

Summary

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Evaluation of the state and renewal of higher education pedagogy

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The evaluation of the state and renewal of higher education pedagogy was carried out between 2022 and 2023, and it concerned all Finnish higher education institutions. The key aim of the evaluation was to form a national overall picture of the current state of higher education pedagogy. The evaluation was implemented systemically and by applying multiple methods. The evaluation questions were:

- What is the current state of higher education pedagogy in Finnish higher education institutions?
- How do higher education institutions update, support, and develop higher education pedagogy?
- What types of pedagogical policies and operating models do higher education institutions have, what roles does digitalisation play in teaching and learning, how do higher education institutions develop and support teaching and education internally, and what type of cooperation aiming at pedagogical development is there between higher education institutions?
- How do higher education institutions support and encourage teachers in developing their pedagogical capabilities?

Various datasets were used widely in the evaluation: answers of a student survey (N = 7,506), answers of a teacher survey (N = 3,064), answers to questions for pedagogical leaders (N = 370), answers of a survey to higher education institutes (N = 36), outcomes of Workshops, including tasks for individuals, in six higher education institutions, and group interviews. In addition, preliminary conclusions and development recommendations were worked on in a development seminar, and the notes taken on the discussions in the seminar also served as evaluation data.

Key strengths

- The link between higher education institutions' pedagogical guidelines and operating models and the strategy is clear.
- The connection between teaching in higher education and research is realised well, especially in the contents of study units.
- The teaching cultures in higher education institutions are oriented towards pedagogical education and development and they support cooperation between teachers.
- Students are treated equitably and with respect and the study atmosphere is good.
- A student-oriented approach, digitalisation and diverse teaching methods are an essential part of Finnish higher education pedagogy.

Key recommendations

- The wellbeing of teachers and students should be supported more and with diverse methods.
- Higher education institutions should clarify the feedback cycles related to the development of teaching: collection and analysis of diverse feedback data, identification of development areas, deciding on the development measures and implementing them, monitoring, and reporting the development measures and informing of changes at the level of the higher education institution, units, degree programmes, teachers, and students.
- Higher education institutions should strengthen the working life perspective in all higher education. Representatives from workplaces should be involved more closely in the curriculum work and in the development of the education.
- Higher education institutions should require that pedagogical leaders have pedagogical competence and interest in managing the development of the activities related to higher education pedagogy. Pedagogy should be managed in a systemic and consistent manner.
- The perspectives of sustainable development, continuous learning, multidisciplinary and digitalisation should be further strengthened in higher education pedagogy and policies on taking advantage of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning should be outlined.

Keywords: educational provision, evaluation, higher education, higher education institutions, higher education pedagogy, learning, studying, teaching, universities, universities of applied sciences.