



THE LANGUAGE CENTRE APPROACH: SUPPORTING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' TRANSITIONS AT VARIOUS POINTS IN THEIR STUDY PATH

Authors:
Sinikka Karjalainen
Head of Development
Tiina Laulajainen
Head of Academic Affairs

FROM SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL AND LANGUAGE CENTRE (LC):

In order to support students' transition from school to University, the Language Centre needs to know about current language teaching developments at school.

- Helsingin kielilukio (Helsinki Upper Secondary School of Languages) as school partner: teacher and student visits to and from the school, joint seminars and development days for LC and school teachers.
- Participation in the yearly Koe Kampus! University info event for Upper Secondary School students.
- Training Upper Secondary School teachers in assessing oral skills.
- Language learning info material for Secondary and Upper Secondary School study counsellors.
- LC members on the Finnish Matriculation Examination Board: preparing and assessing national language tests.



Helsinki Upper Secondary School of Languages
Photo: Mari Salonen

MY UNIVERSITY: SUPPORTING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Some language studies are required in all BA/MA degrees: Finnish/Swedish, foreign language(s). The LC helps new students to get started with their language studies:

- All new students receive an *info letter* about language requirements and optional language courses.
- Faculties have *orientation weeks* where the LC study advisers and teachers tell about the language studies and answer students' questions.
- LC offers general *guidance and advising* and provides advice on *credit transfer*.
- *LC teacher tutors* help students with their language studies and specific language learning issues, including learning difficulties or anxieties.

The University's virtual desktop, *Flamma*, contains all the information students need for studying languages at the LC.

SUPPORTING STUDENT EXCHANGE

Language skills play a central role in internationalization. The LC supports both the incoming and outgoing students:

- Language courses and language testing (especially for outgoing students).
- Students can look for a language buddy in any given language in order to learn a new language or maintain their language skills.
- Language Clubs give students an opportunity to talk with others who have studied the same language or are its native speakers.
- International students can apply for the Language Course Assistant Programme and meet Finnish counterparts and contribute to language learning as native speakers.



University of Helsinki Language Centre
Photo: Linda Tammisto

FROM UNIVERSITY TO WORKING LIFE

- Workplace related competencies embedded in all language courses.
- Special courses focused on workplace language and communication skills.
- Research project on workplace language needs.
- Contacts with representatives of industry and business.
- Data from University's career surveys utilized in LC teaching.

LANGUAGE CENTRE IN BRIEF

- Courses in 16 languages
- 14,000 students from 11 faculties, 35,000 credits completed annually
- Instruction on four campuses
- Language requirements in faculties 3-25 credits

FINNISH UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL IN BRIEF

- Ca. 105,000 students yearly, aged 16-19
- Usually three years
- Finnish Matriculation Examination, gives eligibility for higher education
- Includes language studies; English most studied

Sinikka Karjalainen
sinikka.karjalainen@helsinki.fi

Tiina Laulajainen
tiina.laulajainen@helsinki.fi

www.helsinki.fi/languagecentre

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
KIELIKESKUS
SPRÅKCENTRUM
LANGUAGE CENTRE