

Session: From education to customer-oriented strengthening of retention - Focus on the universities' services to support the employment of international talents

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**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**



University of Oulu

**How to Broaden International
Master's Students' Meaningful
Connections with External
Partners and Support Their
Quality Employment?**

Hanna Saarela, University of Oulu
In collaboration with Salla Hirvonen,
BusinessOulu



Service Needs of International Talents

- **~1 300 international students in eight faculties**
- 848 study places offered (2024-2025) in 21 English-language Master's programmes and three Bachelor's programmes
- >2 500 foreign-language job seekers in the Oulu region including ~1 000 unemployed jobseekers
 - Statistics do not show job opportunities for highly educated
- **Increasing numbers and diverse groups of international talent at the University of Oulu are entitled to meaningful company / employer connections and livelihood**
 - In addition to degree students, also doctoral researchers, spouses of international talent, Finnish language learners etc.
 - Challenges in creating opportunities in specific fields including e.g. international business and bio
 - Also massive need for part-time work
- **Recognising and communicating expertise and competence needs and career prospects is critical**
 - Continuous, diversified opportunities for Master's students' competence-building and steady flow of information during their entire expert path
- **Field-specific approach** helps in answering both external partners' and international talents' needs
 - Importance of aligning with the upcoming TE-24 changes



Continuous Opportunities for Company/Employer Connections Through Master's Students' Expert Path

CONTINUOUS, DIVERSIFIED SUPPORT

SUPPORT TOWARDS THE END OF STUDIES

Application

Commitment

Orientation

Study Modules

Work Periods

Thesis Work & Recruitment

Scholarships
Contribution in study modules
Commitments (preliminary) to offer internship positions

Field-specific career prospects
Virtual visits
Expert presentations

Competences valued & sought after by external partners
Hints regarding summer jobs and internships
First F2F visits

Visiting experts
Student projects & assignments
Innovation challenges & events

Internship positions
Summer jobs
Part-time work
Language training & work experience

Thesis work positions
Thesis work topics
Recruitment events
Mentoring

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Matching Study Fields and Faculties with Region's Sectors of Growth

International Talents: Study Fields

Computer Science & Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Electronics, Wireless Communications Engineering

Architecture, Electricity & Energy, Environmental Engineering, Mineral Resources & Sustainable Mining

Protein Science & Biotechnology, Molecular medicine

Epidemiology & Biomedical Data Science

Chemistry, Earth sciences, Biology, Physics

International Business Management, Business Analytics, Economics, Finance, Sustainable Marketing

Education Science, Teacher Training

Language Acquisition, Literature & Linguistics

University of Oulu: Faculties

Information Technology and Electrical Engineering

Technology

Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine

Medicine

Science

Oulu Business School

Education and Psychology

Humanities

Oulu Region / BusinessOulu: Sectors of Growth

ICT

Industry & Cleantech

Life Sciences (biotechnology, health & wellbeing)

Logistics

Trade & Services

Tourism

Creative Industries





Proposed Measures for Boosting International Talents' Quality Employment in the Oulu Region

Proposed goals 2024 ->	Facilitating International Talents' Integration	Supporting International Talents' Expert Path	Strengthening International Talents' Work Experience & Employability	Boosting Companies' Preparedness & Internationalisation
1 Strengthening of field-specificity	Presentation of field-specific career prospects and companies in the region, collaborative networks	Field-specificity in career counselling and guidance services	Internships and thesis work positions in industry and public sector	Field-specific events with partners and HEIs
2 Responding to needs and ensuring findability of information	Services and timely information in English for international talents' and families' needs	Discovery of companies' talent & competence needs and distributing the information to international talent	Hidden jobs for the reach of international talent, list of companies by field	Systematic organisation of themed events, challenge campaigns, communication of companies' successes
3 Recognising and strengthening of competences	Importance of learning Finnish language, training offering in the region, accessibility	Clarification of possible career paths, support for defining and communicating talent's own expertise	Joint projects & course assignments by companies, preparation for the realities of business world	Long-term collaboration, finding talent, support and services, assistance for 1st international recruitment in the region
4 Offering of meaningful connections and continuous support	Regional programmes (e.g. spouse programme), peer-support, strengthening of agency / participation	Workshops and information sessions, alumni events	Work life visits, language training periods, part-time work, voluntary work	Recruitment and networking events, company visits, innovation challenges

Factors affecting the careers of international graduates

Lotta Metsärinne, Career counsellor

University of Turku

The Spring Forum of International Affairs for Higher Education Institutions

16.5.2024



Yearly 2000-3000
new international
students

7-8 % of all
university students
are international

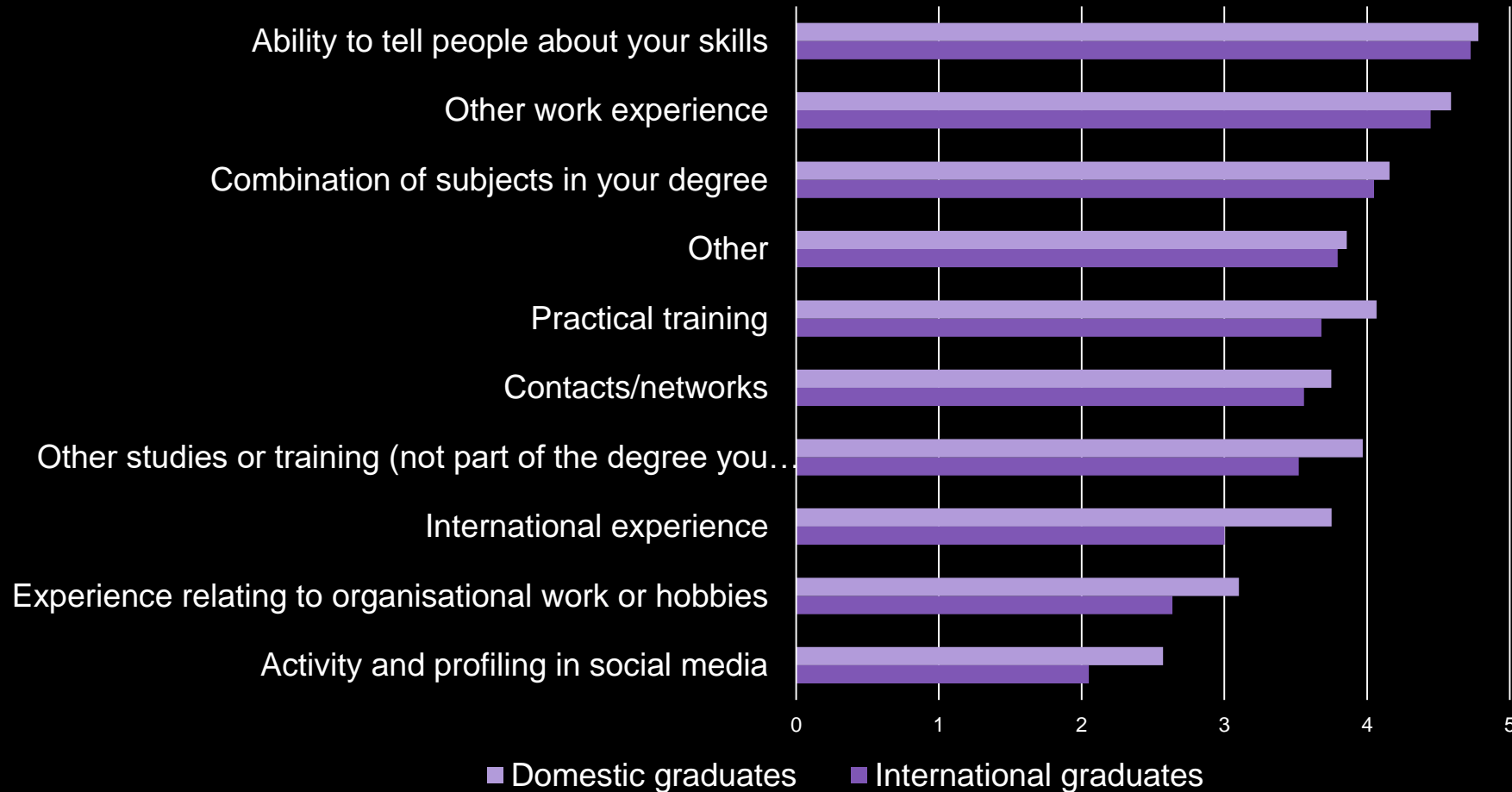
30 % move away
during the first year
and 40 % within 5
years of graduation

Those who stay have
similar types of employment
as domestic peers
→ permanent full-time jobs

What do our international students tell us about their careers and finding a job in Finland?

1) What has affected finding a job?

Factors that affect employability (Career monitoring surveys, 2021-23)



Comments (1/2)

“Language was the most significant barrier. The resources available during studies were significant but nowhere near enough.” (ICT)

“Having moved to Finland for studies and stayed for work - the factor of your contacts and network playing such an important role in your ability to find a (first) job was quite a novelty for me. It feels looking back almost impossible getting a chance as a university graduate having not worked in Finland before (even though having had work experience from elsewhere) to get a chance in application processes. [...]” (Arts)

“Do not focus on a full-time jobs right away and starting to look for a part-time or a summer job during last half of the study year/thesis work as an option.” (ICT)

Comments (2/2)

“I did a good job in my master's thesis, so I got offered to continue as a doctoral researcher.” (Electrical engineering)

“Doing several years of volunteer work to build network. Doing online courses to earn relevant industry-valued certifications in the field. Going to several CV-clinics and actively searching feedback from recruiters.” (Religions and theology)

“Network of people who recognized my skills in-person were able to refer me to jobs that have lasted 1-4 years. I found that my network and referral culture in Finland contributed the most to me landing the jobs I did. Of course, after the first step has been completed through the referral, the studies and degree from 2018 may have factored into the positives for me to land the role too.” (Communication)

2) How satisfied are university graduates with their careers 5 years after graduation?

Graduates 2018 - Career monitoring survey (Uraseuranta), 2023	International graduates working in Finland (N=369)	International graduates working abroad (N=137)	Domestic graduates (N=6485)
a) How satisfied are you with your career so far?	4,5/6	4,7/6	4,7/6
b) How satisfied are you overall with the degree you completed in 2018 in terms of your career?	4,5/6 19 %	5,0/6 61 %	4,8/6 67 %
c) The requirements of my current job correspond well with my academic qualifications?	4,1/6	4,7/6	4,8/6

Dissatisfied graduates living in Finland (1/2)

- *“After graduating [...] I was a doctoral researcher on an employment contract and grants. However, ever since I stopped my doctoral studies I have been now unemployed for almost a year, with a half a year “break” in which I was on a work try-out organised by TE-office. It appears to be very very difficult to find a job in Finland with a Master’s degree in social sciences without speaking Finnish fluently.” (Social sciences)*
- *“It’s very difficult to find jobs [...] or remote work. Usually companies require employees to speak Finnish, even for positions where the employee will communicate most of his time with international customers.” (Business and administration)*
- *“I feel I should have studied Data or front-end development. UX and service design is a sun-set studies. I feel I am not treated fairly at least in the Finnish job market. Always easily laid-off.” (ICT)*

Dissatisfied graduates living in Finland (2/2)

- *“I will say I'm content with my career so far as it can pay my bills and moreover gives me the chance to continue to live in this country but on another breath I would have wished that I am working in field related to my studies say a research work and the likes.” (Religions and theology)*
- *“I met my current employer when working on an course assignment in my last study year. I have been continuously working there since the graduation. [...] I have looked for other jobs but I have been told that I do not have enough experience/knowledge of my field. [...] The current situation might be traced back to difficulties with finding a (summer) job during my studies. I did not work in my field during my studies here apart from working on a few study projects for corporate partners (not paid, as part of courses) and freelancing for student-driven startups. This put me in bad starting position after my graduation. I was lagging behind others by 6-18 months in terms of work experience.” (Mechanical engineering)*

Satisfied graduates living in Finland

- *"I have managed to progress in my career and to do interesting work. However, I have been paid less than Finns doing similar work."* (ICT)
- *"I have chosen that life. In my home country, I could have a successful career, but I decided to stay in Finland after graduation and I don't regret my decision. However, I am not satisfied with my career."* (Social sciences)
- *"Work is fun and engaging, but the money is not very high"* (ICT)
- *"Good opportunities after receiving master degree. Still developing my skills and gaining expertise in the same field."* (Energy technology)

What about
doctoral
researchers?

During the dissertations research:

- 64 % were employed by a uni
- 58 % had a personal grant
- 26 % funded their studies by working elsewhere

5 years after degree:

- 40 % work at a university
- 75 % can use what they learned during doctoral studies

But, unemployment is
more likely for
international
researchers.

Unemployment after completing doctorate (yrs 2021-2023)

	International PhD's	Domestic PhD's
Education	43% (N=21)	10 % (N=63)
Arts and humanities	40 % (N=30)	27 % (N=174)
Social sciences, journalism and information	19 % (N=48)	19 % (N=141)
Business, administration and law	40 % (N=30)	9 % (N=69)
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	58 % (N=57)	31 % (N=183)
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	19 % (N=48)	24 % (N=75)
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	40 % (N=90)	17 % (N=231)
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	50 % (N=18)	30 % (N=30)
Health and welfare	16 % (N=75)	9 % (N=264)

Our job is far from done.

What are the next steps?

Data

- Vipunen – Placement after graduation, 2021-2023, [Placement after graduation \(vipunen.fi\)](https://vipunen.fi)
- Vipunen – Career monitoring, 2021-2023, [Career monitoring \(vipunen.fi\)](https://vipunen.fi)
 - Master's degrees and Doctoral degrees
- Aarresaari Career monitoring 2023
 - Comments and satisfaction with career



Enhancing Employability: University of Helsinki's Support for Internationals

- Asmara Riaz, University of Helsinki
- The Spring Forum of International Affairs for Higher Education Institutions
 - 16.5.2024, Seinäjoki, Finland



MULTIDISCIPLINARY DEGREE SELECTION



37

BACHELOR'S PROGRAMMES
1 IN ENGLISH



62

MASTER'S PROGRAMMES
35 ARE IN ENGLISH



33

DOCTORAL
PROGRAMMES

UH strategy 2021-2030

A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on their eyes and nose. The person has light brown hair and is looking slightly to the right.

**KNOWLEDGE
AND LEARNING
ARE FOR
EVERYONE**

A large, vibrant pink dahlia flower with many layers of petals, set against a black background.

**OPENNESS
ENHANCES
SCIENTIFIC
RESEARCH AND
COLLABORATION**

A group of people, including a woman holding a bouquet of yellow flowers, standing around a light blue bicycle. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a celebratory event.

**THE BEST
PLACE TO STUDY
AND WORK**

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching out towards the camera. The background is a blurred green, suggesting an outdoor setting with foliage.

**A LEADER IN
RESPONSIBILITY
AND
SUSTAINABILITY**

WHY SUPPORTIVE MEASURES ARE NEEDED?

Understanding these underlying rationales is essential for devising better strategies



Structural challenges

The Finnish integration process doesn't always cater to highly educated individuals' needs effectively



Challenges during studies

International students have to juggle between finances, balancing between work and studies and adapting to cultural differences



Language barriers and prejudices

Learning local languages and facing racial, national and lingual prejudices . Successful Integration involves mutual efforts from both parties.

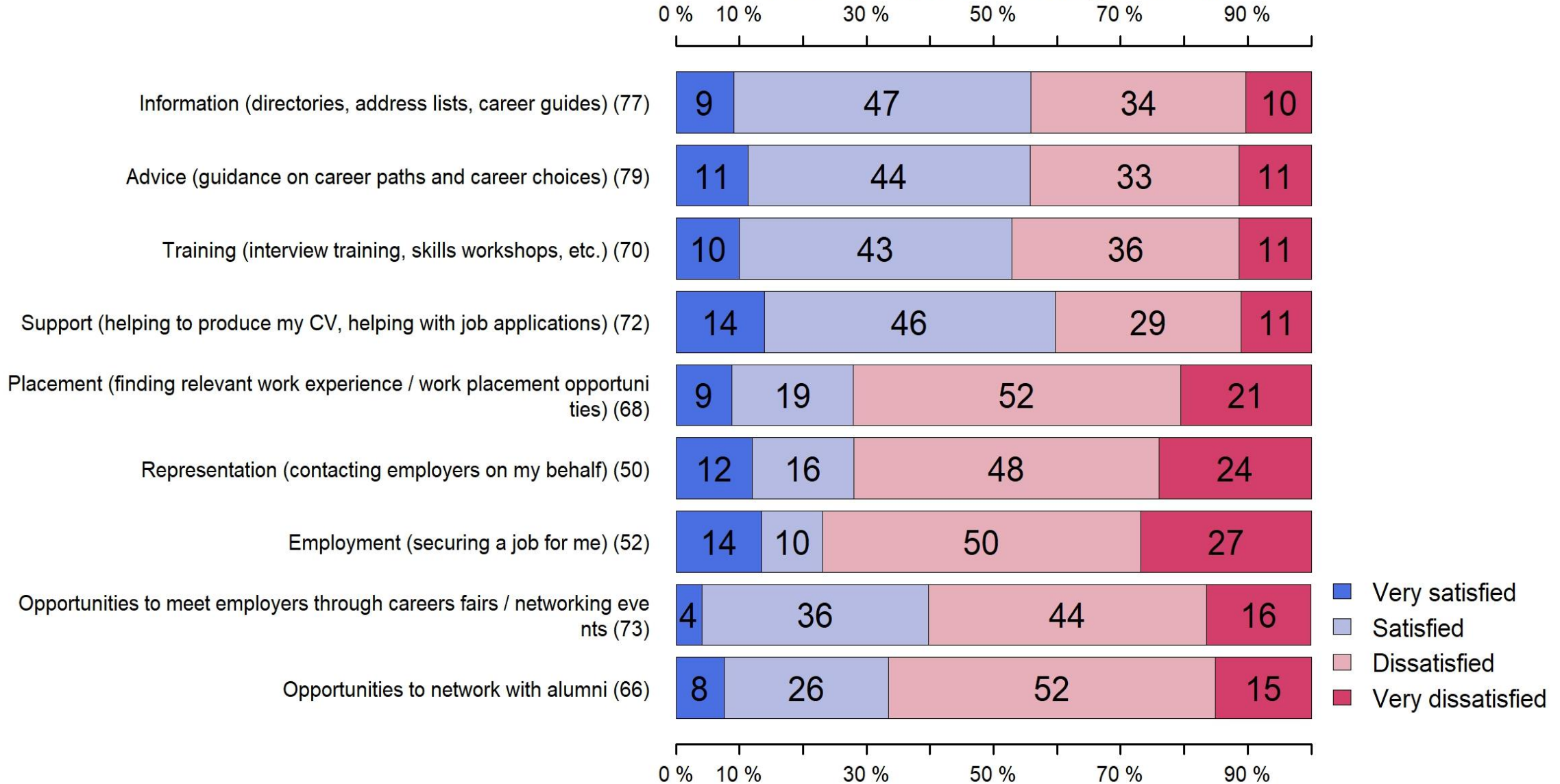


Shared responsibilities

Responsibilities are shared, rather than solely placed on internationals. Continuous updates and adaptations to diverse challenges are necessary in a changing society.

Employment/Careers Support Satisfaction Master's level non-exchange students

Ref: International Student Barometer 2022



Number in brackets is the number of given answers.

DISCOVER

INFORMATION ›

- Application information: UH website helsinki.fi & studyinfo.fi
- Events and webinars
- Blog posts & chat by students
- Admission advisors
- Admission newsletters
- Educational agents

BEFORE APPLYING ›

- Book SAT test*
- Book language proficiency test*
- Find out if you will manage financially in Finland



APPLY

APPLICATION ›

- Admission requirements studyinfo.fi
- Instructions for applying helsinki.fi
- Support from admission advisors
- Submit your application
- Apply for scholarships/loans*

ATTACHMENTS ›

- Proof of language proficiency
- Degree certificate
- Transcript of records
- Official translations*
- Programme specific other attachments*



ACCEPT & PREPARE

ADMISSION RESULT ›

- Offer of admission by email
- Instructions for next steps
- Webinars for accepted students
- Meet the conditions of your acceptance*
- Apply for housing

REGISTERING ›

- Accept student place
- Pay tuition fee*
- Register as attending/ non-attending for the academic year
- Activate IT user account
- Download certificate of student status at sisu.helsinki.fi
- Start using your University email
- Instructions for Students online

PREPARING ›

- Newsletters for accepted students
- Apply for residence permit*
- Get insured*
- Digital skills course and pre-arrival course
- App to connect with other students
- Look into job opportunities*

ARRIVE & ORIENTATE

ARRIVING ›

- Pre-arrival webinar
- Register with the Finnish authorities
- Open bank account
- Get a card and student discount for public transport (HSL)
- Support from International Student Advice and other advice teams
- Keep up to date with studies.helsinki.fi

ORIENTATION ›

- Official events and ceremonies
- Introduction to your degree programme & faculty
- Meetings with your tutor group
- Register for courses at sisu.fi
- Social activities
- Student benefits

STUDYING

- High quality degree programmes
- Versatile course selection

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- High quality degree programmes
- Versatile course selection
- Motivated teachers
- Guidance services
- Study facilities
- Digital learning environments
- Summer Studies
- Broad library services
- Courses from other Finnish universities (JOO)
- International experiences

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- Finnish Student Health Service for physical & mental well-being
- Public healthcare services
- UniSport gym and sports classes
- University's well-being events
- Prayer and meditation rooms
- Discounted & nutritious student lunches

GRADUATION

- Submit graduation request
- Certificate
- Graduation ceremony & conferment ceremony
- Possibility for further studies (master's/doctoral)

HELSINKI ALUMNI

- Discount from Unisport Gym (2 years)
- Alumni networks incl. LinkedIn & Helsinki Alumni Hub
- Alumni events
- Career services in use (1 year)
- Become a mentor
- Skills development
- Open University

INTEGRATION

- Student Union HYY
- Student organisations
- University community
- Language study plan & Finnish courses
- Becoming a student ambassador or tutor
- International House Helsinki
- Student engagement & impact

CAREER

- Workshops
- Events and fairs
- Traineeships
- Mentoring and talent programmes
- Career counseling
- UH's JobTeaser platform helsinki.jobteaser.com
- Self study materials for career planning and job seeking
- Support for entrepreneurship



• Keep up to date with studies.helsinki.fi

CAREER AND INTEGRATION SUPPORT IN UH

Career

Career Development Resources:

- Workshops
- Self-study material for career planning
- Job Teaser

Opportunities and Networking:

- Events and fairs + SIMHE events (Career Day, career fair)
- Traineeships
- Doctoral support
- Mentoring and talent programs (UniTalent, Group mentoring program)
- Support for entrepreneurship - Incubators

Guidance and Counseling Services:

- Career counseling
- Drop-in and Meet the counselor
- Traineeship guidance (traineeship subsidy)

After graduation

- Alumni networks/events
- Career counseling (1 year)
- SIMHE – Career & Education counseling (after 1 year for degree students)
- Continuous learning
- Becoming a mentor

Integration

Student Engagement and Support:

- Student Union/organizations
- University community
- Becoming a student ambassador or tutor
- International trainee program within UH (35 positions this year)

Language and Cultural Integration:

- Language study plan and Finnish courses
- SIMHE language cafe
- Kielibuusti

Talent Boost

SIMHE

Talent Boost and SIMHE at UH

Talent Boost

- Improving the employment opportunities and promote integration and inclusion for international students
- Increase the number of international degree students
- Advocate the needs and status of international talents in Finland
- Inclusiveness and openness to diversity in Finnish society

SIMHE

- Service for highly qualified internationals living in Finland
- Mainly focus on education and career counseling
- International students can attend our events and some services like language café.
- Preparatory and supplementary studies support



- Language barriers
- Cultural differences
- Limited understanding of the local job market
- Lack of networking opportunities
- Uncertainty about immigration regulations

Challenges

- Language & culture integration.
- Expanded employer networking.
- More internships/traineeships.
- Specialized career guidance.
- Student-professional mentorship.
- Alumni collaboration for guidance.
- **Continuous support**

Solutions

- Improved employment outcomes for international students
- Enhanced integration into the local community and culture
- Increased retention rates and satisfaction among international student population
- Strengthened reputation of the university as a supportive and inclusive institution

Future

More is needed

OUR CONTACT

WEBSITE



[Work and Career | Instructions for students \(helsinki.fi\)](#)

[Traineeships | Instructions for students \(helsinki.fi\)](#)

[Career planning as a PhD
SIMHE Services](#)

EMAIL ADDRESS

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**Promoting retention,
integration and employment
– what to focus on in a time
of decreasing resources?**



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