides consumer satisfaction.”*

Both definitions have the same idea that services can be exchanges, even though they most often are intangible and cannot be experienced physically. Grönroos (1990, 27-28) defines the concept in a broader way, according to which services do not necessary take places in interaction between the customer and service provider. According to Grönroos, there are some situations when the

customer as an individual does not need to interact with the service firm. For example, if there is a leakage in the apartment, the plumber might come in to the apartment and fix the problem even when the tenant is out. There is no physical interaction between plumber and the customer. Moreover, in some situations interaction does not seem to be present, although it is there. When a broken product is taken for repair, the customer is not present and interacting with anyone or anything during the repair process. However, when the product is repaired and later delivered to the customer, interaction occurs.

There are four basic characteristics of services according to Grönroos (1990, 29):

**1. Services are more or less immaterial.**

Services have intangible nature and it is normally perceived in a subjective manner. They are often described by the customers with expressions, such as experience, trust and security, but in comparison to physical products, services cannot be felt or seen before the purchase. Because of the high level of intangibility, it is often difficult for customers to evaluate services, thus increasing uncertainty among customers. Therefore, service providers are advised to use some physical evidence as well, such as brochures and various kinds of documents (Grönroos 1990, 29).

**2. Services are chains of activities and processes rather than things.**

Services are processes that include series of activities and resources that are used in order to solve a customer's problem (Grönroos 1990, 29).

**3. Services are generally produced and consumed simultaneously.**

According to Grönroos (1990, 29-30) the production and consumption of a service tend to be inseparable and simultaneous. It is difficult to manage quality control and marketing in advance, as generally there is no preproduced quality to control in advance. Although most of the production process is invisible, the only part of production activities that matters to the customer is the visible part. Although he or she can only experience the result, only the visible part is evaluated in detail.

**4. The customer participates in the service production process**

Services cannot be kept in stock in the same way as physical goods can. Therefore, the capacity planning is a critical issue. Although services cannot be kept in stock, one can "keep customers in stock". Customers are then not only receivers of the service, but also participants as a production resource (Grönroos 1990, 30).

In addition to these four characteristics, it has to be mentioned that one of the major problems in service management is to maintain the same level of service for everyone. In practice, service to one customer is not exactly the same as to another customer. The factors can be, for example, difference in social relationships in two situations or the difference between two service providers (Grönroos 1990, 30).

## **2.2 Service quality**

There are many different definitions of quality, as well as ways of interpreting it, theories and models about it. They all may vary depending on the field and subject. Simply said, quality is attributes of a product or service. Buzzel and Gale (1987, 111) state that *“quality is whatever the customer says it is, and the quality of a particular product or service is whatever the customer perceives it to be”*. Lewis and Booms (1983, 100) define quality as *“a measure of how well the service level is delivered matches customer expectations.”* Both of these definitions lead to an idea that quality is defined not only by the producers, but by the customers.

Service quality is an intangible concept, and it is more difficult to evaluate it in comparison to physical goods. Therefore, a service provider might find it more challenging to understand how consumers perceive their services and quality. Generally, service quality perception is a result from a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service performance (Parasuraman, Seithaml, Berry 1985, 42).

Parasuraman, Seithaml and Berry (1985, 47) have created a table, where the determinants of service quality are presented. The table shows that consumers use similar criteria in evaluating service quality. These criteria are summarized and explained in figure 1.

<b>Determinants of Service Quality</b>	
Reliability	Consistency of performance and dependability. In other words, doing what you promised to do. E.g. accuracy in invoicing or having a room ready upon check-in.
Responsiveness	The willingness or readiness of the employee to provide service and help to customers. E.g. quick respond to requests.
Competence	Possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the services.
Access	Approachability and ease of contact, for example, easily accessible service by phone.
Courtesy	Politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of contact personnel.
Communication	Ability to keep customers informed in a language understandable for them. E.g. explaining the costs and assuring the problem will be solved.
Credibility	Having the customer's best interests at heart, e.g. trustworthiness, believability, honesty.
Security	Freedom from danger, risk or doubt. E.g. confidentiality and physical security.
Understanding/knowing the customer	Making the effort to understand the customer's needs, e.g. providing individualized attention and caring.
Tangibles	Physical evidence of the service, such as appearance of personnel and physical facilities.

FIGURE 1. *Determinants of Service Quality (Parasuraman, Seithaml, Berry 1985, 47)*

It is important to keep in mind that different service providers prioritize different determinants. Additionally, for different customers some determinants are more important than other.

### 2.3 The total service quality model

Customer satisfaction is affected by how the customers perceive the total service quality. When the service provider understands how services are evaluated by the customers, it is possible to manage these evaluations and direct them into a positive direction (Grönroos 2000, 62).

Service quality has two dimensions, one of them is the technical quality or outcome dimension, the “what”. The other one is the functional quality or process-related dimension, the “how”. The “what” is the outcome, what the customer is left with, after the service production process or the “how” is over. The “how” means the way the customer receives the service. Both of these dimensions are equally important parts of the quality experience.

However, the total quality perception is a bit more complicated than these two dimensions (figure 2). Quality is perceived good when the customer’s experienced quality meets their expectations, which is the expected quality (Grönroos 2000, 67). If a customer’s expectations about the service are unrealistic, the total perceived quality will be low, even though objectively it is indeed good quality.

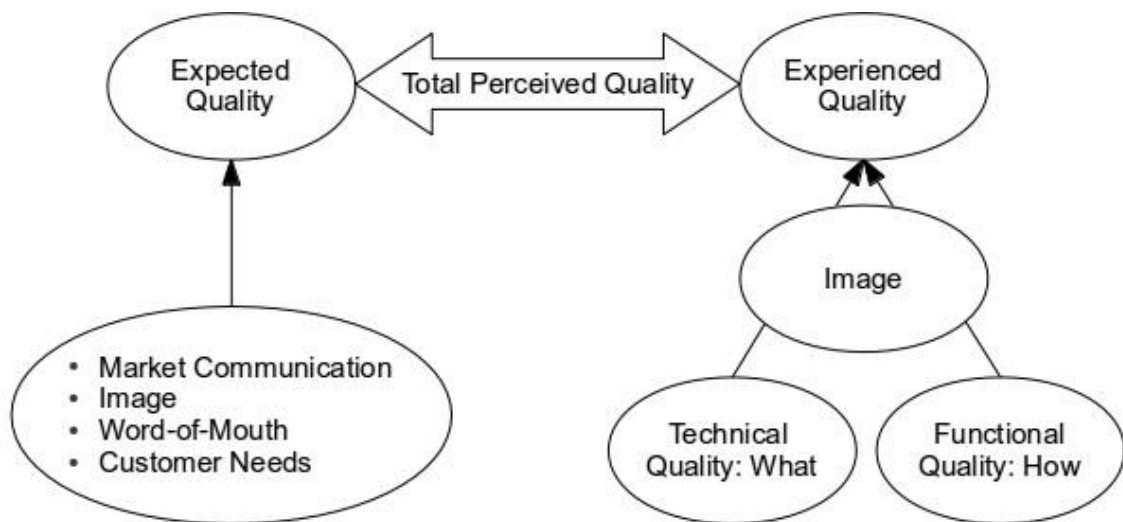


FIGURE 2. Total service quality model (Grönroos 2000, 67)

Expected quality consists of several different factors. The first is marketing communication, which includes advertising, sales promotion, websites and social media. These are directly under control by the company. Other factors are company image and word of mouth, these cannot be directly controlled by the company. The final factor is customer need and values. It is important that the company should not promise too much and should not make the customers have unrealistic expectations. The gap between the expected and experienced quality should be small, because this is what determines the level of total service quality in the end (Grönroos 2000, 67).

## 2.4 Gap model

Parasuraman, Seithaml and Berry (1985, 44-46) have created a service quality model called the *Gap Model* (figure 3). This model offers an integrated view of the relationship between consumer and the company, and can be used for analyzing sources of quality issues as well as for a basis of a service quality improvement. The model identifies four specific gaps leading to a fifth overall gap between customer expectations and perceived quality.

### CONSUMER

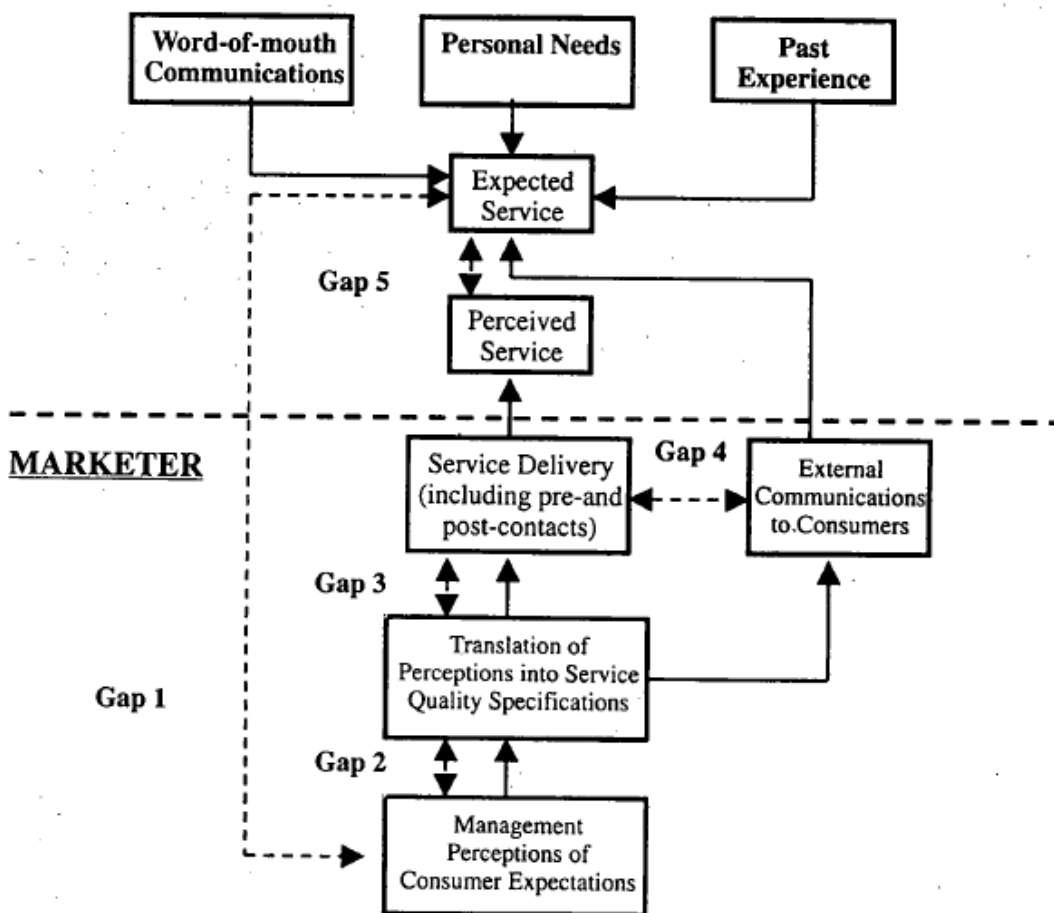


FIGURE 3. The Gap Analysis Model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry 1985, 44)

#### 1. Gap between consumer expectation and management perception

Customers use their expectations for service experiences in order to measure the perceived service performance. It is important for firm executives to determine those expectations when designing and delivering quality services. Therefore, this gap occurs when executives do not properly

perceive what customers consider as high quality service (Parasuraman, Seithaml, Berry 1985, 44).

## **2. Gap between management perception and service quality specification**

Customer expectation might be properly perceived by the executives, however the delivery and performance of the services might still fail. For example, a manager in the restaurant may understand what the customer's needs are, but may not have the needed resources for satisfying those needs. One of the reasons for the gap is the absence of goal setting (Parasuraman, Seithaml, Berry 1985, 45).

## **3. Gap between service quality specifications and service delivery**

Even when customer needs are understood, the goal is well set and the guidance for performing services are clearly stated, high quality performance might still not be performed. Many services are delivered by the firm's employees, however employees' performance cannot be always standardized. The reason for this gap can be lack of training or motivation of employees (Parasuraman, Seithaml, Berry 1985, 45. Kotler 2000, 439).

## **4. Gap between service delivery and external communications**

Media, such as marketing and other communications can affect consumer expectation. It is important for a company to be honest in their statements and do not promise more than can be actually delivered. Promises create expectations and unfulfilled expectations lower perceptions of quality. Business has to ensure the sufficiency of communications between different units in order to avoid reasons for gap (Parasuraman, Seithaml, Berry 1985, 45. Kotler, 2000, 439).

## **5. Gap between expected service and perceived service**

The key to ensure good service quality is meeting or exciding customer's expectations about the service. However, the gap occurs when the customer misperceives the service quality. After all, it is consumers who evaluate if the quality of the service high or low (Parasuraman, Seithaml, Berry 1985, 46).



## 2.5 Higher education service quality

Turner (2011, 1) states that one possible way to look at higher education quality is to ask whether higher education institutions “*fit for purpose*”. However, this question leads to more questions, rather than answering it. Arising questions might be: does a university have only a single purpose? If not, which purpose is important in assessing quality?

Parri (2006) stated:

*“The guiding principle is that the more complex, many-folded or abstract the object under quality measurement is, the more difficult it is to come up with a satisfactory definition. The reason why it is not possible to find the one and only definition for higher education in literature lies in the fact that higher education is one of these objects.”*

Universities provide higher education as their services. Just as any other business, they are driven by competition to measure customer satisfaction, examine the quality of their services and to redefine their product. Moreover, the long-term success and survival depends on how well universities provide their services, as well as it is the quality that sets one university apart from other universities. Students perceive quality of higher education positively when it has exceeded their expectations. Therefore, in order to keep attracting students and ensure the sustainability of higher learning, higher education institutions are required to constantly aim at meeting and exceeding students' expectations (Anderson 1994, cited 16.4.2017).

It is important to know the quality determinants for education services provided by higher education institutions to be able to measure the customer satisfaction of the students. According to Parri's research (2006), quality consists of the following categories: quality as special or unique, refinement, goal-compliance, worth the price and quality as changing and reshaping.

*Quality as exceptionality* sets a goal for universities to be always the best, to belong to the elite communities and achieve the best outcomes. In practice, higher education institutions may want to admit the best school-leavers according to specific rankings, as the higher quality of input directly affects the higher quality of output (Parri 2006, cited 17.4.2017).

*Quality as zero errors* defines quality as flawless outcome or perfection. If the previous category focuses on getting a better position, this one admires perfection. However, this approach is too idealistic for higher education, as it is impossible to define what a flawless and perfect graduate should be, as well as, it is not the aim of universities to produce identical graduates (Parri 2006, cited 17.4.2017).

According to *quality as fitness for purpose* concept, it has to be decided to what extent the service or product meets the goals set. This lets universities to assess the quality and present it through mission statement and goal achievement. Moreover, this concept concentrates on meeting of the HEIs' customers' needs and takes into account the differences between different institutions, rather than making them artificially resemble each other (Parri 2006, cited 17.4.2017).

According to *quality as transformation and/or reshaping*, the main customer of the higher education quality is a student, whose skills, understanding, attitudes and knowledge are changing and reshaping through the study process. Therefore, a university meets its goals, when graduates are able to more easily manage in future working life, by using the knowledge, experience and skills acquired at their university (Parri 2006, cited 17.4.2017).

*Quality as value for money* is a populist approach. It equalizes quality and value, particularly for money. The key point of this approach is the responsibility aspect of quality assurance. For instance, state funded universities are expected to be hold responsible towards financiers and clients. Additionally, the key of increase in cost-effectiveness is in increased competition between universities both for financing and students (Parri 2006, cited 17.4.2017).

## **2.6 The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council**

Finnish quality assurance system is enhancement-oriented, aiming at improving the study and learning experience for all students. Quality assurance is important in order to allow people to have confidence in the quality of higher education. Independent audits of the quality control systems of higher education institutions are conducted by The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (referred from now on as FINEEC).

FINEEC was established in May 2014, by the evaluation activities of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council, the Finnish Education Evaluation Council and the Finnish National Board of Education. It is an independent government agency, whose main duties include evaluation of national education (Finnish Education Evaluation Center 2017, cited 5.4.2017).

FINEEC implement evaluations related to education, education providers and HEIs. In addition to that, FINEEC's responsibilities include supporting education providers and HEIs in issues related to evaluation and quality assurance, as well as to develop education evaluation. Consequently, the aim of the evaluations is to develop education and to support learning while ensuring the quality of education (Finnish Education Evaluation Center,2017, cited 5.4.2017).

In evaluating education provided by UASs in Finland, FINEEC includes three key evaluation types. They are the audits of HEIs quality systems, thematic evaluations of the education system and engineering degree programme reviews. During audit, the quality system that each UAS has developed is evaluated in accordance with its objectives. Thematic evaluations cover UASs on themes that are important with regard to educations policies and to support national level decision-making (Finnish Education Evaluation Center 2017, cited 5.4.2017).

### **3 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

This thesis considers the international students who have decided to choose Finland as a place of study as customers, and our research measures their satisfaction with the services provided by FINNIPS and their own UASs. This chapter discusses the concept of customer satisfaction and its significance, and explains in detail what customer satisfaction actually is and why it is important to keep customers content. It aims to give an overall picture about how customer satisfaction can be achieved and how it can be managed and improved.

#### **3.1 The concept and significance of customer satisfaction**

A satisfied customer is the key for good business. Keeping customers happy creates market success and it is also the best way a company can defend themselves against competitors (Lele & Sheth 1991, 1) The customer is in the main focus of every company and organization. The company's status, image and profit depends on the customers, in other this case, the international degree students. It is crucial for all businesses to meet their customers' expectations and know their level of satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is related to many different business aspects (Management Study Guide 2017). Some of the most relevant aspects are marketing, quality of products and services, responses to customer problems and queries, delivery services, complaint management, and so on. Customer satisfaction, in other words, is the overall impression the customer has about the company or service provider. During all the previously mentioned aspects and processes of business the customer forms an opinion about the organization, and it results in satisfaction or dissatisfaction. It is crucial that organizations interact and communicate with customers regularly in order to increase customer satisfaction. Higher satisfaction level means higher attachment with a specific brand or product.

There are a variety factors that influence whether a customer is satisfied with a certain product or service. According to Lele & Sheth (1991, 82), customer satisfaction has four fundamental factors, which are product-related, sales activity-related, after-sales and culture related variables. The product factor, which can include both tangible and intangible products and services, includes the

basic design of the product, the product or service designers' familiarity with the needs of the customers, the incentives of the company behind the product or service, as well as the manufacturing process and quality control.

The sales activity area has three crucial factors that influence customer satisfaction: messages, attitudes and intermediaries (Lele & Sheth 1991, 90). By the time the customers are ready to buy a product or service, they already have their ideas about their own needs, how the product or service will benefit them, and what degree of satisfaction they want to receive from it. Therefore the happiness and satisfaction of the customer depends on what expectations were created and how, what attitudes were reinforced or modified, how well they were treated during the actual sales situation and how well the intermediaries were controlled. Messages influence customer expectations and attitudes already before the sale. These messages can be overt, which the company creates, such as advertising, promotions or special offers. Covert messages include subconscious signals, atmosphere, decoration, sales location, store layout, product arrangement and so on. The overt and covert messages combined create a certain set of expectations for the customers about the company, their products, as well as the degree and type of satisfaction the customer will get. Attitudes during the sales phase also matter a lot from the customer satisfaction point of view. Everyone from the company's side who has contact with the customer, the salespersons, receptionists, support personnel and so on, their attitudes and actions how they treat the customers affect their level of satisfaction consciously and subconsciously. This is closely related to the third factor, the intermediaries. Sometimes the product or services are sold through an intermediary, such as dealers or retailers. Even though the intermediaries are not directly controlled by the company, their behavior also influence customer satisfaction, therefore it is important that the company carefully selects their intermediary channels in order to keep customers content.

After-sales activities also make sure that the customer continues to be satisfied with the product or service. Typical elements of after-sales support are specific support services, such as user assistance, spare parts, warranties or updates (Lele & Sheth 1991, 96). The range of these services and the company's attitude in handling has a great impact on the satisfaction level. Another element is the feedback and restitution. It includes activities such as complaint handling, dispute resolutions and returns. After sales support tells a lot to the customer about the company, and if they handle these activities well, the company image can strengthen in the eyes of buyers.

The final fundamental that affects customer satisfaction is the company culture and corporate values, in other words, it means an organization's norms, thoughts and beliefs (Lele & Sheth 1991, 99). If a company truly believes in the importance of customer satisfaction, every activity they engage in reflects that, and happy customers will ensure their long-term success.

### **3.2 Managing customer expectations**

The expectations of the customers play a very important role in the overall experience. When making a decision about using a service, customers already have a certain set of expectations. The customers assess the company's service quality by comparing their already existing expectations and wants with what they perceive they get during the service process (Berry & Parasuraman 1991, 57). In order to have a good reputation for good service quality, companies must perform consistently in such manner that the customers perceive that their expectations were met or exceeded. The company must understand and control the customers' expectations to make them happy. If the expectations are unrealistically high, the company can never satisfy the customers, and on the other hand, if their expectations are low, they will not even be interested in the service or product. Customers judge their satisfaction or dissatisfaction by comparing the performance of a product or service against a reference level (Lele & Sheth 1991, 137). The reference is the level expectations they constructed in their mind about the company, based on their marketing communication or advertisements, past experience, feedback from another customer, news media and so on. The following model describes this phenomenon:

$$\text{Customer satisfaction} = \frac{\text{Performance}}{\text{Expectations}}$$

If the company's performance is below expectations, the customer will not be satisfied. However, if the performance exceeds their expectations, the customer will definitely be satisfied. Therefore, companies must remember to pay attention to and manage their customers' expectations. They should create expectations that can be met and customer satisfaction is guaranteed.

### **3.3 Customer loyalty**

Building customer loyalty should be at the heart of every business, because companies succeed by getting, keeping and growing customers (Kotler & Keller 2009, 160). Loyal customers have a tendency of choosing one company's products or services over another company to satisfy their own needs. If they are satisfied, they return to the same place of purchase again to buy the same product or brand or to use the same service.

Loyal customers add value to the business, increase sales and help to attract more customers for the company. When researching customer satisfaction, it is important to find out whether the customers would return and would they recommend the product or service to other people. However, what FINNIPS offers can be categorized as a one-time service concerning the whole study experience. In this case customer loyalty can be measured by asking students whether they would recommend studying in Finland to their friends and would they like to continue their studies in Finland in the future.

## **4 RESEARCH METHOD**

The aim of this chapter is to explain how the research project was carried out. The data collection method used in this thesis is the quantitative method. A detailed customer satisfaction survey was made in order to measure the satisfaction levels of international degree students who are studying at Finnish UASs.

### **4.1 Quantitative survey**

Quantitative research is empirical research, where data is collected and analyzed in numeric form (Blaxter & Hughes & Tight 2001, 64). Quantitative research is concerned with the facts and hard data, and it is generally viewed to be objective and reliable. A popular quantitative research technique in data collection is the survey. A quantitative survey means that data gathered can be analyzed directly (SurveyMethods 2011). It is typically a survey, where a respondent answers a set of questions. People who conduct quantitative research think that the world consists of things that can be measured by numbers, and that there are regularities and things that are universally applicable.

Therefore, the most important characteristic of a quantitative survey is that the data is collected using numbers. The samples are large and the survey findings can be generalized. A good example of it is the customer satisfaction survey, where the answers correspond to a number. A quantitative survey is an easy tool to get real data. The numbers in the database are used for statistical analysis, and the results that are gained from the analysis help to understand the situation and to formulate ideas, discover trends and monitor changes.

### **4.2 Customer satisfaction survey**

The customer satisfaction survey is a great tool to help the companies measure to satisfaction level of their customers (Beard 2013). It helps to identify the happy and the unhappy customers as well as to find new potential customers. The data collected from a customer satisfaction survey also supports employees to fulfill and exceed customer expectations.



Another benefit of these surveys is the identification of problems that are shown by the low ratings. Useful customer satisfaction surveys have questions related to the customer experience, delivery of services, and overall satisfaction. For every company and service provider a satisfied customer is extremely valuable. These customers come back and make repeat purchases, and if it is a one-time purchase, such as entrance exams and a study place, they will spread the word about the company and the service and recommend it forward, gaining new customers for the company. It is just as important to identify the unhappy customers with these surveys. Other than losing them as they stop buying the products and services, they also tell other people about the bad experience they had, and they discourage new potential customers from using the company's services. The data gained from the survey helps to identify and follow up with the satisfied and happy customers, and to identify and fix the problems that come up from the side of the unsatisfied and unhappy customers. Therefore, a customer satisfaction survey is crucial for any company in order to get a good picture about the overall satisfaction level of the customers.

### **4.3 Measuring customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is based on survey data, and the level of satisfaction is expressed as a rating, usually going from very dissatisfied to very satisfied (Farris 2010). Customer satisfaction ratings are very important for every organization and company. After measuring and analyzing the results, the companies are able to focus their work more effectively to fulfil the needs and expectations of customers, and they will work to ensure that their customers have a positive experience with their product or service. It is also recommended to constantly measure the satisfaction, as dropping rates are immediately showing possible problems. Customer satisfaction is measured at an individual level, but it is reported on an aggregate level (Farris 2010). It is measured along various dimensions, usually on a five-point scale: very dissatisfied – somewhat dissatisfied – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – somewhat satisfied – very satisfied. These expressions are converted into numbers from 1-5. The respondents who chose 4 or 5 on the scale are the ones who are considered to be satisfied customers. A scale of 1-10 can also be used for the same purpose.

However, this thesis takes a slightly different approach to the standard measurement scale. Other options were investigated after we thought that the 1-5 and the 1-10 scale might not be the best way to measure the international students' satisfaction. The range of the scale is the most important contributor to get meaningful data (Refine Digital 2016). If there are too few options in a survey,

that does not show the opinions of the customers properly as the small nuances between the different ratings cannot be taken into consideration. On the other hand, when there are too many options, the differences between them are not so meaningful.

When measuring customer satisfaction, the company's objective is to find out whether their product or service has met or exceeded the customers' expectations. When customers have high expectations and they are not met in reality, they will be disappointed and rate the experience as not satisfying. This is why one needs to be cautious when interpreting the data: it is possible that a luxury hotel might have a lower satisfaction rating than a budget hostel, even though the services and the facilities of the luxury hotel are much better in absolute terms, but customers had much higher expectations beforehand. Rising expectations can also affect the ratings negatively. The company can try to boost satisfaction by lowering expectations, however it is not advised, as it may result in the product or service to become unattractive for the customers.

#### **4.4 Research problems and methodology**

The main research problem of the thesis was to determine how satisfied the international degree students are with their overall study experience in Finland, starting with the application process. Additionally, the task was to find out how FINNIPS could develop the whole study process and support services to guarantee the satisfaction of international students, based on their comments and suggestions.

The research was done using a quantitative survey. This method was chosen because this way it was possible to reach out to more students all over Finland and thus it was possible research a wider population, which would have been impossible using qualitative personal interviews. However the survey is not purely quantitative. A few open-ended qualitative questions were also added to the survey in order to find out more details and personal opinions of the respondents. The survey (Appendix 1) was designed in cooperation with the commissioner FINNIPS. Their constant feedback on the survey questions allowed the construction of a more accurate and relevant survey that covered all the possible areas FINNIPS was interested in. The survey was constructed using four separate sections which followed each other in a logical manner, in order to make it easier and more pleasant for the respondents to answer. These sections are dealing with the following areas: basic information, before starting the studies, during the studies and general questions regarding

the experience. The survey includes many different types of questions: multiple choice, scale and open-ended. Not all of the open-ended questions were compulsory in order to make filling in the survey simple for the respondents.

The open-ended questions were aimed to collect feedback corresponding to the Gap model and customer satisfaction theories related to the services. For example in case of a negative feedback a possible gap is detected in the service process which should be fixed. In case of a positive feedback, the service met the respondent's expectations. The respondents were also requested to evaluate service quality, as explained by Parri and Grönroos, of various parts of the studying process and services on a scale. The rating scale used in the survey is 1-6. When using the 1-6 rating scale, there is no central neutral answer. This way the students answering the survey are forced to think about their answer more carefully, and making their opinion to lean towards the positive or the negative direction. The aim of this idea was to guarantee that there will not be any "lazy" answers, as people often tend to choose the middle option, which is an obvious choice when they do not want to think about the answer more carefully.

The sample of the research is 140 students from 12 different Universities of Applied Sciences. The population of the research comprised of all international degree students studying in 17 UASs, all of which are part of the FINNIPS network. The survey was meant for anyone who started their studies in 2013 or later, and have not yet graduated. The survey was made on the Webropol website and it was published on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The public link was sent to all 17 UASs after the research permits were granted, and the relevant contact persons forwarded the link to their international students. The response time given was roughly four weeks, and the survey link was closed on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017. As an incentive two movie tickets were added, and the winner was contacted by e-mail after the raffle. The collected answers were processed and analyzed using Webropol. The data was converted to comprehensible information in the form of graphs and tables.

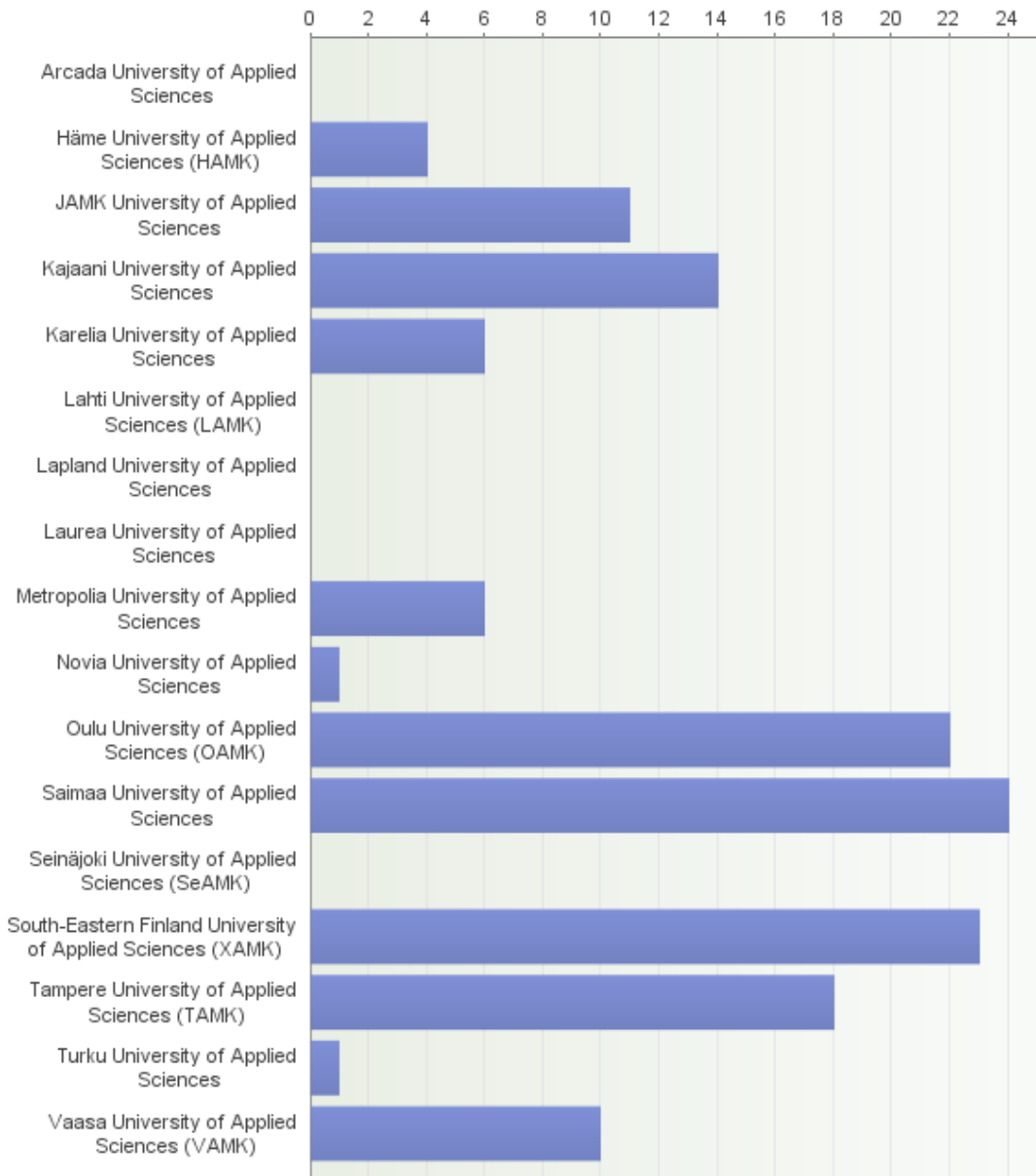
## **5 RESULTS OF THE SURVEY**

There were 140 answers received from students of 12 different Universities of Applied Sciences all together during the period of four weeks' response time. The survey was sent out to 17 UASs of FINNIPS network. Out of them, there were no responses from 5 UASs, therefore they are not represented in the sample.

This chapter's aim is to present the most important findings from the survey. The results were analyzed based on the four sections mentioned earlier, which are basic information, before starting the studies, during the studies and general questions regarding the whole study experience.

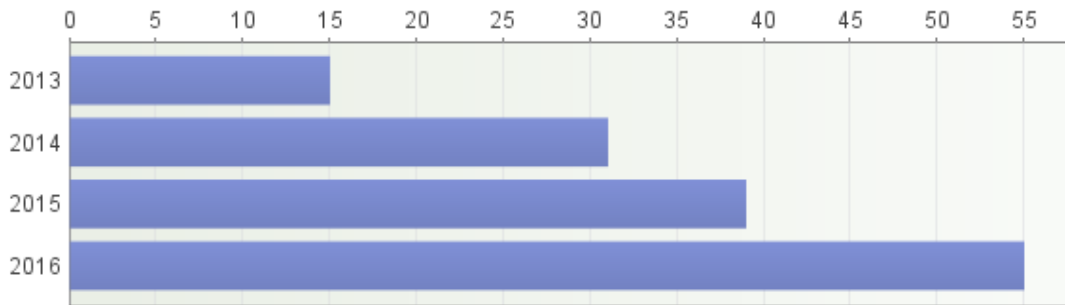
### **5.1 Basic information of respondents**

The survey started with questions about the basic information of students, such as place of study, year of admission, age, gender and country of origin. The highest amount of answers, which stands for 17,1% of total answers, were received from Saimaa UAS, followed by South-Eastern Finland UAS with 16,4%, and Oulu UAS with 15.7% (figure 4). Moreover, students of International Business bachelor program turned out to be the most active group, with 46% of respondents.



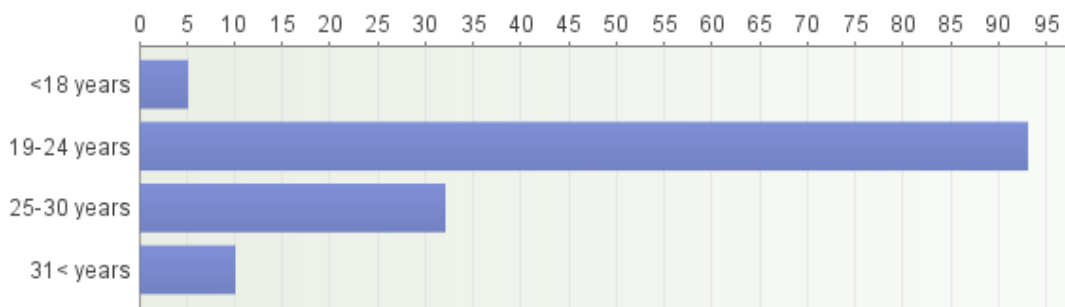
*FIGURE 4. Amount of respondents from different UASs*

The survey was meant for anyone who started their studies in 2013 or later, and have not yet graduated. From figure 5 it can be seen that the biggest amount of responses came from first year students, who started their studies in 2016.



*FIGURE 5. Starting year of the studies*

The highest amount of respondents are students aged between 19 and 24 years old, as it was expected before the research. Surprisingly, there were also a number of students whose age is under 18, as well as over 31 years old. (Figure 6)

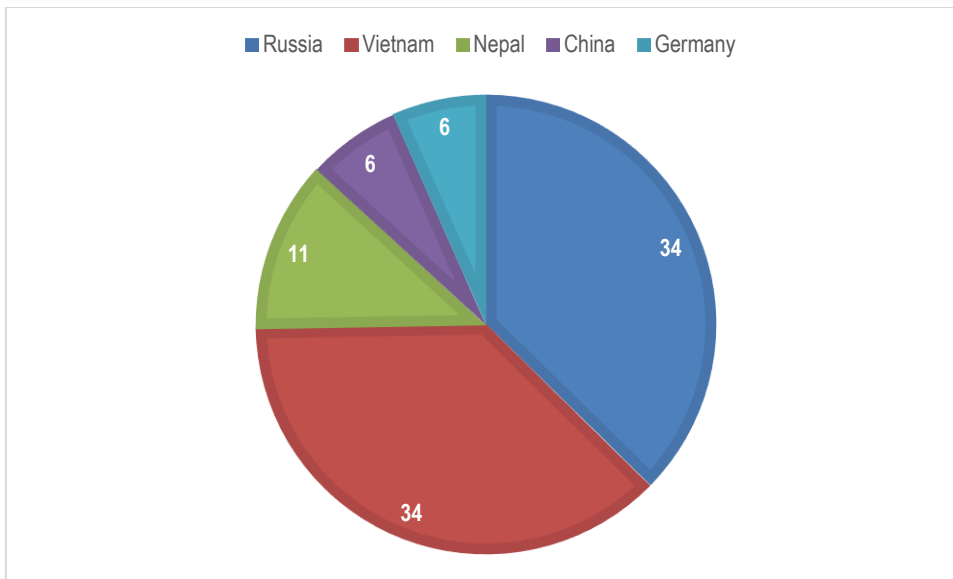


*FIGURE 6. Age of respondents*

The gender division of the respondents was fairly balanced, with 58% of females and 44% males. In addition, 3% of them did not want to disclose their gender.

The last question in the basic information section was about the students' countries of origin. In total, 38 different countries were represented. Figure 7 summarizes the top 6 countries.

FIGURE 7. Top 5 countries of respondents' countries of origin



The highest number of responses came from students from Russia and Vietnam, both with a share of 24,3%, followed by Nepal with 7,9%. This already shows that most of responses come from non-EU/EEA countries, which accounts for 81%. Thus, only 19% of all the respondents came from the EU member countries.

## 5.2 Before starting the studies

The first part in this section is related to the channels, from which the students found information about studying in Finland. The survey included three main channel groups, which are websites, social media and other sources of information. Each group had an extra option open question, where students could share their ideas about other potential channels.

According to the figure 7 it can be seen that the most significant websites, where students get information about studies are websites of their UASs. It is closely followed by Study in Finland website, which is maintained by the FINNIPS network. Most of the students who responded with "Other website" mentioned local websites of their countries of origin.

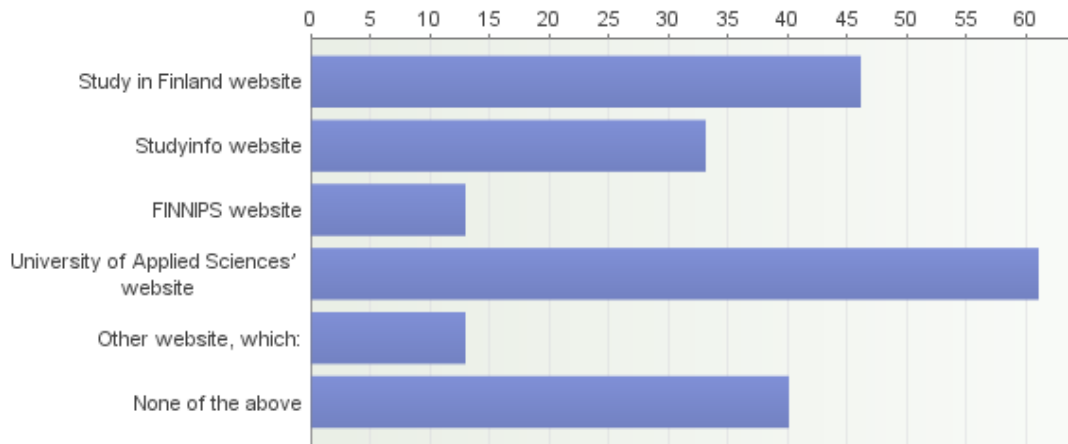


FIGURE 8. Websites as a source of information

The second channel group asked about social media sources. Not surprisingly, the most popular social media channel that the students used is Facebook (figure 8). There were also a lot of “None of above answers”, without further explanation. Although some UASs are using snapchat for their marketing purposes, such as OUAS or XAMK, none of the respondents chose this option.

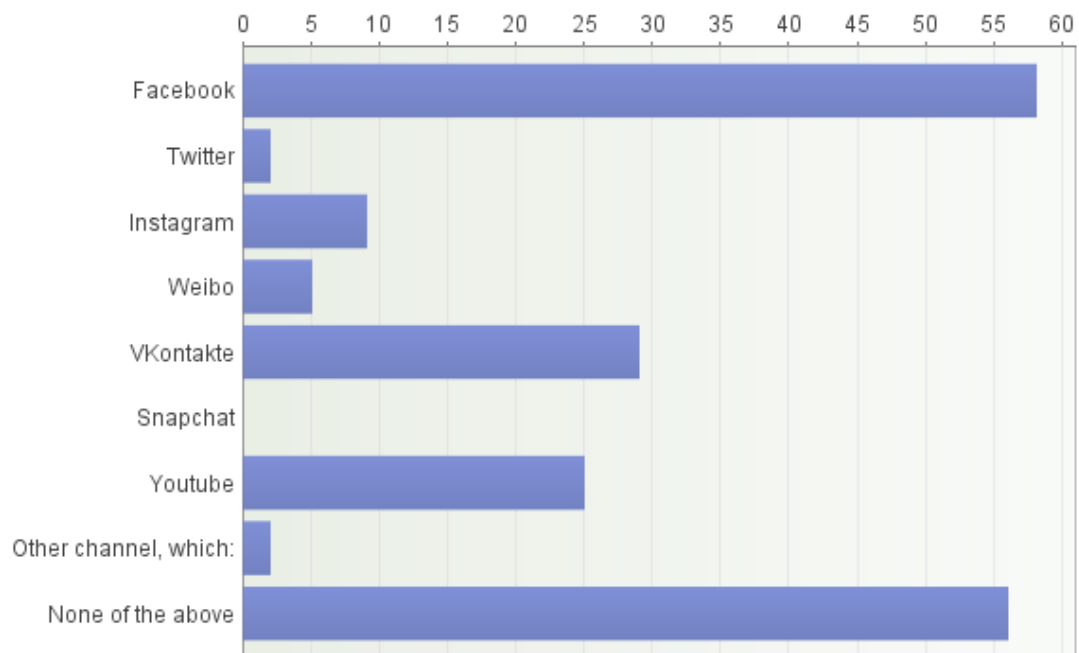


FIGURE 9. Websites as a source of information

In addition to websites and social media, there are many other important channels of information, as it is shown in figure 8. According to it, friends are the most preferred way of getting information about study places. Education agencies also play an important role. Despite the expectation, study



fairs were not that significant according to the survey. Mostly Russian and Vietnamese students mentioned them.

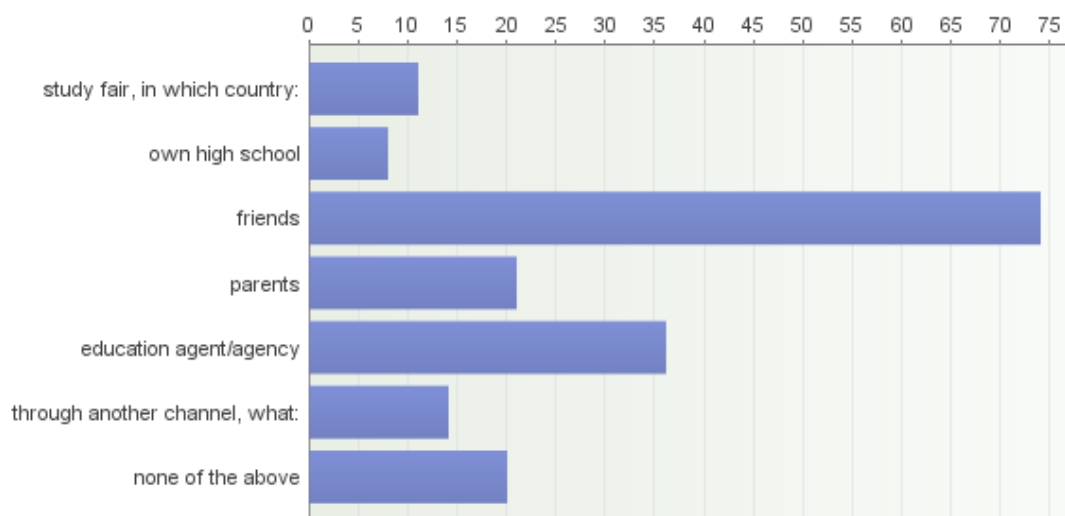


FIGURE 10. Other sources of information

The next question in this section was an open-ended question, regarding the most important channels for receiving information about education. The students were also asked to tell if there was a channel they used, but through which they could not find information. This question was not compulsory, however the response rate was 80%, which is surprisingly high. When it comes to the most important channels, most of the students repeated their previous answers about social media and UASs' websites.

Every individual may have his or her personal reasons to choose a particular place to study. However, there tend to be common factors as well, importance of which is different for different people. The following question was regarding the reasons why students chose to study in Finland. Just as the previous question, this one was not compulsory, with an even higher response rate – 89%. The most common answers for choosing Finland as a place of study were high quality of Finnish education without tuition fees during the admission times, as well as the range of English-taught programmes. Additional factors were freedom in the studies, good technologies, safety and peaceful environment, and family reasons, such as a Finnish spouse.

This is supported by the results from the next questions, where respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of certain factors in their decision to apply to study in Finland. These factors, as well as the respondents' choices are summed up in table 1. According to it, the most important

factors in deciding the place of study are quality of education, degree programme and country. Unexpectedly, the least important choices factors were UAS, city and recommendations from other students already studying in Finland. Overall, all the factors were in average considered important, rather than unimportant. Students had an opportunity to comment on anything they think might be totally, for example, unimportant or very important. Factors such as language, costs of living and career opportunities are considered to be very important.

*TABLE 1. Importance of different factors affecting the choice of study place (1 = not important at all, 2 = unimportant, 3 = somewhat unimportant, 4 = somewhat important, 5 = important, 6 = very important)*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Average</b>
Country	3	1	9	23	45	59	5.02
City	13	15	25	33	31	23	3.88
University of Applied Sciences	10	6	22	44	29	29	4.16
Degree programme	2	2	6	11	45	74	5.26
Cost of living	7	5	10	28	48	42	4.65
Quality of education	2	0	3	10	40	85	5.44
Clean nature/environment	6	2	17	39	44	32	4.49
Safety	2	5	9	32	41	51	4.84
Recommendations from other students already studying in Finland	16	10	23	29	40	22	3.95
Other, what?	4	0	1	1	3	6	4.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>4.58</b>

Many of the respondents were also interested in studying in countries other than Finland. The most popular considerations of the students were Germany, USA, UK, Sweden and Canada. A number of students have answered that besides Finland, the other option for them was only to study in their home countries.

Out of all respondents, 33% took the entrance exam in Finland. The following popular countries are Vietnam and Russia. It is difficult to make assumptions on the results of this question, as the biggest amount of respondents are coming from Vietnam and Russia.

As it can be seen from table 2, students' evaluation regarding the admission process was very positive. Only one student chose "very disappointed" when rating the schedule.

TABLE 2. Evaluation of different factors affecting the admission process (1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = somewhat dissatisfied, 4 = somewhat satisfied, 5 = satisfied, 6 = very satisfied)

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
Schedule	1	2	7	35	58	37	4.84
Online application process	0	2	7	24	61	46	5.01
Guidance	0	3	9	33	57	38	4.84
Entrance examination	0	2	6	25	60	47	5.03
Total	1	9	29	117	236	168	4.93

The most of the students were satisfied with the admission process, many of them were also very satisfied. Entrance examination was something the respondents were especially satisfied. Overall, only 2 students out of 140 were dissatisfied with the whole admission process.

### 5.3 During the studies

The third part of the questionnaire consists of only one question. The main aim is to evaluate how students' expectations have been met in terms of different factors, such as content of the studies and library services.

It can be seen from table 3 that, generally, respondents' expectations were met. Only a few students' expectations were not met at all.

TABLE 3. Evaluation of how student's expectation have been met (1 = did not meet my expectations at all, 2 = did not meet my expectations, 3 = somewhat did not meet my expectations, 4 = somewhat did met my expectations, 5 = met my expectations, 6 = met my expectations completely)

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
Content of studies	5	10	21	46	43	15	4.12
Study environment	2	6	5	23	61	43	4.89
Student and international services	0	5	6	28	57	44	4.92
ICT services	0	2	3	32	51	52	5.06
Library services	0	1	8	22	45	64	5.16
Study guidance and counselling	1	6	7	32	53	41	4.81
Tutoring	6	8	16	37	46	27	4.36
Housing	3	7	15	27	50	38	4.63
Living costs	3	5	17	41	50	24	4.44
Total	20	50	98	288	456	348	4.71

According to the results, students' expectations are met in especially library services, with no lowest rating at all. Tutoring has met least of expectations. This factor goes along with the results of the previous question, where students were mostly dissatisfied with guidance and schedule.

#### 5.4 The whole study experience

The last part of the survey is related to the overall study experience of the students. This part is ideal for students who are about to graduate, as they already went through the whole study process and have formed their opinion about different aspects of studying in Finland. However, the first-

year students have just finished their first year, therefore they already have many ideas and feelings about the experience.

The respondents were especially negative about employment possibilities in Finland and only 6 people have evaluated it as very good (table 4). Surprisingly, internship possibilities were negatively assessed as well. Interesting fact is that big amount of respondents have evaluated their Finnish skills as very bad, bad or somewhat bad. In total they corresponded for 66% of all the respondents. Moreover, only 8 students considered their Finnish skills as very good. From these results, it can be assumed that people without good knowledge of Finnish language are especially considering employment and internship possibilities bad.

TABLE 4. Evaluation of aspect of the studies and the competences gained within the studies (1 = very bad, 2 = bad, 3 = somewhat bad, 4 = somewhat good, 5 = good, 6 = very good)

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
Working life relevance of your studies/degree	5	4	17	40	51	23	4.41
Working life connections of your UAS in general	8	4	20	55	35	18	4.14
Internship possibilities	9	13	28	43	33	14	3.86
Employment possibilities in Finland	17	22	44	33	18	6	3.22
Employment possibilities outside Finland	2	5	18	54	48	13	4.29
Your English skills	0	1	4	17	50	68	5.29
Your Finnish skills	18	29	45	28	12	8	3.08
Total	59	78	176	270	247	150	4.04

The next question was aimed at finding out the aspects of the studies that students are especially happy about. Respondents were asked to think and share what do they consider is the best in the

UAS they are studying in, degree program their studying on and general in studying in Finland. The answered supported the previous results, as well as brought new ideas.

Regarding the UASs, the respondents considered teachers, the structure of the courses, the possibilities to study independently, exchange possibilities and their friends as the best aspects. Many students also mentioned the study environment, which includes good provision of ICT and other facilities. Similar factors were also valued when students evaluated their degree programmes. One more time, the teachers, the study curriculum and good facilities were the most appreciable aspects. Lastly, students considered clean, calm and safe environment, beautiful nature and friendly people as the best aspects of overall studying in Finland.

The following question addresses what students would want to improve in the UASs they are studying in, the degree programme they are studying in and the study environment in general. The results were very contradictory to the previous questions. Respondents think that the most improvement has to be done in teachers and teaching ways. Additionally, as it was already mentioned twice previously, students would want to see more development in guidance and tutoring. Some of the students wish to have more activity events and wider choices of Finnish language courses. Similar aspects have to be improved in degree programs. Students mostly mention teachers, teachers' language skills as well as teaching methods. In overall study environment the respondents would want to see improvements in better connection of students to the working life, activities with local people and better possibilities to learn Finnish language.

Most of the respondents are aiming to get employed after the graduation (figure 9). Surprisingly, 20% of them are planning to continue their studies in their home county or elsewhere outside Finland. Besides the fact that so many respondents have previously evaluated the possibilities of getting employed as very bad, 67% of all the students are still planning to get employed in Finland upon graduation.

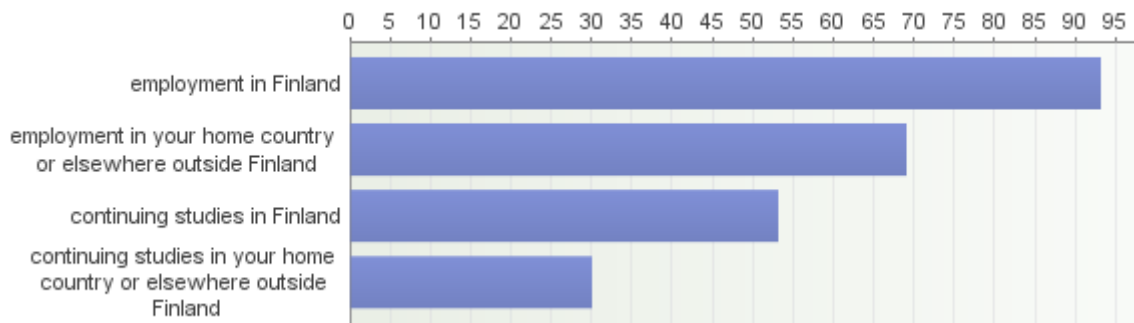


Figure 7. Plans upon graduation

14% of all the respondents would not recommend studying in a Finnish UAS to their friends or other people. According to the responses, the most popular factor affecting the choice is the tuition fees that apply to the new non-EU/EEA students, who start their studies in autumn 2017. Respondents state that because of the paid education, Finland loses its main advantage over other European countries. Additionally, students find it difficult to support themselves financially and are very dissatisfied with the possibilities to get employed in Finland.

However, 86% would recommend studying in a Finnish UAS to their friends or other people, which shows that respondents are generally satisfied with the quality of education and overall study experience in Finland. The main reasons for overall satisfaction is the high quality of education, safe, clean and peaceful environment, the standards of life and many possibilities upon graduation.

## 6 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSITIONS

Customer satisfaction is the impression the customer perceives about the company or service provider. The customer forms an opinion about the organization, and it can result in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Measuring customer satisfaction will help the company to understand their clients better and therefore to avoid gaps in quality perception and improve overall satisfaction. During the research process, there were some of the issues that have to be taken into account, as well as areas for improvement have been detected. The aim of this chapter is to present these issues and provide potential ideas for improving them.

The biggest issue for respondents was the tuition fee, introduced in year 2016. According to them, Finland loses its competitiveness over other EU/EEA countries, as well as attractiveness to the students outside the EU/EEA. For some people, free education possibilities cover many disadvantages such as rough climate, lack of sunlight and difficult language. However, not everyone knows about the wide possibilities of receiving a study grant. One of the idea for UASs in FINNIPS network is to communicate their services better, though, and advertise their international programs stating the possibility of getting study grants more clearly.

Another big concern for students is employment and internship possibilities in Finland. Respondents state that international students face many difficulties in finding a place for professional training or an employment. This is definitely something that can affect the overall satisfaction of the students, as when coming to Finland, they expect the high-level education and assume that such asset will provide them with a number of future opportunities. However, when facing the difficulties, student get disappointed. This is not directly the fault of the service provider. Providing students with the job positions is not the UASs' main service, and many factors depend on the students themselves. In order to avoid potential gaps, universities should organize more events aimed at bringing companies and students together, as well as cooperating with local companies in order to provide students with different projects. Additionally, UASs can help non-Finnish speakers, by offering a wider choice of Finnish language courses, or courses concentrated on speaking rather than only grammar.

A great number of responses were about teachers and teaching ways in Finnish UASs. What was contradictory is that many students considered their teachers as one of the best thing in the UASs



they are studying in, but also many considered it as an area for improvement. According to the respondents, some of the teachers in Finnish UASs do not have a sufficient level of English, as well as a lack of work experience in the area they teach about. In addition, students are concerned about the competence of the teachers in handling their subjects. One explanation of this contradiction can be that the teachers' performance cannot be always standardized. Different teachers have different approaches and ways of teaching. Moreover, students have different expectations about different subjects. Thus, some of the teachers met most of the students' expectations and they were very satisfied, while others did not, thus the students wanted an improvement. An improvement can be done through sufficient amount of trainings and guidelines for the teachers.

As the survey revealed, social networks and school websites are the main source of information about studying in Finland for international students. However, some of the respondents claim that they could not find enough of information from UASs' website. Additionally, students would want universities to create greater amount of videos about studying and be more active on YouTube.

All the development propositions were given by respondents and can be found in the end of the thesis (Appendix 3). All the ideas are subjective and FINNIPS network further decides about their implementation.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The research problem of this thesis was to determine how satisfied the international degree students are with their overall study experience in Finland, starting with the admission process. In addition, the aim was to find out how FINNIPS could develop the study process and support services to guarantee the satisfaction of international students, using their comments and suggestions. The research was conducted using a customer satisfaction survey, based on a sample of 140 international degree students representing 38 countries and 12 Universities of Applied Sciences. Even though 5 UASs are not represented in the sample, the research can be considered rather reliable due to the amount of responses.

According to the results of the research, it can be determined that the international degree students are satisfied with the both the technical and functional quality of the services that were provided to them during the admission process. In this section the schedule, online application process, guidance and entrance examination components were rated by the students. The respondents were especially satisfied with the entrance examination. The mean value of the average grades of the overall admission process was as high as 4.93. For international degree students, the admission process is the most noticeable and exposed function of FINNIPS. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the students are satisfied with all the elements that this function includes. It can be concluded that in the eyes of the students, FINNIPS succeeded to provide a satisfactory service when it comes to the admission process.

According to the results of the third section of the research, it can be determined that the international degree students' expectations about various elements of the study process were met. The respondents rated their expectations about the content of studies, study environment, student and international services, ICT services, library services, study guidance and counselling, tutoring, housing and living costs. The students were most satisfied with the library services and the least satisfied with the content of studies. However, the mean value of the average grades is still high, 4.71. The following factors are not directly influenced by FINNIPS, yet they play a significant part in determining the overall satisfaction of the student study life in Finland.

According to the results of the next section, there are some study areas which could be improved to increase the overall satisfaction. The respondents rated various aspects and competences they

gained during their studies. These were working life relevance of their studies and degree, working life connections of their UAS in general, internship possibilities, employment possibilities in Finland, employment possibilities outside Finland, their English skills and their Finnish skills. The students were most satisfied with the English language skills they had gained during the study experience. In this section, three elements showed dissatisfaction. The majority of respondents were not satisfied with the internship possibilities, employment possibilities in Finland and their Finnish language skills. The lack of Finnish skills is tightly related to the lack of employment possibilities in Finland that the respondents perceive. However, the students turned out to be very satisfied with the working life relevance of their degree as well as the working life connection of their UAS.

The conclusion of this research is that the international students' satisfaction level of the overall study experience and service quality is very high. The results also showed that the majority of the respondents, 86% would definitely recommend studying in Finland for their friends and other people. This proved customer loyalty towards FINNIPS and Finland as a study place, and further proves the success of FINNIPS as satisfactory service provider.

## 8 DISCUSSION

The main objective of the thesis was to find out how satisfied international degree students are with their overall study experience in Finland, starting from the entrance exam process and during their actual studies. The topic immediately caught our attention as we are both international degree students and we were eager to find out more about our fellow students' experiences. Another important reason for choosing to conduct this research was our concern for the future of Finnish international education after the introduction of the tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students. Based on the results as well as the students' comments and suggestions, we wanted to give development ideas to FINNIPS on recruiting international students to Finland and retaining them by keeping their satisfaction level high.

The main research method was the customer satisfaction survey. The survey was constructed with questions aimed at finding out more about the degree students' satisfaction level and their motivation behind choosing Finland as a study place. Students who have started their studies in 2013 and later were selected for the research as a sample. The population was all international degree students studying in 17 Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. It was important to reach students who have not graduated yet, because they are still in the middle of their study process, thus they are also able to recall their experiences more clearly than those who have left the institutions long time ago.

The thesis was successful as a research as it answered the research questions and we managed to get a clear picture about the overall satisfaction level and motivation of international students. In addition to the quantitative data, we managed to get a better insight based on the comments and suggestions of the students provided in the open-ended questions.

The research process went smoothly. The only issue was the research schedule which was delayed. It was already tight to begin with, and it had to be reorganized, while we were waiting for research permits to arrive from various UASs, as we could not send the survey link before that. The survey was published with one week delay. In a hindsight, the answering period could have been longer, that way our sample might have been larger. However, thanks to our personal contacts we managed to get more respondents, and our final sample consisted of 140 students representing 38 different countries.

Cooperation and feedback from others during the process was very important in the execution of the research. The commissioner was very helpful throughout all phases, and they provided us with ideas during the construction of the survey as well as with assistance during the research permit process. We got useful feedback from our teacher and opponents as well. Writing the thesis as a team also improved our own cooperation and project management skills, and it was also easy to keep each other motivated.

The learning experience of the research was rewarding. The topics of customer satisfaction and service quality were already familiar to us from previous courses, however it has never been discussed so thoroughly. Getting an in-depth knowledge about customer satisfaction and service quality is crucial in business as they are the core and heart of every company, whether they are offering tangible products or intangible services. The knowledge we gained through the research is going to be very beneficial in the future working life.

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**Foreign degree students' experiences about studies in Finland and Finland as a place of study**

We are Olga Konstantinova and Patricia Virsinger from Oulu University of Applied Sciences, and we are conducting a research for the FINNIPS network. Please share your experiences about studying in Finland and Finland as a place of study, and win two movie tickets! Answering the survey takes about 20 minutes. The results will be used for our thesis only and your information is strictly anonymous and confidential!

If you want to participate in the movie ticket lottery, you can give us your contact information at the end of the survey. Your contact information will only be used for conducting the lottery.

Thank you for your participation!

## BASIC INFORMATION

### 1. University of Applied Sciences: \*

- Arcada University of Applied Sciences
- Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK)
- JAMK University of Applied Sciences
- Kajaani University of Applied Sciences
- Karelia University of Applied Sciences
- Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LAMK)
- Lapland University of Applied Sciences
- Laurea University of Applied Sciences
- Metropolia University of Applied Sciences
- Novia University of Applied Sciences
- Oulu University of Applied Sciences (OAMK)
- Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
- Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (SeAMK)
- South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK)
- Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK)
- Turku University of Applied Sciences
- Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (VAMK)

### 2. Degree programme (names of the degree programmes may change over the years so if you do not find your programme from the list, please write the name in section “Other”): \*

- Business Information Technology
- Business Management
- Construction Engineering
- Electrical and Automation Engineering
- Environmental Engineering
- Game Design
- Information and Communications Technology
- Information Technology
- International Business
- International Logistics
- Maritime Management, Captain
- Materials Processing Technology
- Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology
- Nursing
- Restaurant Entrepreneurship

- Security Management
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Sustainable Coastal Management
- Tourism and Hospitality Management
- Other, name of the programme

**3. Starting year:**

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

**4. Age:**

- 18 and younger
- 19-24
- 25-30
- 31 and older

**5. Gender:**

- female
- male
- other
- not specified

**6. Country of origin:**

**BEFORE STARTING YOUR STUDIES****Where did you find information about studying in Finland?****7. Website:**

- Study in Finland website
- Studyinfo website
- FINNIPS website
- University of Applied Sciences' website
- Other website, which:
- None of the above

**8. Social media:**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Weibo
- VKontakte
- Youtube
- Other channel, which:
- None of the above

**9. Other, what:**

- study fair, in which country:
- own high school
- friends
- parents
- education agent/agency
- through another channel, what:
- none of the above

**10. What do you think is the most important channel for receiving information about education and/or is there a channel you use but through which you could not find information?****11. Why did you choose to apply to study in Finland?**

**12. Which other countries were you interested in/considered as a study destination? You can mention several countries.**

**13. How important were the following factors in your decision to apply to study in Finland?**

Please evaluate on a scale from 1 to 6: 1 = not important at all, 2 = unimportant, 3 = somewhat unimportant. 4 = somewhat important, 5 = important, 6 = very important.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Country						
City						
University of Applied Sciences						
Degree programme						
Cost of living						
Quality of education						
Clean nature/environment						
Safety						
Recommendations from other students already studying in Finland						
Other, what?						

**14. Additional comments regarding question 13:****15. How would you evaluate the admissions process in terms of:**

Please evaluate on a scale from 1 to 6: 1 = not satisfied at all, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = somewhat dissatisfied, 4 = somewhat satisfied, 5 = satisfied, 6 = very satisfied.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Schedule						
Online application process						
Guidance						
Entrance examination						

**16. How was your overall experience regarding the Admissions process?**

- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied

**17. Where did you take the entrance exam:**

**DURING YOUR STUDIES****18. How have your expectations been met in terms of:**

Please evaluate on a scale from 1 to 6: 1 = did not meet my expectations at all, 2 = did not meet my expectations, 3 = somewhat did not meet my expectations, 4 = somewhat met my expectations, 5 = met my expectations, 6 = met my expectations completely.

	1 = did not meet my expectations at all	2 = did not meet my expectations	3 = somewhat did not meet my expectations	4 = somewhat met my expectations	5 = met my expectations	6 = met my expectations completely
Content of studies						
Study environment						
Student and international services						
ICT services						
Library services						
Study guidance and counselling						
Housing						
Living costs						

**GENERAL QUESTIONS REGARDING THE EXPERIENCE****19. How do you evaluate the following aspect of your studies and the competences gained within the studies:**

Please evaluate on a scale from 1 to 6: 1 = not good at all, 2 = bad, 3 = somewhat bad, 4 = somewhat good, 5 = good, 6 = very good.

	1 = very bad	2 = bad	3 = somewhat bad	4 = somewhat good	5 = good	6 = very good
Working life relevance of your studies/degree						
Working life connections of the UAS in general						
Internship possibilities						
Employment possibilities in Finland						
Employment possibilities outside Finland						
Your English skills						
Your Finnish skills						



**20. What do you consider is the best in:**

- your UAS:
- your degree programme:
- studying in Finland in general:

**21. What kind of things would you like to be improved in:**

- your UAS:
- your degree programme:
- your study environment in general:

**22. Your plans upon graduation:**

- employment in Finland
- employment in your home country or elsewhere outside Finland
- continuing studies in Finland
- continuing studies in your home country or elsewhere outside Finland

**23. Based on your experiences, would you recommend studying in a Finnish UAS to your friends/other people?**

- Yes, please describe why/ what would you highlight:
- No, please describe why:

**24. Additional comments regarding the survey:**

## Sources of Information, comments

### Websites:

- Hochschule Neu-Ulm
- forums
- <http://www.bachelorsportal.eu/>
- Vietnamese website
- vsaf (vietnamese students association in finland)
- Own university
- Facebook
- <https://www.studyportals.com/>
- Facebook ads
- <http://www.finland.org.np/public/default.aspx?nodeid=35075&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>
- studying abroad, google
- <https://www.studyportals.com/>

### Social media:

- Baidu
- LINE

### Study fair, in which country:

- Russia
- Russia
- Vietnam
- Russia
- Vietnam
- Russia
- Vietnam
- Russia
- Vietnam
- Russia
- Nepal
- Russia

- Russia

Other channel:

- Embassy of Finland
- Home University
- Teeviit
- High school exchange in Finland
- My home univercity
- family
- Advertisements
- I googled it
- google
- Newspaper
- been living in Finland for years, so I guess word of mouth?
- Uncle
- family
- Nordic school

**THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANNEL FOR RECEIVING INFORMATION**

- Other students experiences matters to me
- Student agencies' websites, Facebook groups
- Facebook,websites.
- Social media, word of mouth
- in my opinion, I think that the most important information should be found on the school's website. other websites that are official channels of Finnish education like FINNIPS or studyinfo.fi should also have enough information too. I can find the information I needed through these websites.
- through people
- the social media, because there are many people getting information from the social media nowadays.
- Most important channel: education agent/agency
- Internet, we can use facebook page which is more easy and later on we can ask questions from e-mail to the university we applied for.
- Social media and universities´ websites
- For me it was when I was in Finland in erasmus. I decide to return again to do another degree. To search information I mainly use the studyinfinland.fi to search for degrees and universities.
- Mass Media in home country
- The most important channel: online news, friends.
- N/A
- Reddit perhaps :) . Websites like studyinfinland, finnips and schools' own websites provide pretty good information.
- I think through the home university and schools
- studyinfo
- University websites, Study in ... websites, University rankings etc.
- The University of Applied Sciences' websites
- study fairs for high school students
- Studyinfo is the most important website.
- Facebook, university website
- websites

- The most important channel for receiving information is the websites. It's the clearest and easiest way to find anything. Facebook is the channel i use the most time but the provided information is not as flexible and accessible as the websites.
- I think the greatest channel are study fairs, since you can actually have a face-to-face real time conversation with University representatives.
- Most important channel: study info websites.
- International office at home university, Website of Finnish University
- Study in Finland website gives quite precise information about necessary steps and introduction about Finnish education.
- Website
- Home university and web site
- Internet and study fairs.
- FINNIPS Website, and University Website.
- Education agent is the most important to get to know the programme and university, then the university website
- Personally, I knew about Finland through a Study abroad agency since 2010 and I have not met the requirements to study in Finland back in the day. However, until last year when I had my chance to go and study in Finland. I used both channels which were the agency and the websites (mostly studyinfinland and finnips) to receive information.
- The most important is VK and Facebook. I am use Youtube, but there is no information about education
- Social media is the most important channel, because we spend most of time on that. Every channel I use can get information.
- all social networks like facebook, instagram, vk, besides, speacial sites like study in Finland are good sources of information.
- Study in Finland website is a great tool for a start, then the UAS's own website.
- Facebook, that's how I found about my university.
- In my opinion, social media and study fairs are the best channels.
- The most suitable channel for such information should be social media. If speaking about the information regarding studying abroad.
- Participation in education fair in different countries

- I believe the quickest sources are online search engines especially designed for university and college degrees. I usually suggest [www.studyportals.com](http://www.studyportals.com) to anyone who is searching for a degree.
- In Asia, people use Facebook mostly, so Facebook is the key to get in touch with Asian students
- Visit schools in other countries
- Social media Facebook and YouTube. And special agencies
- The internet has most of the required info but sometimes the structure is not so clear
- Facebook
- Students came into our classrooms and told us about their exchange experience we then had meetings for those who were interested.
- internet is the most important. it'll be good if there are education fair about Finland in my country as well
- Social media like Facebook and Twitter
- The most important is Google, because it helped me narrow my search and find the Study in Finland website
- Websites were the most useful
- In my opinion , it should be promoted more in schools and via the Internet web-site
- Internet and websites, especially own website of university
- Own high school
- Social media
- Education Agent is the most important channel in Vietnam for having trusted info about education program.
- I think, in general, social media is the most powerful and popular way reach student though it depends which country you are targeting. People shows different behaviour depending their location. for my country, I would say, newspaper, education agent and study fair are the most effective way to reach out to the students
- Friends, websites, Facebook group and study fairs are the most important channels
- Social media
- The University of Applied Sciences's own website is the most important and clear

- No, as I have applied myself and carried out all process myself I was most of the time active to check studyinfinland.fi website and its Facebook page and equally active to check updates in website of my preferred website and even email them for authentic answers. In my opinion, specific websites of UAS are important channel of receiving authentic information and www.studyinfinland.fi and finnips.fi has made it quite easy to locate all websites of UAS at one place.
- I assume it could be different social media platforms and word of mouth because I personally learned about an opportunity to study in Finland via my acquaintances. As for another source of information, I would propose connecting to educational institutions directly that are located in the countries that are the target ones for promotion of education in Finland.
- INternet
- Relatives, Friends, Education agency
- doesn't really apply to me, I mean I knew already how does it work here?
- internet
- Email
- School's website, feels like a reliable source of information.
- Google searches and own Tamk website
- Instagram
- The most important channel for receiving information provided it is honest is via the people that attended the school.
- for me it was personal contact with finns who told me, that there are English degree programs in tampere.
- I think Facebook is a very good channel since many people around the world can have easy access to it and actually use it.
- Official website
- Official government sites or sites specialized in providing clear updated info.
- I think the most important channels are through high schools or social media for incoming students.
- Study fair, social media and friends
- Facebook
- with google.com --> studying.fi
- University of Applied Sciences' website

- I think the most important channel is friends because we're the same age so we have similar concerns and burdens while finding a university to apply for. Personally my own high school didn't help me at all because since I've planned to study abroad, my main focus was not a university in my home country, which is what my high school guided most of its students to. So I would say that is a not-so effective channel
- Nowadays I would say Facebook since it's really used all over the world when I was finding universities I got ads from US but nothing from Finland if Finland advertised about it making there no tuition fee policy visible I think a lot of people would be interested.
- education fair, television advertisement, facebook, embassy website, conferences in high school
- High school, educational fairs
- The most important one is Facebook as I use it most of the time.
- Social Media channels like Facebook, Instagram. Using geo-targeting and showing ads in the target countries could definitely be the best chance of reaching the students all over.
- it would be useful if there were more youtube videos
- Internet, friends, people around us
- Instagram, Ads on Youtube
- website and also videos that are uploaded in various social media
- Social nets, schools
- websites
- University web-pages, Social media accounts.
- Social media.
- Well, I guess it is Internet, because there you can find a lot of possibilities about choosing universities.
- The most important and reliable ones, imo, would be official websites.
- email to university or contact friends studying same uni.
- Google
- Personal References, Official Websites
- In my opinion official university's webpage is the best source of finding an information as it is always up to date. Student office always responds quickly if any questions arise. However, it would be nice to have an all the time updating database containing information about all universities.



- Social media
- Websites
- Internet and social media
- University of Applied Sciences' website
- University website
- I think that most important is social media, but targeting ads can be very helpful here. Also, word of mouth is still most powerful, as people believe their friends more, just like I did.
- I looked for information on Studyinfo.fi and University of Applied Sciences' website but honestly, I did not get enough that I wanted. For example, I had not graduated from high school at the time I applied for the entrance exam so I had to prepare different documents from the others. The websites were not so clear about the documents, what kind and how many the candidate needed to provide. I also thought that the UAS should present more about themselves and their fields on the websites so that the students could choose the right ones (introduction videos, facilities, surroundings, student life,...). I followed my UAS' Instagram, it gave me some first impressions but unfortunately, the captions were written in Finnish so I hardly understood. They were not so long so a translation into English below would be nice. To me, the most important channel is the social network, where school and student become closer.
- Social networks are the most important.
- The most information-receiving channel would be facebook and youtube.
- Now-a-days, world is getting smaller because of internet. I have found all the information through websites and facebook. If there is any confusion arises then the most convenient way to be sure is to email the university admission office. I did and cleared my confusion and got a good picture of the admission system and about the university.

**REASONS TO APPLY TO STUDY IN FINLAND**

- Finland is famous for its education system and friendly culture here
- Because Finland offers free education and Finland has one of the best educations in the world
- I live here, it's free.
- 100% free tuition fee, Best education, Friendly people
- Finland has the best education and it's free
- because of the reputation for being one of the top education system in the world and it was also free, even for international students. I could not afford studying in other countries so I chose Finland, which has low expenses and also good schools.
- because i heard it is the first to-go-to in terms of the education system.
- it's cheaper comparing with the other counties and also Finland is famous for its education.
- Students are well-qualified after graduated.
- First reason will be good and world's top education and second reason is free education.
- Peaceful and safe life, high level of education
- I knew the country already and also because of family reasons I had to come here.
- different method of study/learning/teaching
- Free education with high quality
- Because I live here with my wife and kids.
- It was free (not anymore), good reputation and I liked cold weather ;)
- Double Degree
- personal (family) reasons
- Quality of education, availability, study programmes.
- Because Finland is a nice country and there is no tuition fee
- There was free aducation and nice promotion of university in the internet
- Because it was free. great opportunity for my skills.
- The education was for free, it allowed to obtain an international diploma in the end
- That was the only place with the degree I wanted in English that was affordable for me.
- Study is free; Finland is peaceful; they have the IB faculty and I satisfy all their requirement.
- Because I needed Environmental Engineering program
- Free education. Good level of rducation
- No semester fee

- 1st, it's free for everyone who can pass the entrance exam. 2nd, the studying program is in English and there's no requirement of using local language (Finnish) in studying program. 3rd, this is the biggest factor. I love this country for the 1st time i know it.
- Three main reasons: Interesting program, Positive feedback about study program, Free education
- It's free
- Always wanted to go to Scandinavia
- Interested in Finnish culture and language
- The country is nice and has supports towards students. Fee was free when I started. The quality of education is high, high living standard.
- More flexibility with my studies. The degree is in English. Lots of students from abroad. Small class rooms. Finland has a great education system and also engages in international activities
- It was closer for me than any other country and much easier to apply.
- because of the double degree programm
- Family purpose
- To imbibe the cornerstone of Finnish strategy for the future which is knowledge and expertise grounded in education and research. Learning in Finnish context will help me pass through so many transcultural barriers since it is an international choice of study. Oulu, is a modern growth centre, it creates an inspiring and stimulating environment for business studies, work and leisure. The University is an international scientific community known for high quality research and education that provides experts for demanding tasks on both national and international level. The University promotes well-being and education in Northern Finland and is a significant player in the Finnish and European research based system of innovation and education. The University of Oulu's multifaceted skills and the influence it exerts on the local business world is best seen through the Faculty of Technology. High level international research is carried out particularly in the fields of applied electronics and information and communication technology.
- I moved here 2 years ago
- As I mentioned in question 10, I had known Finland roughly for 7 years but I have not had any chances to apply for studying until last year. I chose Finland because:
- It has good education systems and reputation.
- It has transparency information.
- It provides English teaching degree which I can study.

- Low rates criminals.
- It was affordable for me and my family unless we have to pay tuition fees.
- Finally, Finland is a member of the EU, I can travel within EU countries without visa. However, I must obey the laws if there are any regulations. I came to Finland to fulfill my dream which are study abroad, looking for a career and if I am good enough, maybe it can be my second home.
- Because in our home university was double degree program in Finland, it was good chance to have new experience.
- Finland as a nordic country, is famous for friendly person, pure nature environment, safety.
- Safe environment, good education, more opportunities (exchange program, summer courses), campus with excellent facilities and entertainment events for the students, friendly atmosphere for studies
- No tuition fees plus the different education style.
- I was already living in Finland, so it was the obvious choice for me.
- Social Sciences are comparably weak back in Russia even in universities in Moscow. Also, Finland is not that far and provided free education until recently.
- It was free and quality of the education is excellent
- The Finnish education was ranked high globally (source: wikipedia.com) and I believe other Scandinavian countries' universities. The language this degree was taught was English. And finally, but this is also very important; no tuition fee was required.
- I would like to find a new, higher, and better educational environment
- Free education
- Logistics. And it was for free.
- European diploma
- High quality education
- Free
- Relatively close
- Free and good quality education
- Free education, wanted to travel, be around international students, life experience.
- free tuition fees and plan to work in the future
- Because Finland has a high standard educational system with good well being and equal human rights.

- Because of high quality education and my passion for Finnish culture and language
- I had been an exchange student before and wanted to come back to Finland
- high quality of education
- I know that education in Finland is on the high level and it was free for me. I heard that it is very good to study here. Also it is not far away from Russia.
- private reasons
- English programme, free education, studies abroad, programme choice.
- Due to level of education there
- Because Finland has a well-known education system and it was still free at the time I applied for studying at KAMK.
- Safe, high-quality education
- Undeniable number one fact about all student for choosing Finland is, its free. This reason can vary person to person. For me, I can mention one fact beside free education such as Finnish high quality education system is well recognised throughout the world.
- It was free, great education system and social welfare
- Because it was free
- Because Finland's education system and opportunities provides for students is considered to be one of the best education in the world
- One of the main reason was my passion for Information and Communication Technology. I had missed an opportunity for it since my high school major was not science and was about to complete my Bachelor's in Nepal in another degree. But as I gathered information I knew about the quality of education, free opportunity and most importantly open door to apply for IT despite of my high school major I choose Finland as study place.
- Because none of Russian degrees satisfied me and Finland was close and had a degree I wanted to be educated in.
- I was attracted by an approach to studies that completely differed from the one the universities of my home country adhere to. I liked that the process was focused on the application of the skills that students gain to a future working life.
- Developed country
- Because of free education and to have international experince.
- Relative's reference, New experience, Santa, Coldness, EU country
- Been living in Finland before starting studying

- Because of chargeless education and quality of education
- Great education in the world
- Personal ties in the country.
- I was already living in Finland
- My girlfriend lives here.
- I love the country itself.
- I discovered finland as a Au pair and liked it so much I want to stay longer
- Because of free education and high-quality standard of living.
- Education was free of charge
- Because I have a girlfriend here.
- I wanted to move to Finland to be with my fiance.
- Good esucation system, peaceful country
- I studied in Finland already before as an exchange student.
- Because of my wife.
- I always find Finland peaceful, I like how Finnish people are all polite and considerate towards everyone. Plus, they really respect personal space, which I love. The education system in Finland is known for being the best in the world also, so that's one huge pros that urged me to go to Finland.
- The quality of education has been known to be the best. I am making the best out of it and would love to use this knowledge in my professional career.
- i choose Finland because I heard education system in Finland is good and social system as well.The education was free of cost providing the opportunity for freedom and increase in critical thinking rather thinking about tuition fees and return on investment of parent money after graduation. Finland is peaceful and calm and i see more opportunities and better life.
- High ranking of Finnish education in the world, accessibility of education, possibility to study in English
- Because of the educational system.
- free education
- my boyfriend is finnish
- I was already living in Finland.
- Better opportunities
- My friends are also studying and Finland education system is the best one

- Because I wanted to further my education in Business
- Good quality of education, exchange opportunities
- free education, near to Russia, studying in English language
- Good quality of the education and no tuition fees
- Because of this wonderful country with its safety and nature.
- I wanted to move here and firstly I moved to Finland
- The quality and the reputation
- free education system, quality education , living in finland is safer
- European environment, different climate, not popular in the previous years
- College expense too high in home country, and to be closer to a family member.
- List of reasons: High level of education, Close to my home country and city (300 km between St.Petersburg and Lappeenranta), 3.Free education till 2017, 4.High living standards, 5.EU degree
- High-quality education, European diploma, in English, free of charge
- Finland has the best education in the world and it has good living environment for students.
- Finnish girlfriend
- The best education system
- Education level at top list in the world
- There was no tuition fee and I figured that if I complete my higher education abroad I can say on a job interview that I am familiar with international environment and it (studying abroad) may be an indicator of my willingness to work for some goal.
- Free education + had contacts here
- It was free of charge when I applied, this is the main concern since otherwise the tuition is too high without doing a full time job to support.
- Finnish education system is the most interesting for me as there are no that much obligatory things and most of them appear, when bureaucracy questions appear, so it is ok. Freedom is the biggest plus alongside with highest level of knowledge shared during education process.
- Finland's education is ranked in world top 10, no tuition fee, suitable environment (to me), residence permit allows to travel to most European countries.
- No fee for foreign students, high level of education, European country.
- Because of tuition-free education, intercultural environment

- I have chosen Finland due to not have any sort of tuition fees. Although, they are starting to take tuition fees from this year. Another point to chose Finland is that they are developed country and their technology is also world renowned.



**WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES BESIDES FINLAND WERE YOU INTERESTED IN/CONSIDERED AS A STUDY DESTINATION? YOU CAN MENTION SEVERAL COUNTRIES.**

- Germany, Sweden
- America, UK
- Holand, New Zealand, America
- Australia and Canada
- the U.S and Canada
- USA, Australia, China, Canada
- U.S
- Singapore
- Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany
- none
- 0
- Germany, USA
- Canada, USA, Netherlands, Germany
- N/A
- I would have studied in my own country, had it not been Finland.
- USA
- Canada
- Portugal
- Peru
- Norway, France
- Kazakhstan, Russia, Lithuania, Germany, United States
- Japan, Netherlands
- Germany, Great Britain, USA
- Norway.
- Czech Republic, Austria
- Netherland, Australia and Singapore.
- Germany, France, Spain, Canada, Australia, the USA, etc.
- UK, Canada, Germany
- China

- Russia
- France, Germany
- Estonia
- Italy
- New Zealand
- Germany
- US
- Singapore
- Australia
- Just my home country
- Norway, Sweden, Denmark.
- Denmark, France
- Norway, Iceland, Sweden, USA, Germany, France, Switzerland, UK, etc
- None
- Germany
- The Netherland
- France
- New Zealand
- Japan
- USA
- Germany, USA
- Sweden
- none
- Germany
- None
- United Kingdom
- Did not consider other options.
- Canada, Australia, Germany
- I was interested in studying in Spain, I admire the culture and football is my favourite hobby.
- I was also considering Lithuania (there is an old Sports university there)
- United Kingdoms (but the tuition fee would have been quite high)

- Czech Republic
- The UK, The US, Australia, France, Germany, Singapore
- All well-developed European countries
- Canada
- Check republic
- Canada
- Germany
- USA, UK, Singapore, Australia
- Australia, elsewhere in Canada and Scotland
- Germany
- Norway, Sweden
- Norway, Sweden and Denmark
- Only Canada
- UK, US
- Germany , Belgium
- home country
- Sweden, Norway
- Russia, Great Britain, Sweden
- Sweden and Australia.
- Poland, Singapore
- UK, Canada, Germany, Australia, S. Korea
- The Netherlands, Belgium
- Germany
- Norway and Germany.
- Germany, USA. If i knew that education here nowadays is so useless, I would go to Germany in the first place.
- Russia, Germany
- Norway/Sweedden/Denmark/Germany New Zealand / Australia
- America, canada, australia
- Japan
- Germany

- none, I lived here beforehand
- Australia
- England & America
- No other country.
- None
- Canada
- Ireland, Iceland, Scotland, and U.K
- if finland would not work, I would have continued studying in my homecountry germany
- Netherlands: top universities in top world 100 with considerable tuition fee and scholarship.
- Germany: free education but you have to study in German.
- France: free education, you have to study French or low tuition fee.
- Singapore: top 50 universities in the world, considerable tuition fee, great job oppprtunities.
- Japan: 2nd biggest economic country in the world, considerable tuition fee but you have to study in Japanese or else you can study in English but in international universities, with not so good speaking teachers.
- Korea: almost the same with Japan.
- China: great job opportunities, but because of the political situation it is quite risky to live and study there.
- Russia
- Japan and South Korea.
- USA because I am from there.
- Australia
- Germany, Sweden and Norway.
- America, Holland, Singapore
- Before doing researches on Finland, the US has always fascinated with its multicultural environment and its hectic lifestyle.
- United States
- Canada
- Germany
- Estonia
- united states

- germany
- australia
- England, New Zealand.
- Only Finland.
- Sweden, Italy
- Australia
- Austria
- Germany
- The USA, Malaysia, Singapore.
- Sweden
- Lithuania, Singapore, Spain and Denmark.
- germany, norway,usa
- Sweden, Netherlands, USA
- USA,Austria, Germany
- Russia
- Germany, Checzh republic, Greece
- USA, Canada, Japan
- Israel
- Denmark, Scotland, Austria, Germany
- New Zealand, Australia, Germany
- Sweden, Germany, Netherlands
- Germany, Singapore, United States
- I am interested in the engineering field, so Germany is also a great destination. However, I had not applied to any universities there because I did not have any German language certificate.
- Ukraine, Poland.
- Germany
- Actually, I was interested to study in the English speaking countries like USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand but due to their heavy tuition fees and living cost I could not apply there. I was also interested to study in Germany because of their world class technology and cheap in cost education. However, I could not make it their too because of visa issue.

**FACTORS AFFECTING DECISION TO APPLY TO STUDY IN FINLAND?**

- The future career path after receiving the education at AMK
- studying abroad for many chinese students is more like an investment, we want to study in the wide-known universities, and think about the costs at the same time.
- family ties in Finland.
- the Winter and Living Style
- Location was everything, the nearest IB programme had to do.
- living costs
- The country' official language
- The country was important in the sense of money that I will have to spend on travelling.
- I love the intimate study atmosphere of Finland.
- Finland is also a country ranked high in human rights and gender equality. The government is among the least corrupted governments in the world. I respect countries with such qualities even if the weather is far from perfect and ideal. The information presented briefly summarizes my ideas for choosing to come here. They may be brief, but the point in the right direction.
- I didn't do any research prior coming here, only asked my friends what they thought of it and went based on that.
- Political relationship , Relationship due to nationality.
- International environment, possibilities for students.
- I also thought, I would be great to have a carrier here after I finish my study.
- I just wanted to travel abroad and study for free.
- Leisure Activities
- For degree students, students that will be in Finland for four years it is VERY IMPORTANT for them to actually have required GOOD Finnish language courses that allow for a student to obtain a B1 rating. Please note that I am not speaking about "grammar", grammar doesn't teach you to speak. What is needed is beginning conversational courses along with the grammar to develop language skills.  
The reason for this is many majors require internships, and it comes a matter of safety. Example, sound engineer working on site. It is a danger when most of the crew is speaking

Finnish/signs are in Finnish it is a safety hazard if the person can't understand what is written or spoken to them!

In fact, it becomes a danger in everyday life if you can't handle the language. Example, if an emergency happens. And, please note that NOT EVERY emergency person, doctor, nurse, etc. speaks English!!!

A student living here and not being able to handle the language is a accident wanting to happen!

- I really only chose it because of my girlfriend here.
- In all honesty I wouldn't mind studying in a very hot place or likewise in a very cold place too. As long as the quality of education is really good and I have a few good friends or people who I can enjoy with. That should be okay.
- tuition fees consideration was very important as in internet Finland has high unemployment rate
- There is also important to know about culture of the country where you are moving.
- Possibilities to have placemet and get experince
- choosing UAS aside tuition fee is very important
- Requirements of applying and renewing permit as a student
- Ability to pursue a career during and after study.
- Ability to work and support study.

**WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER IS THE BEST IN YOUR UAS?**

- VAMK, very student-focus
- Marketing teachers
- Facilities, some lecturers
- study environment
- Friendly staffs and helpful teachers
- facility (computers, internet connections, etc.)
- ICT provision
- Most of the teachers are conscientious
- study material and ICT resources
- environment
- staff
- student service
- Facility
- Oulu
- Those teachers that are competent and motivated.
- Course structure and support from teachers
- Variety and international office
- very well equipped
- Student facilities, international services, tutoring
- Nice teachers and friends
- Facilities for students
- Environment inside of University (computers, wi-fi, etc..).
- I met some good friends.
- Comfortable environment for studies inside and outside university (like wi-fi, sofas, computers, places for self-studying)
- Working atmosphere
- Possibilities
- Possibilities for exchange
- Facilities conditions
- ICT systems, teachers



- Very comfortable study and work environment
- Marketing, health care and library services
- Flexible teachers
- Facility
- technological advance (computers, wifi, smart devices)
- study curriculums are essential and well planned
- Flexibility of my studies, guidance and support of teachers when it comes to problems and international environment as well as activities
- Some teachers.
- flexibility
- Teachers
- Study process
- The University of Oulu's multifaceted skills and the influence it exerts on the local business world is best seen through the Faculty of Technology. High level international research is carried out particularly in the fields of applied electronics and information and communication technology.
- Some teachers and their teaching methods
- Study facilities
- atmosphere
- I can choose everything that I want to learn.
- campus, ravintola, study program, curriculum, teachers
- Campus environment
- The environment that is created for the students.
- A lot of practice
- Study programme
- Staff and the guidance in my studies
- Cozy little campus, friendly teachers and students
- Friendly learning environment
- Small campus, building within walking distance.
- Printer
- logistics in terms of engineering

- Best environment, best service, best education
- Atmosphere, obsessed teachers
- The degree program is good, however, the content of studies are not conveyed enough. I can feel still that I still not learn enough
- High Teacher Interaction
- low cost of living. Tutor
- friendly studying service and quick action
- The help and guidance for foreign students who have never studied at a university before
- The atmosphere and grounds
- friendly studying environment, high quality teachers
- Is located in a good city
- Small
- Programmes and subject choice
- Teachers
- Counselling services
- Teacher
- International Office
- Curriculum
- The university has all tools and instruments to study my programme very well. Teachers are also very competent and teach well, although many of them have lack of English; but it is still ok and I understand the material.
- The good lecturers
- Study environment is very good.
- The classrooms are technology comfortable. You can use a computer to work there, print documents. Projectors are a super useful feature to students the presentations.
- International friendly atmosphere and a wide range of exchange destinations. Diversification of the courses that can be chosen.
- Practical learning
- practical trainings at school is great

- Some teachers
- no social distance
- Study environment
- International environment
- The study environment
- The atmosphere
- Everything I need is at school, good price for food, gym, a place to study.
- the TAMKO are for relaxing and having a chat and free coffee
- Laboratory work.
- Tutoring, food, study facilities (classrooms, library etc)
- Some of the people in charge of guidance are good and helpful.
- It is nice that there is affordable lunch and the library has most of the books needed for classes.
- Helppo and considerate faculty members
- Practicality
- Teachers
- library service
- must be the library because I sleep there all the time
- I really like how in few of the courses the teachers are so determined to teach that actually makes you motivated too and you would wanna learn about it more.
- online services
- Library services, guidance, flexibility, freedom of choice
- OAMK
- Cheapest lunch price.
- helpful and flexible teachers
- cheapest food in Finland :D
- the flexibility in the course structure that makes it easier for a student to make the degree their own in any way they want.
- my teachers and classmates
- The flexibility in choosing the free choice courses.
- Teamwork

- Teaching method and my teachers
- The practicality of our studies
- Building, library, schedule
- Study Environment
- The teachers
- Good university, good teachers
- The internationality and some of the most awesome professors.
- collabrator with lappeenranta university of technology, exchange programme
- no tuition fee
- home-like atmosphere
- Shared campus/resources with LUT
- lifestyle
- Practical amount of work vs theoretical; LUT nearby
- practical courses
- it's international
- Sport hall
- Environment
- the way of teaching
- I heard that in comparison to other schools it is regarded slightly better in terms of alumni performance.
- Internationalization and informal atmosphere
- Guidance
- Equipment.
- Laboratory
- Facilities
- Facility
- Programme, schedule, atmosphere.
- Facilities
- Friendly environment
- My UAS is 24 hour open for students (like classroom, computer lab, library) and this is best facility I can ever imagine.

**WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER IS THE BEST IN YOUR DEGREE PROGRAMME**

- International Business, link closely to the real business life
- marketing course
- The intercultural experience
- academic curriculum
- Study lots of helpful courses in the first year
- internship possibilities and teacher's guidance
- laboratory exercises
- satisfied
- I am supported with lots of equipment and things
- demanding course
- our group and classmates
- the flexibility of the teachers
- various course
- International environment
- It
- Those teachers that are competent and motivated.
- study contents
- Variety of subjects
- demanded skills are taught
- Mentoring
- Quite practical
- my study group
- Permissions and freedom.
- It introduces the framework of Business for me.
- Telecommunications subject (because of teacher)
- Future relevance
- new friends
- Openness and teachers with different backgrounds
- ability to use previous experience as a base to complete courses
- language courses especially Finnish

- Interesting subjects and great teachers
- Curriculum
- Job prospect
- Practicality
- multiculturalism
- involvement in real cases/projects
- somehow relative and realistic to future working
- Interesting contents and the degree is in English
- It has more IT courses.
- not too hard
- Teachers
- The programme also offers a double degree possibility with Neu-Ulm University in Germany.
- Some topics
- Mixture between Business & IT
- practice lectures in labs
- Everything is OK.
- good curriculum, interesting courses
- Ability to apply theory into practice
- It's mainly practical, you learn a lot with almost no effort.
- Possibility to try some new activities.
- BBA
- People I meet
- Easy and relaxed but in the point :)
- Simulation practice and hand skills as a nurse
- A wide range of subjects regarding sports and physical activity.
- General information about the logistics
- A lot of practical application for knowledge
- International Business
- A lot of practical information
- Good potential to get a job

- Flexibility with thesis, Practicum, and overall studies.
- practical
- good learning methods
- the knowledge that I acquire is the one I am passionate about
- The lecturers
- helpful for future career
- Connecting closely to practice
- content
- Teachers
- Courses
- It's somewhat good.
- Innovation
- International Business
- Courses
- Courses are interesting and met my expectations. I feel that I gain knowledge, which I will need for my future job.
- The sensible schedule
- Afterwards the first year, more emphasis on specialization and professional modules.
- Tapio Korkeamäki's attitude towards his subject and teaching it! I wish all the other teachers were as passionate as him! True professional, knows his subject, he cares about every little bit of information he gives, makes sure that everyone understands it. He has to get an award of the Best Teacher of Finland!!!
- An opportunity to dive into a real business environment by the events organized by the head of the program
- Facilities
- was great to gather more experiences
- Curriculum
- I'm working already
- somewhat contents
- Practical projects
- Diversity of the students

- The content
- Teaches you how business works in Finland
- to connect with some other people
- Energy and Environmental Engineering
- Exchange destinations, partner Universities
- Global economics. Probably the best taught class!
- Nothing I can think of.
- Practice placement
- You can choose your specializations
- Projects
- ICT facilities
- must be the somewhat not-so-stressful studying schedule
- Dealing with new people, people from all over the world is great. Although they might not match your thinking style or even disagree to it but it's a good thing to know how people are in general and what culture they represent.
- company based projects
- Experience with international students
- IT
- The practice in studies
- employment prospects
- the possibility to speed up my degree.
- it is useful
- All classes are taught in English.
- BBA International Business
- All the courses included
- teaching about cultural differences
- Wide choice of fields to work
- Variety of courses
- Relevance
- Subjects and knowledges that are given, experience
- Meeting new people



- relevant to actual working life,
- high requirement, challenges
- very diverse and multinational environment
- Relevant in many industries
- working opportunities
- Wide range of future job possibilities, general and quality knowledge of each field related to mechanical engineering
- practical courses
- we have lots of subjects which are aimed on practical tasks in working life, good teachers
- Soft skill
- Heikki Valmu, lecturer
- Lessons
- the way of teaching
- Compared to other UASs, solidworks courses.
- Professional guidance
- That it is the way of the future
- Experiment.
- Hands on skills based
- Teachers
- Facility
- Perspectives. And it's also very interesting.
- Exchange opportunities
- Contents of degree tightly connect to real life work
- Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology

**WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER IS THE BEST IN STUDYING IN FINLAND IN GENERAL**

- Worthwhile experience
- Good environment
- Nature
- good
- Study environment
- clean environment, good behaviors that we can learn from (be on time, responsibility)
- beneficial
- satisfied
- The system concentrates on students
- Its one of the best education in the world.
- students are given more freedom in their studiesm which lead them to be more self-organized and responsible
- the organization of the student services and the relaxing environment of school. No pressure, all positive feelings
- no ideas at the moment
- Affordable
- It is free.
- Everything
- Nature, easy and simple
- i like that city where I study (Oulu) is safe and clean, also there is no harsh language barrier, since many people speak English
- Student facilities, international services, various possibilities, amazing environment
- The environment and people
- interesting experience
- I like my University and Finland. So, everything is good.
- Finnish people are so kind.
- Study process is full of freedom, minimum things that student forced to do
- Safety, friendly people (teachers in particular), ecology
- Good
- Atmosphere

- Safe environment, friendly and kind people, beautiful natural scences.
- A completely new environment for exploration and a world full of opportunaties
- Received many community services
- Access to a broad range of education
- Environment
- high quality of education
- modern, diversed education methods
- many oppourtunities for going abroad and experience a new culture
- Öhm it's actually too cold
- It is free for me.
- no need to learn finish
- Safety
- Nothing is disturbing you from your studies
- Learning in Finnish context will help me pass through so many transcultural barriers since it is an international choice.
- Help from kela
- Somewhat International.
- communication with other students and teachers
- I love everything in Finland.
- very international atmosphere, meeting with many new people all the time, nice possibilities to go hiking or bbq (Finland 4 u course)
- Contemporary student life, causality, ability to access teachers easily
- Quite calm environment for studying.
- How the studies are going in general.
- The study environment
- Unforgettable experience
- Internationalization of students
- The people's personalities. I would try to describe it but this would be a gross estimation: humility, respectful, self-reflecting, sporty (many people just walk around in sports clothes rather than fancy ones).
- Easy studying

- Relationship between classmates and teachers
- All things are good compared to Asian Education
- mentioned above
- Good facility, somewhat international
- Cool Finnish Experiences and traveling to Russia
- good reputation
- always encourage people to get involved with more study
- learning a new language and meeting a new culture from within
- Being in Finland
- good
- Education
- Free
- Student friendly environment
- Schedule
- Be more creative and proactive in approaching challenging and grow up from that.
- Creativeness
- Best of the best
- Environment
- Finland is a paradise on the Earth. Although I receive no support from Finnish authorities, except for free education of course, I am still happy that I study here. I wish Finnish people were more thankful for the country they are living in, because I often hear from my Finnish peers, what a terrible country Finland is.
- Safe and clean environment, friendly people
- I was used to study the books and learn them alone but here I have found and learnt that my works are graded on basis of effort I show in time management and ordered manner of organized work as part of study and it has certainly helped me to sharpen my study skills. Hence, I am learning much than I was learning ever before.
- For foreign students it is very lame. They are being taught about 35% of study material what Finnish native students get. FACT.
- Practicing my English and an independent living
- Culture

- very calm for student life
- Environments
- it's ok, I lived here beforehand
- Quiet good
- Living condition
- Stress-free environment, possibility to talk to people (teachers, counselors) quite easily
- The student benefits
- Learning about the language
- The culture and country itself with its breathtaking landscapes
- WONDERFULL student culture!!! Haalarit!! ;)
- Qute Okay
- Sauna
- It's just much easier than it was in Denmark, so I guess that's pro and con.
- It was the best because it was free but now it costs for people who are from outside of EU so it is no longer worth it.
- Quality education
- You can get job in Finland
- equipment and timeline
- study content
- must be the peaceful environment
- I would say the fact that you can be with your friends once in a while and although you can't really hangout a lot because of the weather but its great. Moreover, the way how the coaches help you out is great.
- freedom to excel on my own
- Great student life
- quite nice
- The pactice in studies
- employment prospects
- relaxed nature of education
- beautiful and very well preserved nature.
- I think the people in Finland are really nice.

- The possibility to improve the overall grades by participating in a retake exam.
- student benefits
- Its the most productive course for me
- Academic Freedom
- Nature, quality of food and accomodation, many internationals
- location, approach, less stressful
- Living a peacefully and steady life.
- Climate, environment. Making friends from all over the world
- providing free education to every nationality basically no descriminaton on nationality
- friendly and helpful citizens
- safe and European
- Affordable lifestyle
- Student atmosphere of union, relaxed atmosphere, teacher's attitude towards students, nature proximity
- safe
- nice and safe country, nature, nice environment in school
- Good student services, public transport
- Education, not too much pressure
- It is widely recognised for its elementary education but in most people's mind education in Finland in general is believed to be high quality. (I'm not saying it's not, but I think it is a bit exaggerated)
- Free education, high quality of education and living standards
- Student life
- Free of charge at the moment.
- They are silent quiet. No disturbances
- Freedom
- Facility
- Level of education. Standard of living
- Friendly environment
- Excellent

**WHAT KIND OF THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE IMPROVED IN YOUR UAS?**

- More degree programmes
- Timetables
- one professor teaches lots of subjects
- Nothing
- nothing
- if all posters in the portal and in school have English translations, that would make us feel more included
- Working experiences or Finnish working management skills
- More sport clubs
- Some teachers are not good as teacher, they have lots of knowledge but they don,t know how to teach effectively.
- more guidences (f.ex. thesis guidences)
- maybe the AC lectures are a bit hard to follow
- scheduling
- Nothing
- Oulu
- More resources for teachers, better working life connections, more cases etc. More practical experience opportunities in general.
- Clear Campus map. It is difficult to find some rooms even after studying here for almost two years.
- Better teacher
- I am a bit skeptic about the idea of moving to merging several campuses into University building
- Teaching
- More outdoor activities
- printing facilities for free
- The programs like moodle and peppi and the calendar, it's all messy and there is no need to have several websites for one University
- Some services (as Peppi, form for resits).

- The teachers should work and have a lot of business experience so they can inspire students better.
- To have summer courses
- more international events
- more courses in english
- Organizational things
- Level of competence of the staff members
- Should support international students more
- Nothing
- More projects, camps for students to attend, especially international students. More school clubs for interaction between international students and Finnish students.
- A bit more in-depth teaching
- I heard about "Bring your own device" plan and I don't like it. It very uncomfortable to bring a laptop to school especially with students use desktops.
- 24 hours access to university's facilities
- more interesting lecture
- more chance for students who do not speak English for joining student unions and different groups of student
- not as much group work
- Books availability in library (we have a very limited amount of the course books).
- To bring their entrance examination centre to Nigeria. Or help Nigerians to travel to Finland to write the entrance examination.
- Scheduling of free choice courses
- Students Chemistry
- Schedule (don't like 8:00 lectures)
- pay more attention on Finnish language study
- qualification of some teachers, more optional courses, summer courses
- Studies could be more intense
- I'm just in the beginning of the studies, so I'll be able to answer the question when we get to the specialised subjects.
- Make some sport teams (of different sports) and take part in tournaments.



- Nothing
- The catering company
- More study options in English
- Nothing
- Gym opening times, I would like to make it 24 hourly open. Improve some equipments within the gyms (add or replace).
- More precise studying
- More possibilities to contact with possible employers
- more activity about finding job for international students
- Free bread in the dining room
- better Finnish language course. We did not learn much and the way teacher taught Finnish was just bad which discouraged us to learn the language
- Wish teachers were a little more strict with students, more challenging is needed.
- higher standard and strictness
- activities for business students
- Confusement about Independent Studies. I still haven't figured out how to find out what courses I can be a part of, if I am enrolled for them and when they take place
- More events
- marketing channel, funds for student activities
- More information in English
- Being actually more international and not just saying they are, putting everything in Finnish and English, no preferring of Finnish students, true information in the internet, teacher who speak English better than B1 level
- Create more focused studies.
- More guiding in English
- Having more English programs can be taught in the future such as Financial and Designing Web, etc...
- Tutor
- More study place
- no comment

- Better cooperation with local companies in order to provide internships and jobs for students. More and better courses of Finnish language
- The communication between tutors and students
- This campus gets a lot renovations now, so no suggestions at the moment.
- Offering more opportunities for internships (connections to real companies with a probability for several students to be hired as trainees)
- Food
- guidance and counseling
- Tutors for for IB student
- Study
- Activities or events for learning languages and cultures between international students
- Finnish language courses for foreigners were extremely poor, we didn't even go through a whole book in two years.
- Nothing really
- Higher level of studies
- An overhaul of the curriculum. Professors and department heads working together, not department heads lording over professors. Again, the need for ACTUAL Finnish language courses that develop skills for the REAL WORKING WORLD of Finland!!!
- announcement of happenings / parties is not very good in english. there are announcements but for me (as a foreigner) they would not motivate me enough to go there. hard to describe, here an other try: it feels like the nice finnish student culture is not that easily accessible for us. There is so much advertisement done for exchangestudents, but we degree students, have to put much more effort into understanding the finish student culture. If I would not be good friends with my finnish class mates I could not follow so well
- Library systems. should have more popular and famous book in English.
- Laboratory: should be bigger and better equipment.
- Evaluation: teachers should have better evaluation and somehow guide students to raise their own dreams and take responsibility for their own life.
- Clubs or organisations in UAS: Should have more for international students.
- Gym facilities: should have better equipment.
- UAS dorm: should have it for more reasonable price.

- Teachers: improve on their English speaking skills.
- More time for internships and practical trainings
- More comfortable schedule
- More programme in English
- more motivated students
- international environment
- I'd like IB students and GD students to be more connected, also the sofa in the library to be softer
- I wouldn't know what should be improved in the university in general but I would like to say that if the food had more variety for all kinds of people that would be great!
- start up and research opportunities
- Teachers
- OAMK
- some of the teaching / evaluation methods
- get teachers with real working experience rather than teaching experience.
- it's good
- Help the foreign students to find an internship here in Finland. Maybe an early collaboration with local companies would help.
- Connections with Companies in the area
- nothing
- More interaction between students. More interaction with tutors as well.
- Quality and quantity of exchange universities, teachers' knowledge and professionalism, more international teachers
- the level of language of teachers
- Finnish teaching level
- Updating contents every few years would be nice.
- globalizing manpower,
- practical approach
- Internship/placement opportunity assistance
- quality of education
- Improvement of some IT services

- more English course
- none
- More diversity in nationality
- more study hours
- Teachers (some of them)
- labs' environment
- might need some organized activities
- Nothing specific
- More job/thesis opportunities
- More advisories on what to study to achieve and assistance on innovation ideas.
- Parking places for personal cars. More common rooms . Self study rooms
- Nothing
- The air conditioner system, usually it works well, but in some random days, it makes me either too hot or too cold.
- Some teaching methods.
- Teaching personnel
- nothing
- more co-operative and nurturing lecturers, helping international students regarding internship within Finland

**WHAT KIND OF THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE IMPROVED IN YOUR DEGREE PROGRAMME?**

- There should be more inspiring teachers
- Organisation and some teachers
- Some courses are redundant
- some teachers didn't do their jobs well, in my opinion. they are not bad but sometimes i (even other classmates) find their methods of teaching is not good. even when we reported it to the Dean, it didn't change anything.
- if we can get teachers who are more interested in the fields or courses that they are assigned to teach in, then that would make us more interested or at least make the class more attractive
- international business
- None
- Teachers should be updated
- broader choice of courses (f.ex. less cultural and marketing courses)
- more finnish intensive courses or change to study more
- focus on the content of the course
- Contents of studies, too much marketing stuffs in general now
- It
- More resources for teachers, better working life connections, more cases etc. More practical experience opportunities in general.
- more subject choices like networking or security. And I think they should keep teaching Finnish until the last year (maybe one per semester)
- better teacher
- it is closed now
- Teaching
- Finnish language should be focused more
- no compulsory courses during the summer
- Level of English of teachers should be improved.
- All courses. Because all of them have a lot of weaknesses.

- I want to be given the topic before I go to the class. Thanks to that, I can prepare for it better.
- To change programming teacher; to make other courses more interesting and more related to real life; to have an opportunity to drop such unnecessary courses as mathematics and physics and replace them with more useful for professional skills.
- More teachers
- more interesting courses
- More engineering-related studies
- Level of competence of the teachers
- content of professional education should be improve. Besides, we need longer Finnish language courses with more advanced knowledge. Now, it's not enough for international business students who want to have an internship or employment in Finland, especially somewhere's not Helsinki - the most international area in Finland in my opinion. Here in Oulu, we don't have much chance to get a job in English even part-time jobs.
- Nothing
- More teachers to teach different subjects. Not only one teaching different subjects at a same semester
- Nothing in particular
- Internship possibility (school should partner up with local companies and recommend students for internships rather than let them find on their own).
- more hard skill lectures regarding business maths and finance
- more experienced professor
- Better integration into working life. More IT courses
- better and higher qualified teachers. more lectures. learn more
- Unimportance of some courses, that could be combined into one.
- To study up to doctorate degree in my chosen degree course.
- It would be better if we weren't these last BIT group in Oulu
- My degree is the last BIT course. Even though we have to obey the schedule of the study. Somehow it is not really good because we could not have any chances to retake some courses if we fail. I know life is unfair, however if we tried hard but due to some unexpected reasons that cause our failure, we don't have chances like previous BIT groups.

- nothing
- pay more attention on Finnish language study
- more online courses
- none
- More detailed studies in Anatomy and physiology.
- Nothing
- BBA
- More practical studies, less imaginary assignments
- More choice of major subject like finance
- Nothing
- The competence of the teachers in handling their subjects is probably my biggest source of complain. Consider a subject dealing with health problems. It is very much relevant to our work. But if the teacher is unable to guide the students, then we are left with a course that sounds meaningful from its name but somewhat hollow as we go through it.  
Another important improvement is the number of teachers. A teacher may have to teach 4-5 courses per a semester, which I believe is too much for anyone even if she or he is competent.
- Future work possibilities
- More possibilities to find a Practical Training inside Finland
- IB
- More technical information
- Better study content
- Some things we learn is learned a couple times in many different classes. (Over lapping info) It's very annoying!
- more strict when giving exam and higher standard
- activities for business students
- I like my degree programme the way it is
- More unity with web platforms
- nothing
- To make the schedule of deadlines more steady
- Not only basics studies but developing -> so that I could learn something

- Ease process of internship search
- Better schedule
- It's somewhat good.
- More chance for internship
- more choice subjects
- more teachers
- More projects, especially issued by local companies, to make students more experienced
- Almost everything. Construction degree needs a lot infield experiences, meeting with representatives of construction companies, available internships in real companies, not only in HAMK Sheet Metal Center.
- Improvements concerning the schedule (overlapping obligatory and optional courses)
- Content of study
- teaching methods
- International Business
- study contents
- Less team works
- better quality teachers, a lot of them had no or very little teaching experience, they had work experience (which is good), but generally had no idea on how to relate to the students
- I would like to had had some courses to learn some graphics programs that would help me do more in the marketing visual area
- Higher level of studies, it's not challenging, and I really want to learn.
- Order and structure! Real professors!
- the work load could be more spread through out the whole 3 years! if feels in beginning I was drowning in work, and especialy then having time for being social and connect with other would have been so important
- More related courses, less important courses.
- Please add more and more business courses in between, so students can flexibly train their mind to think as a engineer in a business way, or a businessman in an engineering way.
- Proper teachers, normal courses, clear homework
- English capabilities of several teachers.



- Nothing I can think of.
- Group work and assessments
- No limitation for number of students for each specialization
- better exams
- teaching skills
- teachers to be more considerate while grading
- There were a few courses especially profession development which we discussed about with our teachers and it should definitely be worth more credits, since there is a LOT of work.
- courses ( not so matured as providing today's engineer)
- Content, selection of subjects, assistance in finding an internship
- IT
- More international
- the first year curriculum offers almost no work skills making it hard to get a job early on
- provide more current courses. For example, programming languages like Python, Ruby, etc.
- we study a lot of useless stuff and too little programming but my degree is not gonna continue anyways
- Possibility to choose to work either in teams or alone on different projects.
- Difficulty of the exams
- More in depth courses, not just scratching the surface.
- Schedule, less courses regarding research
- higher requirements
- More practical assignments.
- including more important and working life subjects
- better spoken English
- More elective choices
- More Finnish courses for those who actually want to learn
- professors
- Addition of courses related to math and finnis language
- more tourism classes

- more guidance on theoretical information
- not enough practical tasks
- As we have a really rasistic Degree Manager, she needs to be changed
- need clearer guidance for lab assignment
- Better math, so more courses and at a higher level.
- The amount of elective courses
- That our head of degree and other teachers would care more
- More opportunities to see and connect to real work life and places.
- More depth learning
- Teaching personnel, minimum scores for the entry exam should be raised, studies are too easy
- nothing
- Our international Mechanical Engineering course curriculum as we have to go to exchange after 2nd year which is not possible for everyone.

**WHAT KIND OF THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE IMPROVED IN YOUR STUDY ENVIRONMENT IN GENERAL?**

- Good
- Lack of social skills
- part-time job for students
- i would like to be friends with more people in my class. i find that Finnish people can be quiet and shy sometimes and they prefer to hang out with the Finnish people than people from other countries
- If we can get to do more activities in school so we can join in. For example, sports club, basket ball court at least..
- more activies with the locals
- Its nice
- students are not friends of each others they isolate themselves in their own cultures.
- support foreign students in finding internship and part-time job to consolidate the knowledge gained, without fluent Finnish and NO coding languages
- Its pretty good, so nothing I can think of.
- it's good.
- More finish students
- More interaction between Finnish and international students
- More applying Finnish language in studying
- More information on the courses.
- I want to have more international students from various countries.
- Free printing
- More cooperation with students from different countries
- good
- Mindset about studying and working
- We're lack of internship and also employment possibilities for international students. International students have not much choices to take.
- Better housing offers (better means cheaper)
- Focus on developing practical skills relating to the field.
- Nothing in particular

- More Finnish please.
- more connections to local companies
- school trip to connect students
- Increase the temperature in the country
- very old university building, look slike a pre-school
- Excellently
- Students chemistry
- pay more attention on Finnish language study
- good enough
- More housing in the campus and should be more affordable. Housing in Oulu is much cheaper.
- Nothing, it's better than I expected.
- Good
- Accomodation company
- Satisfied :)
- While there is a trend for increased availability of studying online, I would like to find ways to make face to face teaching more effective than the online. I don't yet know how. But I think there should be a difference in quality between studying a course online or in classroom.
- Don't know
- More mandatory Finnish language courses
- teachers and my classmate are so friendly and supportive
- Finnish students should stop talking to Finnish teachers in Finnish at some points. It's annoying to see them talking in Finnish which creates the bond better between them, whereas we cannot have because we can't speak the language
- Not many regular things to do here, especially in the winter.
- 24 hour accessibility into university
- activities for business students
- I would like the library have more topics to cover, I would like to gain some independent knowledge
- More quiet places to study

- Better English skills of the teachers
- Create more activities
- More links to the companies
- I have no comment at this point. Because I think KAMK has done a good job.
- Nothing
- very good
- more activities
- better food in canteen; more offers or discounts for students.
- I would move to a much bigger city, to have outgoing and open minded people around me.
- Everything is satisfactory
- not much
- study environment is ok
- Schedule of classes
- it's ok
- Not good enough
- More face to face classes
- the study environment was generally quite good
- Nothing
- Everything good.
- N/A
- more happenings that connect ppl throughout all years.
- SHOULD BE MORE COMPETITIVE
- is okay
- Higher demands, more homework related to classes, more meaningful PD sessions.
- Teachers teaching skills.
- Proper timing
- There is no problem.
- nothing
- more multi-nationality communications should be included
- wish there'd be more activities

- Its good to study with a lot of people but sometimes its really tough since all the people don't take it as seriously as others and some take it too seriously. So it then becomes a mess I guess if the teachers gave enough instructions as to WHAT THEY EXPECT that would be wonderful. Everyone would have an idea of how it should look like and how much efforts are needed.
- caring and encouragement and motivation to show big picture to fresh new child in new world rather than living them in lost in wild and few can see the path after immense struggle
- Everything is great
- More active
- change the first year curriculum so that it gives more work-life knowledge
- encourage better communication between students of different nationalities during group works.
- a bit more social activities
- The library is not always the quietest place in the school.
- May be more english environment
- More diversity
- more educated fellow students
- Creation an extra activities beside studies for students, bigger library
- maybe add more nationalities to our small campus, or unite 2 campuses together
- Faster housing service, more practical tasks
- Just get rid of "students" who only came to get a residence permit in an EU cuntry and ignore school.
- I wish employers would employ more foreigners
- More projects oriented study module.
- More international students, less russians
- More diversity, since my class is half Vietnamese half Russian.
- More recruiting opportunities, competitions, real life cases etc!
- Teacher should not treat all students in the same level as some of them talent and some of them average. So, if they can take a good care of that I think it would be nice.

**WOULD YOU RECOMMEND STUDYING IN A FINNISH UAS TO YOUR FRIENDS/OTHER PEOPLE?**

**If yes, please describe why/what you would highlight:**

- Education quality
- more comprehensive knowledge
- Costs
- education and people
- It has the best education, and it's in Europe so they can travel any country in Europe anytime they like
- it is a much better environment than my own country's education environment.
- There are a lot of resources and opportunities in the education sense
- the lower tuition fee
- The knowledge I learnt
- The main reason is pure quality education
- nature, safety and high-level of education
- Education is top and the teachers are so comprehensible and easy going.
- different style of teaching/learning/studying
- Low cost
- It is free. Sometimes you even get monies. Free education is legit amazing.
- focus on practical matters, good people and nice weather (except for winter)
- Nice experience
- quality of education
- experience that will broaden your horizons in education and everyday life
- I will, but I know, that they won't do it, because of the fee.
- Study process is full of freedom
- Peaceful atmosphere in university without stress
- good level of education
- great atmosphere, professionalism, no pressure
- Good at overall conditions
- Level of education offered
- XAMK is a good university in general

- Because it's worth it
- Very good environment and quality + Tuition fee is cheaper than other countries(?)
- close relationship between students and teachers, learning through different methods and additional offers by the university
- adaptable environment, studying opportunities
- Support of teachers
- Easier to study
- it is easy to get good grades, very flexible university which is good to do other things as well
- Friendly atmosphere, safety, quality of an education
- Because it is an international choice for study.
- Qualification is needed for employment
- good study environment
- new experience and improve english
- environment
- good education, good and peaceful country for living
- Best value
- Good atmosphere and a lot of practical experience
- A lot of practice and opportunity to be employment in Finland after studies
- Good Practices
- It is a great place to study and I didn't regret for a second choosing Finland
- Quality education in a relax and peaceful environment
- High quality of education
- The people, the government, the quality and standard of living, the beauty of the place in the summer
- Practical knowledge, and amazing study environment
- Best environment, best service, best education
- a huge prospective
- Yes and No, Highly depends on personality of the person! Finland is a tough place to live and it's not for everyone.
- good learning experience



- good education
- the atmosphere very much inspires me to study
- It's a beautiful country and the education is good, a fun place to be
- high quality, good environment
- It is interesting to study
- You can definitely improve language skills and broad your network. I gain a lot of knowledge in my area of interests. Very friendly environment.
- It is very good to get practical experience.
- Friendly and open environment
- Study environment
- Finland provides one the best and high quality education that assist one's to improve skills that required in practical use
- great education system, great environment
- Finland in general, my degree programme
- If you are willing to learn Finland provide lots and lots of opportunities and resources.
- An exceptional opportunity to study in an intercultural environment with an applied approach to business
- culture of country very high
- Study environment
- no social distance, teachers answer to e-mails
- Quality education
- Clean environment
- positive environment
- The programme and people
- If you have plans on moving to Finland, however the school might not be very challenging.
- library
- Friendly environment with great teachers
- There is a possibility to work in Europe after finish study.
- because of the high education system
- study content
- because it's great, it's safe and it will make you a different person

- Because of the diversity it has to offer and the professional studies are not just for the name you actually feel it.
- freedom to study in modern way, new way of life and thinking, heaven for rich kids
- Great student life, practical experience
- Finland is quite nice place to study.
- The practice in studies and the peace of Finland
- High quality of teaching, modern infrastructure, flexible and helpful teachers
- studying is easier here compared to my home country
- very chill environment
- The emphasis is on the English language. Learn English very well and a bit of math and logics and you are accepted.
- Not difficult as central/southern EU schools
- Its the best place to learn more qualitative education
- Not just reading books, but actual doing.
- In general, it's good if you are organized and motivated person
- interesting programmes, good studying facilities
- high quality of teaching, Respectful teachers, practical matters connected to the world demand
- I would highlight the benefits of an appropriate studies with a combination of a great country.
- Good possibility to develop your skills and have an opportunity to work in Finland
- Meeting new people and cool teachers
- educational system
- new study environment
- Lappeenranta is a great student city
- possibility to find job in EU
- quality of education, study environment
- practical courses
- met my expectations, it's not too hard to study, improving english, nice environment, good education and european diploma
- Good teachers

- lots of space for improving yourself with self study, good quality lessons from the better lecturers
- It is better than in Russia
- flexible time for studying
- Easier than at home and probably worth more.
- high quality and informal atmosphere
- It's fun living here
- Safety / cheap study / friendly people
- Quality of education, quality of facilities
- facilities, teachers, tuition fee
- I'm completely satisfied with my choice.
- Because I like my life in Finland
- education quality
- world class education and technology

**If no, please describe why:**

- they might expect tighter schedule
- the official language's difficulty
- The school describes itself in a brighter light on media than it actually is.
- Netherland can be a better option with reasonable price and good quality.
- because it will give no useful knowledge
- The education became paid, but the quality is not better than in most other European countries
- It was not really what I had expected
- Not good enough English skills of the teachers and the quality of the studies
- Education is not free anymore. For the same tuition cost and cost of living, it is better to study somewhere in UK, Germany, Austria, etc. Those countries also don't have problems with jobs
- So little education, I can learn it all by myself just in 4 months. Finnish students get taught A LOT MORE compared to the foreign ones.

- now that fees must be paid but it's not easy to get a job. though you get support from sponsors it's good to support yourself in some things.
- It takes a great deal to move to Finland, so unless you plan to move here I wouldn't recommend it. Next, the school does help you to gain fundamental skills \*ex. Finnish Language\* in order to live and study here.
- sometimes, I miss the deepness of understanding and connections.
- because of racism, very chill and sometimes irresponsible way of teaching. Too much freedom for students. Almost no possibility to find a job upon graduation.
- If they are looking to not be challenged and have exams based only on memory and multiple choice it's for them. If they want to feel like you learn something you didn't know and have exams based on more than just reading a book a few times and remembering a fact but not even having to understand it.
- Now it costs a lot of money so it isn't worth it anymore.
- From my experience at my particular UAS, I would not recommend it to other Americans unless they have family or are already familiar with Finnish.
- It is very hard to work to support study if there is no one to support you.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS REGARDING THE SURVEY**

- As foreign students, the future development and career life are our focus and I would like to suggest you can collect some information on ' How you evaluate your future career life after graduating from Finland' and ' what difference in your opinion compared to studying in Finland and not studying in Finland in your future career?'"
- Finnish education is nice but not so highly recognized by the others
- the teaching method is based on conversation and talk between students and teacher, so teacher needs to summarize then students can memorize all the things.
- I am not sure if all of the questions are too relevant to people already living in Finland. A bit more explanation on some of the questions would also be good, to explain what information you are looking for, or to allow surveyees to elaborate on their answers.
- Unfortunately, I was disappointed with the fact that my University teaches us only for networks and CISCO. There is no opportunity to study programming well or some other IT related subjects. Programming is only "for tip", but this is the most wanted subject for almost all the students in our degree program. I sincerely consider that there should be more fields for studying.
- I've met some racist cases while applying for vacancies. They denied me all the time with the reason that i don't have enough Finnish language skills. However, they have recruited some friends of mine who don't have enough Finnish language skills like me. I just thought it was about my gender but not. My friends who were hired are in both genders: Male & female. I'm so upset and feel depressed because seems like i have no chance to have a job. I want to be able to cover my living cost here first, then work and stay in Finland after.
- I mentioned that I don't want to live or continue studying in Finland after my graduation. The reason for that is simply that I am missing friends and family and not that I have a bad experience here
- I hope to let the reader know that if I criticize, my aim is to improve an experience and journey that I already admire. Sure, I can talk about how much I like this and that, but that only boosts pride and contentment. The better way forward needs us to ask the question 'what can we do better' and hence my criticism aims to answer that question.  
Finally, I would like to thank you for the time you spend reading my ideas and opinions.  
And I would like to say that I truly appreciate the opportunity that's been given to me here in this country. Kiitos!

- Instead of "met my expectations completely", would have been better to have "exceeded my expectations". Otherwise very good
- This is a really detailed survey with logical order and it does not take too much time to answer the questions.
- I would highly recommend Finland for all students who are planning to study abroad.
- Finland is a wonderful country. But since the education is not free anymore, it will lose its attraction for truly international students (outside the EU/EEA). Free education possibilities covered many disadvantages like: climate, gloomy people (sometimes you want to talk to and befriend with local people or peers at university; not ignored), job opportunities and etc. No, when it won't be free anymore for those students, Finland does not look so nice and attractive: it is cheaper to study in Germany, for example; or or the same annual cost one can study in UK.
- you really should have an option for those who choose to study in Finland because they lived here beforehand, it's not that if I don't have Finnish passport it automatically means that I came here for educational purposes, I have been typing so many times "other" and "I lived here beforehand" it became almost annoying.
- I would like to mention that people would be much more interested if the universities displayed the discounted fee as their highlight rather than somewhere below. To attract more students that should be displayed in BOLD so they know how to achieve discounted tuition fee.
- I would not recommend my brilliant friends who want to excel in his field like a rocket and expect big things. They should join the university to glow the light. UAS simply is not meant for them. Understand the difference before you feel you are in dark.
- good survey. I'm happy to contribute. good luck with the thesis.
- My experience at Saimaa UAS has not been bad and I appreciate what it has provided for me in terms of education. However, I think it is far behind other UAS' in Finland. The way the school was advertised prior to admission is vastly different than the actual environment and courses available.
- What I felt right, I write it here. Hope, there will be no negative impression about me. It is a good way to judge the system and improve quality. I liked the questions here as it is covered all of them. Wish you guys every success in life.