



Supporting the entrepreneurial potential of higher education

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Case Brief: Satakunta University of Applied Sciences



Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) is located in the Satakunta region at Finland's West coast. It is the largest higher education institution in that region and has six faculties, eight campuses and approximately 6,300 students. SAMK, together with a consortium of three other higher education institutes in the Satakunta region, forms the "Satakorkea", which is a body of higher education institutions with common guidelines and goals, such as the promotion of micro-enterprises across the region.

Entrepreneurship education (EE) at SAMK is focused on "**blended learning**" methods, which are integrated into curricular offers and extra-curricular activities. These methods include e-learning, independent studies, group work, contact teaching and tutoring. The goal is to increase student interest in entrepreneurship by stressing its importance as a future career option. Once students learn more about entrepreneurship, they are able to consider it from their individual starting point, e.g. their self-image, personal competencies, and networks. SAMK defines this framework as "effectual entrepreneurship".

Since 2013, the University has renewed efforts to integrate EE across all disciplines by introducing "Basics of Entrepreneurship", which is a series of lectures that form a core competence in the study curriculum. The Faculty of Business and Culture exclusively offers a Masters Programme in "Business Management and Entrepreneurship", which is taught in both English and Finnish. Students also have the option to widen their entrepreneurial education by choosing elective modules, such as "Developing a Business Idea" and "Developing an Enterprise", as well as having the option of completing their field placement or thesis in their own enterprise, with the help of the "Enterprise Accelerator". The Enterprise Accelerator is perhaps the most distinctive out of all these approaches because it facilitates students in creating their own enterprise. It includes a body of expert mentors, who are typically from SAMK's education and research staff, and occasionally from other partner organizations. These mentors help students in developing a new business plan, and aid students who are intending to acquire an existing enterprise. The Enterprise Accelerator also acts as an incubator once the initial stages of the business plan have been implemented. It has been designated as a Centre of Excellence in Education (2005 – 2006) by the Finnish Ministry of Education.

The impact so far has been the creation of nearly 200 enterprises since the inception of the Enterprise Accelerator, 14 years ago. Further information is available online on SAMK's official website (<http://samk.fi>) and its student-run Agora News Blog (<https://agorasamkinenglish.wordpress.com/>).