

Academic Guidance and Counselling Policy

Introduction

This Policy sets out the goals for academic guidance and counselling at Tampere University and defines the related roles and responsibilities.

This Policy is based on the strategy and education strategy of Tampere Universities. As laid down in Section 22 of the Degree Regulations, **the aim of academic guidance and counselling is to facilitate students' learning, help them make choices about their studies and promote the smooth and timely progression of their studies.** The University offers guidance and counselling services that support the development of academic expertise and foster continuous learning. The services also support the achievement of the University's goals for internationalisation. The University has issued separate guidelines that set forth the principles that govern the supervision of students working on their thesis. Academic guidance and counselling involves multiple stakeholders and groups of stakeholders. Services are provided by individual persons (such as teachers and students), groups (such as peer groups and research groups) and internal communities (such as independent institutes and University Services units).

Tampere University's Academic Guidance and Counselling Policy is consistent with the national and European requirements and goals pertaining to quality assurance in higher education (KARVI2018, ESG2015). Our guidance methods and services are continuously developed in accordance with the principles of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. We collect feedback from applicants, students, student advisors and external stakeholders on a regular basis. As set out in the University's quality assurance policy, all feedback as well as follow-up and assessment data is utilised to develop the quality of education and academic guidance and counselling services.

General guidelines for providing instructional support and promoting students' academic progress

The University aims to offer academic guidance and counselling services that not only support the wellbeing of students but also help them satisfy their academic and degree requirements and graduate within the normative timeframe, which is generally five years (Appendix 1). We provide students with services that facilitate their learning and their growth into academic experts. These services are both integrated into the curriculum and provided as separate services. The range of services available includes timely and appropriate communications, advisory and instructional services and special advisory services. The quality of guidance and counselling services is developed in collaboration between the faculties and University Services to achieve common University-wide goals. Guidance and counselling services are mainly provided by degree programme staff and the faculties. Each faculty and degree programme has a designated person who holds primary responsibility for developing academic guidance and counselling services and related practices. This responsibility may also be assigned to the degree programme committee. Guidance services are in large part provided by teaching staff in a classroom context.

Students

- are responsible for developing their skills and competencies and for planning and pursuing their studies and research;
- are provided with services that facilitate their learning and their growth into academic experts.

KARVI2018: Audit Manual for Higher Education Institutions 2018-2024. Available at

https://karvi.fi/app/uploads/2017/02/KARVI_Korkeakoulujen_auditointika%CC%88sikirja_FINAL.pdf

ESG2015: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Available at

http://www.equip-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/ESG_2015.pdf

Guidance and counselling services are both integrated into the curriculum and provided as separate services;

- receive guidance and counselling services in a classroom context and are responsible for seeking additional services that they may need.

The University

- is responsible for planning and implementing curricula, learning environments and courses to allow students to make effective academic progress and graduate within the normative timeframe;
- oversees and systematically develops the accessibility and safety of different functions and services;
- ensures that all students are treated equally;
- develops multichannel guidance and counselling services as part of the digital campus to supplement face-to-face services;
- ensures that students have the opportunity to receive professional guidance and counselling services either individually and/or in groups especially at an early stage of their studies and when they are making choices about their studies and moving on to a different degree level. Services are provided in both Finnish and English;
- offers special advisory services in English and Finnish to students, when necessary. Special advisory services are offered when students have questions, for example, about learning, time management, motivation, career planning or special arrangements. The person who provides special advisory services must have special expertise in the area in question;
- offers basic and advanced training to persons who provide academic guidance and counselling services (such as targeted training for academic tutors and dissertation supervisors and courses in university pedagogy) and facilitates collaborative working through networks;
- expects the persons who provide academic guidance and counselling services to develop their instructional skills by attending training and participating in development activities and peer activities.

Guidelines pertaining to each education cycle

- Staff in the faculties and University Services (including the Open University) engage in systematic collaboration to develop academic guidance and counselling services. The related processes (such as dealing with challenging situations) and relevant stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities have been fully described.
- Degree programme staff and our Education and Learning Services provide timely information, advice and guidance to prospective applicants (including Open University students) and individuals seeking to develop their professional competencies. Different applicant profiles are taken into consideration when providing information and advice.
- University Services units and the faculties collaborate to support international students' adjustment to Finland and campus life. The collaboratively designed and provided services help international students become familiar with the Finnish academic culture, develop their employability skills and build contacts with potential employers. International students are also offered the opportunity to learn Finnish.
- While different stakeholders work together to support the labour market relevance of degrees and help students plan their careers, teaching staff, faculty staff and degree programme staff will hold primary responsibility for providing this type of support.

The University's Education and Learning Services unit offers students career planning support both individually and in groups in response to students' needs.

- While different stakeholders work together to support the development of students' study skills and their ability to make effective academic progress, teaching staff, faculty staff and degree programme staff will hold primary responsibility for providing this type of support. Education and Learning Services provide students with materials that help them develop their study skills independently and maintain their ability to effectively pursue their studies as well as offer them the opportunity to attend individual and group guidance sessions, when necessary.
- External stakeholders and service providers (such as the Finnish Student Health Service, FSHS) offer students mental health services and services that help them deal with financial or social problems. The University maintains collaboration with external partners and keeps students up-to-date with the available services.

Further guidelines for providing BSc and MSc students with instructional support and promoting their academic progress

- The faculties and University Services offer students systematic support that facilitates their induction into their discipline and integration into the campus community already at an early stage of their studies.
- The University maintains diverse peer support programmes. One form of peer support is student tutoring. All new students are assigned a student tutor.
- Students are expected to update their personal study plan (PSP) on a regular basis. Students are entitled to an annual personal advising appointment with their academic tutor or a member of support staff. Students draw up the first version of their personal study plan (PSP) at the orientation stage when they first join the University. They must review and, if necessary, revise their PSP no later than when they are starting to write their thesis. However, students are recommended to update their PSP in the mid-stage of their bachelor's programme, at the beginning of their master's programme and towards the end of their studies before they reach the normative time to degree completion. Personal study plans are stored in the PSP system electronically.
- The faculties must allocate sufficient resources to ensure the successful implementation of the Academic Tutor Programme to meet the needs of each degree programme. Participation in the Academic Tutor Programme will be included in the academic tutor's annual work plan in accordance with instructions provided by the faculty. The Academic Tutor Programme should preferably be incorporated into the curriculum of each degree programme.
- The University develops reporting systems that support the monitoring of students' academic progress. Degree programme staff must review data stored in the reporting systems on an annual basis to track students' progress and agree on the allocation of instructional resources and support services. The reporting system allows staff members to identify students who need support services and provide students with timely information.
- Internships that are counted towards degrees are an important form of collaboration between the University and employers and help generate valuable feedback that supports the development of education. Internships provide students with hands-on work experience that helps them identify and appreciate their strengths and skills.
- All students are entitled to receive a reasonable amount of supervision while working on their thesis. Thesis supervisors support students' independent scholarly activity. The University has

issued separate guidelines that describe the roles and responsibilities of thesis supervisors and thesis writers.

Further guidelines for providing doctoral students with instructional support and promoting their academic progress

- Dissertation supervisors and doctoral programme staff must pay special attention to the guidance and advice provided to doctoral students at the beginning of their studies.
- The supervisors of doctoral students help them prepare and update their research plan and personal study plan. These plans must also include a plan for internationalisation. The University supports the development of expertise among doctoral students based on their individual goals.
- Doctoral students must receive high-quality supervision while writing their dissertation to ensure that they are able to make effective progress. The University has issued separate guidelines that describe the roles and responsibilities of dissertation supervisors and dissertation writers.
- All doctoral students will be assigned a supervisor, at least one co-supervisor and possibly a follow-up group (Degree Regulations, Section 26). As doctoral students write their dissertation under the guidance of multiple supervisors, they have access to a broad base of expertise and receive support for expanding their professional network and help for addressing potential gaps in supervision and any other problems. The members of the follow-up group possess expertise that improves not only the quality of supervision and feedback provided to the student but also the quality of the completed dissertation.
 - o In addition to the supervisors, the follow-up group will include persons involved in the student's doctoral programme or external members of whom at least one must hold a doctoral degree. The external members may represent, for example, other universities, companies or research institutions.
 - o The follow-up group must be established during the student's first year in the doctoral programme in accordance with programme-specific guidelines. The working methods of the follow-up group may vary between doctoral programmes.
- The academic progress of doctoral students is systematically monitored at the level of doctoral programmes and the entire University. On an annual basis, doctoral programme staff will monitor doctoral students' progress towards their degree and review feedback concerning academic guidance and counselling services.
- The University's academic guidance and counselling services strengthen the multidisciplinary dimension of doctoral education and help the University reach the goals for internationalisation.
- Supporting the development of doctoral students' research skills is a collaborative effort that involves, among others, the University's Research Services, Educational and Learning Services and the People and Culture unit.
- When planning doctoral education, the University will consider the diverse career opportunities available to doctoral graduates (careers in academia, industry, the public sector, companies, etc.). Dissertation supervisors are expected to bring up career plans when meeting with their students. The University Services units will also offer support for career planning.
- The tasks and work time allocated to the supervision of doctoral students are agreed upon between dissertation supervisors and their supervisors and recorded in annual work plans.

Appendix 1: Academic guidance and counselling services at Tampere University from the perspective of goals and functions

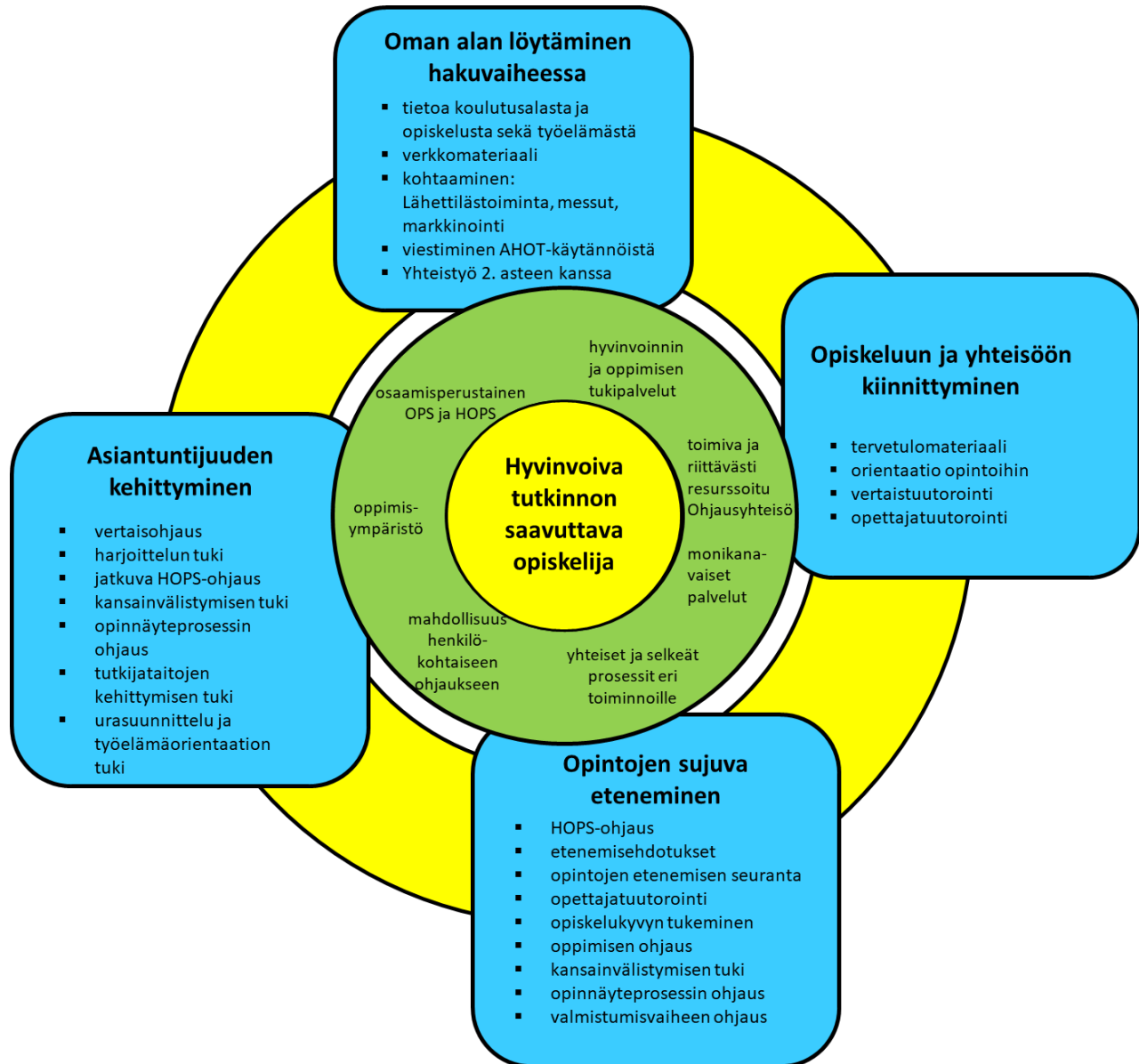


Figure 1: Academic guidance and counselling services available to BSc and MSc students. The green background indicates the minimum requirements for achieving related goals.

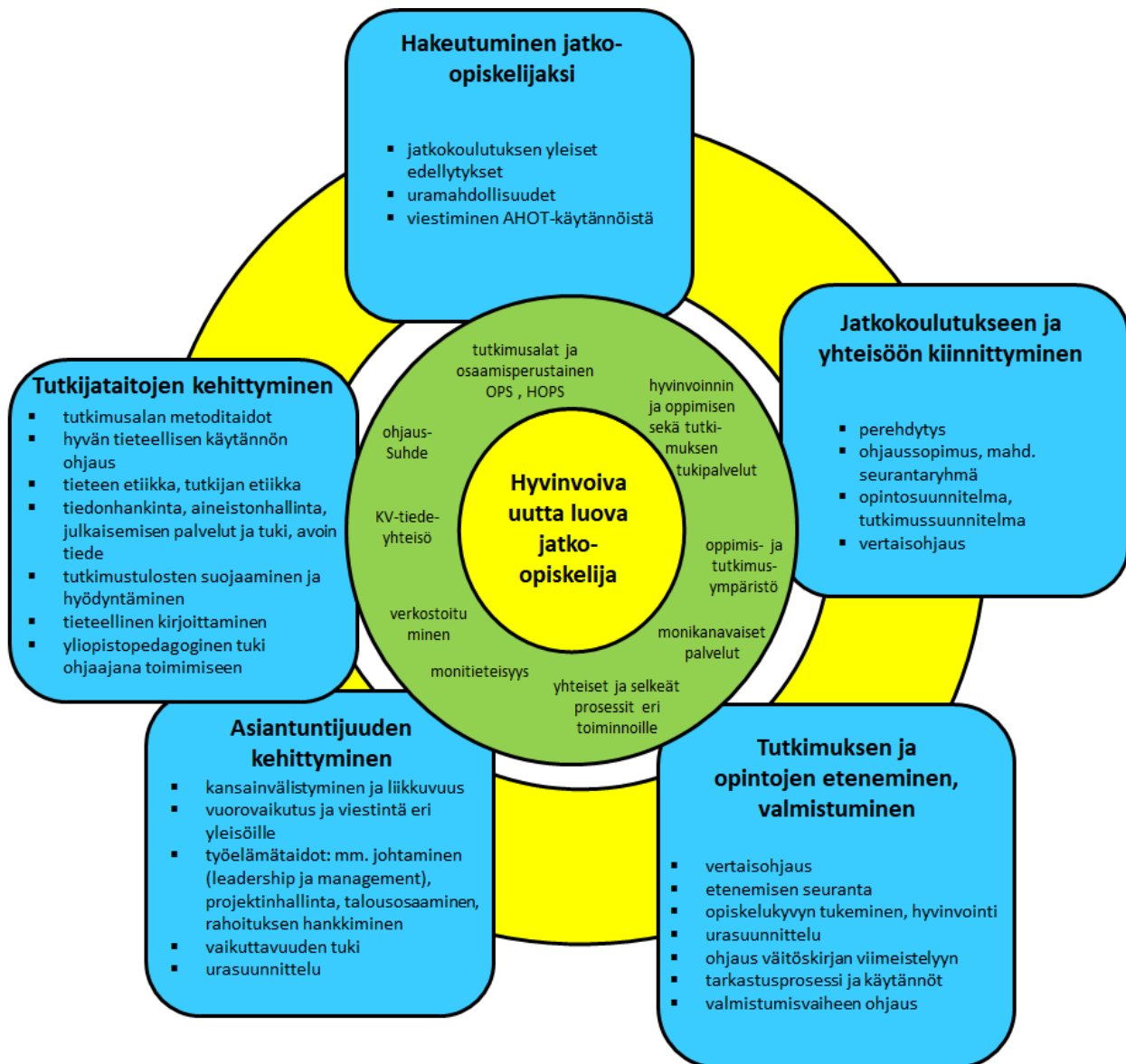


Figure 2: Academic guidance and counselling services available to doctoral students from the perspective of goals and functions. The green background indicates the minimum requirements for achieving related goals.