



Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu
Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

Sustainable International Education at SAMK

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Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 Goals and Objectives	5
3 General Principles Governing Activities	7
4 Human Rights, Ethics and Responsibility	8
5 Predictability and Security	12
6 Financial and Ecological Principles	13
7 Sustainable Marketing	15
8 Process During Studies	16
9 Monitoring, Principles and Development of Activities	18
Sources	20

1 Introduction

The vision of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) is *Every SAMK student graduates and finds employment*. SAMK is a regional higher education institution whose strategic mission is to educate experts, act as a developer and internationaliser, and promote entrepreneurship. The business and industrial structure of Satakunta requires SAMK to provide broad and multidisciplinary education and research. Student graduation and employment are key factors in the vitality of our region.

SAMK's profile focuses on people and the renewing industry. Finland lives from the industry of Satakunta and the west coast. The role of people in renewing industry is significant. With skilled employees and new technologies, shared goals can be achieved.

We respond to changes in the operating environment driven by the region's educational needs and population forecasts by offering a diverse range of educational services. We focus our education on degree programmes with strong graduation and employment outcomes. We are carefully increasing the number of students in multiform and online education, as well as international degree education, without increasing the total number of degree students. International students, especially those from outside the EU and EEA, are a key means of ensuring the availability of workforce in Satakunta.

The most important factor in the vitality of the region is ensuring the availability of labour. As global migration intensifies, competition for professionals is increasing. Satakunta's strategic programme on international talent attraction and immigration comprises four themes that aim to achieve its vision and key objectives. The themes support each other and overlap to some extent:

1. Attracting international talent
2. Employment of international talent

3. Employers' readiness to utilise international talent
4. Smooth settlement

The task of the higher education institution is to increase the number of international degree students and support their smooth settlement. We integrate international students into Satakunta together with companies and communities. SAMK produces skilled labour primarily for the labour market in Satakunta and Finland, as well as for international labour markets. At the same time, the internationalisation at home of the Satakunta region and the higher education community is promoted as foreign students strengthen and develop the region's international competence.

International fee-paying education mainly refers to fee-paying international degree programmes taught in English, as well as fee-paying education intended for international learners that leads to or supports applications to such programmes. In addition to education for which tuition fees are charged per academic year, degree education can also take the form of fee-paying, commissioned education that leads to a degree. At SAMK, fee-paying, commissioned degree education is provided only in very exceptional cases and for specific needs. Other types of education available for purchase include individual courses or study modules, such as separate Postgraduate Diploma courses and summer and winter schools. This document describes the principles and guidelines for international fee-paying education, aimed at ensuring the sustainability and ethics of such activities. Monitoring, supervision and the handling of possible deviations are described in the guidelines.

The principles set out in this document apply to all of SAMK's international educational activities, including student and staff mobility.

2 Goals and Objectives

The education policy report (VN 2021:24) emphasises the role of higher education institutions in recruiting international students and supporting the employment of graduates as part of national objectives. Tripling the number of higher education students and achieving a 75% employment rate are national objectives.

SAMK's strategic target is 1,750 international degree students, 75% of whom are liable to pay tuition fees. The employment target for graduates is the same as the national target, 75%. The statutory and central strategic objective of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences is to educate new skilled labour for the Satakunta region and to contribute to the success of businesses and communities.

Recruitment and education of higher education students, and the employment of graduates, are important parts of the regional objective. At least half of those who remain in Finland and become employed should find employment in the region. According to the vision of Satakunta's strategic programme on international talent attraction and immigration, regional cooperation will build an international, attractive and retaining Satakunta. International professionals are a natural part of the labour market, and they settle in the region to live and work as part of the Satakunta community. (Satakuntaliitto 2024.)

Competition in the international education market is extensive, and competition for talent is fierce on all continents and in most nation-states and higher education institutions. Success in international education markets requires continuous renewal and development, as well as financial investment, market knowledge and preparedness for market changes. It also requires continuous renewal of the education programmes offered and a change in the operating culture of higher education institutions to meet market needs. However, Finnish higher education stands out in this competition by not being profit-driven.

Success in international fee-paying education is part of SAMK's programme for the continuous development of quality and operations. Fee-paying education must be financially viable. The financial performance of English-language education is monitored separately as part of turnover. International fee-paying education provides financial opportunities when tuition fees and related scholarships are set at the level specified in the Universities of Applied Sciences Act. Fees are kept at a sufficient yet competitive level to enable investments in the sustainable operation of the growing number of students.

The goal is to work with partners to recruit motivated students who are capable of pursuing a degree and interested in doing so.

Profiling SAMK's role as an international educator serves students and the achievement of its objectives. The content of SAMK's degree programmes is primarily designed to meet the competence needs of regional business and industry. An international student studying and graduating from SAMK has the opportunity to acquire skills that are in demand, particularly in Satakunta, and also nationally and internationally.

Developing international competence and capacity is an integral part of staff development. International staff and students bring valuable expertise. The income generated by fee-paying international activities enables the comprehensive development of the higher education institution as an international player amid tightening public funding and rising targets, such as higher intake numbers.

In accordance with decisions of the Board of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, funding from tuition fees is used to maintain and develop operations and services.

3 General Principles Governing Activities

International fee-paying education is governed by the same rules as other educational activities, i.e. Finnish legislation and international agreements. Universities of applied sciences and the organisation of education are governed by the Universities of Applied Sciences Act.

Applicants for English-language fee-paying education mainly come from outside the EU and EEA. Degree education remains free of charge for students from the EU/EEA area. Cultures and societal practices outside the EU/EEA often differ significantly from Finnish culture, and applicants' experiences of education and learning may also differ from those in Finnish higher education and at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. Taking cultural differences into account and appreciating them is an important starting point in international activities. In our activities, we ensure that our staff comply with the obligations imposed on the higher education institution by legislation and international agreements, and that they can take cultural differences into account in their work.

The values of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences are community, responsibility and open-mindedness. These values are reflected in our daily activities and form the basis for a humane, sustainable and adaptable organizational culture. These values also guide our fee-paying international education activities and the daily interactions of our foreign students with other students.

Finnish higher education institutions have jointly created an ethical code of conduct for international education agents (ACoC 2024). The purpose of the code of conduct is to establish rules for education agents and other partners involved in international student recruitment, ensuring responsible and professional conduct in all interactions with potential students, their parents, education providers and other stakeholders. The code of conduct has been approved by both the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Arene) and the Council of Rectors of Finnish Universities (Unifi). SAMK's contracted agents are aware of and committed to complying with this

code of conduct. The code can be found on the higher education institution's website.

SAMK is committed to the recommendations of the Responsible International Cooperation Group in higher education and research (Ministry of Education and Culture, 11 March 2025).

4 Human Rights, Ethics and Responsibility

We respect one another and value diversity. We promote equality, non-discrimination and fairness. We are a responsible employer and a non-discriminatory higher education community. The Finnish education system promotes the human right to education and a better life. Legislation ensures equal treatment of all students.

At SAMK, students are treated equally, fairly and justly at all stages of the application process and throughout their studies. This is implemented through student selection processes and compliance with operating practices; the use and development of learning environments; the operation and development of guidance and counselling and other student services; and feedback systems. The individual needs of students are taken into account as part of equality.

In applicant marketing and guidance, prospective students are provided with an accurate and realistic picture of Finland and SAMK as a higher education institution, of studying and of the opportunities for graduates to find employment or continue their studies at a higher level. The aim is to ensure applicants and students have comprehensive and accurate information to support their study choices.

This activity is implemented within the framework of the obligations and rights of higher education institutions. It is essential to acquire sufficient information and competence to support decision-making and ensure accuracy. It is impossible to obtain all the information, for example, about applicants and the

partners they use. Knowledge and experience are constantly accumulating, and the applicant market is becoming increasingly transparent through thorough analysis and cooperation between higher education institutions. Every year, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences has foreign students from over a hundred different countries.

SAMK actively participates in national programmes and cooperation networks such as Study in Finland, Education Finland, Business Finland, and the HERENET network of universities of applied sciences, which together define responsible practices and share information on potential misconduct. Through these networks, SAMK also participates in joint student recruitment events aimed at international students. The President of SAMK represents Arene in the Responsible International Cooperation Group in higher education and research.

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences uses partners in its education marketing in addition to direct marketing. Partnerships are always based on cooperation agreements, which may be commission-based or, for example, involve participation and material fees for student recruitment events and school visits. In addition, SAMK has nearly 200 higher education partners globally. The largest single form of cooperation is the Erasmus+ mobility programme, which also enables students to pursue degree studies abroad or to participate in joint double-degree programmes. Some of these degree programmes are subject to a fee.

When collaborating with various international partners, it is essential that they are trained to understand, know and communicate accurate information about Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Satakunta and Finland to applicants and students. Partners must commit to the Code of Conduct approved by Satakunta University of Applied Sciences and participate in the training we organise. The training and information provided to partners aim not only to ensure they receive it but also to ensure they understand it.

Partners are selected based on need and the higher education institution's criteria, with the aim of building a sufficiently broad and long-term network that functions effectively in the context. Agreements with partners set out the

parties' rights and obligations. International partners are instructed and trained to operate in accordance with SAMK's rules. Partners are contacted regularly and informed about SAMK's activities, changes and objectives, particularly in relation to education. Partners are regularly invited to visit the campuses to ensure they have an accurate, up-to-date picture of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences' degree programmes, teaching, learning environments, and more. International partners must be familiar with SAMK's degrees and admission criteria, as well as the rules and practices related to entry and settlement.

Partners provide insight into the target country's culture, studying, and the needs and expectations of prospective students, as well as potential challenges. Based on this information, joint activities are developed in the target country. The material provided to partners and applicants is transparent and truthful. SAMK uses communication and marketing channels appropriate to each target area to provide information. Where possible, the local language is also used. This ensures that the information received by applicants, students and their families is accurate. Close cooperation ensures the integrity of the information.

The activities of partners are actively monitored and regularly evaluated. Each semester, feedback is collected on activities related to the recruitment and marketing of international students, ethical practices and financial matters. Similarly, students' progress in their studies and employment is monitored. The information obtained is used responsibly in student recruitment. SAMK provides open information about its partners on its website. If critical feedback is received about a partner's activities, the feedback is handled in accordance with SAMK's feedback and quality system.

Student selection is based on criteria approved by SAMK's Management Group and Board. Degree programmes implemented as commissioned education are only organised on a case-by-case basis for specific reasons. This is to ensure that all degree students have access to the same standard study-related services, such as health care provided by the Finnish Student Health Service (FSHS) and subsidised meals at campus restaurants. Degree

students apply to study via the studyinfo.fi service, while non-degree applicants apply via the higher education institution's own application channels. A separate scholarship system has been created for students who pay tuition fees: Tuition fees and scholarships - SAMK – Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. The system offers scholarships to students who have performed well in their studies, as well as a two-tier scholarship for those who have performed well in Finnish language studies. Applications for non-degree programmes are made separately for each product in a manner to be determined individually.

Part of responsible student recruitment is ensuring a safe arrival and settlement in the country. As Satakunta does not have a student village or student foundation-organized student housing model, SAMK has actively worked with local service providers to develop safe and transparent housing solutions for international students. Similarly, settlement services such as International House Pori and International House Rauma have been established in cooperation with the cities (Pori, Rauma). These also serve international students. Students accepted to SAMK are offered pre-arrival guidance webinars and meetings on various topics, which their parents and families can also attend. In addition, incoming students can ask the SAMK ambassadors questions. Upon arrival in Finland, students are welcomed by peer tutors and student mentors, and later assisted by teacher tutors, student counsellors, and the entire higher education community.

SAMK has practical training supervisors and a partnership manager who provide advice on part-time work, practical training and finding work after graduation. The main responsibility, however, always rests with the student. Finnish legislation sets limits on the amount of part-time work permitted under the right to study and residence permits. It is essential for students to understand that their primary task is to focus on their studies, complete them, and graduate within the target timeframe. Students should be aware of this and motivated by it when applying for admission to a higher education institution.

As an education provider, the higher education institution is responsible for ensuring that students acquire skills that align with its quality system and

decisions. SAMK's message emphasizes the importance of qualifications related to integration and employment. Students may also choose to apply for practical training or jobs in their home country or elsewhere abroad, if laws, regulations and practices allow. This individual's right to make decisions about the direction of their own life carries more weight than, for example, the goal of 75% employment in Finland after graduation.

5 Predictability and Security

International cooperation offers significant benefits but may also involve security risks. In responsible international cooperation, we strive to achieve a balance between risks and benefits. Satakunta University of Applied Sciences aims to find applicants and recruit students who have the ability and motivation to succeed in their studies, who want to come to Finland and study at SAMK, and who want to find employment in Finland after completing their degree. The choice of country is primarily based on demand and information about the success of students from that country.

SAMK complies with the country-specific recommendations and restrictions of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the guidelines of various authorities. Activities may be restricted in countries where corruption is widespread or social order has collapsed. SAMK acts with particular care and avoids engaging in behaviour that is prohibited in Finnish culture. The higher education institution has a strict zero-tolerance policy on corruption, and money laundering possibilities have been eliminated from its practices.

There are often delays in students starting their studies, resulting from administrative processes and decisions that cannot be directly influenced, and their duration is difficult to estimate. SAMK aims to understand these processes and provide applicants with accurate, realistic information about them and their timely completion. The work of the authorities is supported by providing timely information on application deadlines, student selection and the start of studies. Delays caused by authorities have been addressed, for

example, by organizing online studies for students whose residence permit processes have been delayed. Admitted students are offered online guidance to ensure that their immigration and arrival in Satakunta are as well prepared and safe as possible. Regional authorities operating in Satakunta also participate in online guidance and information sessions.

An essential part of foresight is recognizing the regional challenges. Although Satakunta is an export-driven region, knowledge of the Finnish language has a significant impact on employment. International students are supported in learning the Finnish language and culture, offering up to 20 ECTS credits in Finnish. A scholarship system encourages foreign students to study Finnish, and cooperation with local associations and other parties supports not only formal language and culture learning but also informal language learning, while also promoting networking, employment, and integration into the region and Finland.

We must be able to cooperate even with countries that do not share our values and principles, and whose view of the world order we must understand. Understanding does not imply acceptance, and in some cases, we must also consider individuals or groups, regardless of or even because of the country's power politics. For this reason, the higher education and science sector needs a broad understanding and knowledge of risk-prone entities and the ability to evaluate each action on a case-by-case basis. It is important to identify and build the right national networks and operating methods, for example, with Finnish embassies, immigration authorities, and border guard services. Local operators in the region play an important role in ensuring a safe environment and atmosphere for everyone.

6 Financial and Ecological Principles

Financial and ecological principles are essential to responsibility. Tuition-fee-funded education must be financially viable for Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. Education exports are guided by financial principles and

related contractual matters, including, e.g., commissions. According to legislation and ministry guidelines, the higher education institution's annual fee revenue must cover the costs of organizing education for students who are required to pay tuition fees, including scholarships and other grants paid to students, i.e. the activity must be full-costing as a whole.

The sustainable development and responsibility programme also supports the profitability of fee-paying activities and guides international student recruitment. In its marketing plan, SAMK considers, among other factors, the environmental impact of travel. Student recruitment makes extensive use of various forms of online marketing and guidance, utilises partners and combines trips where possible to minimise the carbon footprint of air travel, for example.

Demand is considered in particular when selecting countries and regions. SAMK identifies countries with high numbers of students studying abroad and knows the key target groups and partners. Geopolitical tensions and security risks are also monitored in certain regions. Risks may relate to recruitment itself or related measures. Diversity in student recruitment is actively pursued to ensure genuinely international degree programmes, with students who enrol representing different countries and nationalities. Often, the student markets associated with this are smaller, and national networks are utilised in the target areas.

Tuition fees are paid to SAMK as specified by Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. Partners are not responsible for charging tuition fees to degree students. The partner's role may include providing paid assistance to students in choosing a suitable degree programme and in matters related to entry into the country and settlement.

7 Sustainable Marketing

Sustainable marketing is an essential part of the sustainable and ethical activities of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK). It supports the higher education institution's strategic objectives and values – community, responsibility and open-mindedness – and ensures that communication and student recruitment related to international education are conducted openly, ethically and in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

According to Satakunta University of Applied Sciences' Sustainability report (2024), the higher education institution's activities are based on the four dimensions of sustainable development: ecological, social, cultural and financial sustainability. These perspectives also guide marketing and communications. Marketing ensures that communications support equality, diversity, and transparency, and provide a realistic picture of studying at SAMK, the Satakunta region, and employment opportunities in Finland. This promotes responsible decision-making among students and sustainable education-based immigration.

SAMK's marketing emphasizes truthfulness, ethics and the student's best interests. All marketing materials and channels are based on up-to-date, accurate information and are designed to support the equal treatment of applicants and to help applicants understand the overall study experience. Marketing avoids exaggeration and ensures that the information presented is comparable with the options offered by other higher education institutions.

In its marketing and student recruitment, SAMK is committed to the Agent Code of Conduct (ACoC) of Arene and Unifi, which defines the ethical principles of international student recruitment. In accordance with this code of conduct, all partners and agents adhere to principles that emphasize:

- Ethical marketing and accuracy of information
- Transparency and honesty in all communications
- Equality and non-discrimination across all applicant groups
- Cultural sensitivity and responsibility towards host communities

- Continuous professional development and maintenance of a feedback system

Partners are familiarised with SAMK's values and operating principles and must participate in training to ensure accurate information and responsible communication with applicants from different cultural backgrounds. Feedback from international students and partners is continuously utilised in the development of activities. This ensures that marketing supports SAMK's principles of sustainable growth, honesty and transparency and promotes equal opportunities for students to apply for and succeed in higher education.

8 Process During Studies

During their studies, international students are subject to the same guidance and teaching rules as all other SAMK students. SAMK can offer the support necessary for settlement and integration within the limits of its resources. SAMK works with the regional community to offer a wide range of opportunities for meetings, interaction, and employment related to integration and settlement.

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences is responsible for enabling effective, full-time learning through pedagogical and other teaching arrangements. Regarding financial support, students who pay tuition fees are covered by the scholarship system approved by the Board of SAMK Ltd.

Students are responsible for participating in and completing their studies and learning. Students who are required to pay tuition fees are also responsible for paying these fees by the deadline set for each academic year. SAMK has separate rules that determine how tuition fees are paid, how they can be refunded, and how the right to study depends on the payment of tuition fees.

At SAMK, guidance, counselling and support for study ability are available to every student at all stages of their studies and in different life situations.

Guidance and counselling support international students' wellbeing and life management, and their progress and engagement in their studies. Teacher tutors act as the students' primary immediate guides and counsellors.

Guidance, counselling, and support are also provided by, for example, student counsellors, special needs teachers, wellbeing coordinators, contact persons for international relations in faculties, staff in international relations and student services, and multiprofessional partners such as the Finnish Student Health Service (FSHS) and parish campus workers.

SAMK regularly organises student wellbeing events and activities where students can easily meet local service providers and receive support that meets their needs. In addition, SAMK enables students to participate in CampusMoWe sports and wellbeing services at a low cost and with a low threshold. International students have access to the Finnish Student Health Service (FSHS). Otherwise, international students who are required to pay tuition fees are not, in principle, entitled to social benefits in Finland. Students and partners are informed of this appropriately at various stages of the application process.

Students have the opportunity to work within the limits of Finnish legislation. It is the responsibility of the authorities to ensure that students have sufficient funds to study full-time. Practical training plays an important role in students' studies and employment. SAMK promotes access to practical training placements in cooperation with companies and organizations that have signed partnership agreements and others.

The student union SAMMAKKO is obliged under the cooperation agreement to support international students in becoming full members of the higher education community. The employment of students graduating with a degree in Finland and Satakunta is an objective aligned with SAMK's strategy. Students may also have other goals, and these goals do not affect their studies at the higher education institution. SAMK strives to promote employment in Finland and in Satakunta.

International students are given the opportunity to learn Finnish, as language skills are a key prerequisite for employment, integration and participation.

SAMK cooperates with local associations and other parties to enable international students to participate in local community activities. Participation supports both language development and students' engagement in their place of study.

SAMK provides information to the authorities on the progress of international students' studies and other matters in accordance with the obligations imposed on higher education institutions by law.

9 Monitoring, Principles and Development of Activities

Members of the higher education community have equal rights and obligations to participate in the international activities of the higher education institution. The higher education institution has various feedback systems and initiative activities in place, which can also be utilised for the development of international activities. Staff are provided with language and cultural training and coaching in working in a multicultural environment. Staff are also informed of the results of fee-paying education activities so that they can commit to the organisation's decisions and recognise their significance for the existence of the entire organisation.

SAMK's research centres implement projects that develop solutions to support integration, educational pathways and employment, and strengthen the readiness of organisations to receive international professionals. The focus of the Research Centre for Human Functioning is work- and education-based immigration. International students benefit from the research centre's development projects in that the operating models, educational content and cooperation structures created in the projects support their integration, employment and placement in Satakunta work communities.

SAMK's quality system and annual plans are applied to international education activities from both financial and operational perspectives. This is also the best way to evaluate and develop activities from both customers'

and the organisation's perspectives. Well-functioning services, high-quality student recruitment and high-quality teaching provide Satakunta University of Applied Sciences and Satakunta with the best possible tools to succeed in this demanding task and achieve the education-based immigration goals.

Sources

ACoC 2024 = Finnish International Education Agent Code of Conduct (2024).

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