



**Policy Document for the Student Union of Hanken School
of Economics**

Approved by the Student Council 18.9.2019

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Policy Document

The Student Union of Hanken School of Economics

The University system in Finland is founded on scientific and creative education and research, as well as on academic freedom and academic responsibility. The Student Union of Hanken School of Economics (SHS) works to ensure that everyone is given the same opportunity to an academic education.

According to the University Act, it is the Student Union's responsibility to act as a binding link between its members and advocate their social, intellectual and study- related ambitions in accordance to students' societal role. SHS guards its interests according to its mission of academic traditions as well as matters regarding the Swedish language. Hanken is SHS's closest collaborative partner.

1.1.1. Guidelines for the use of the Policy Document

The Policy Document represents the Student Union's external opinions and therefore a document that every trustee representing the Student Union externally should be aware of and follow closely. This includes when the Student Union's Executive Board participates in external events or takes internal decisions about external factors. Since the Policy Document is approved by the Student Council, who have been elected by fellow students, the Policy Document should correspond with most students' opinions. The Policy Document can also support the work of student representatives that function in Hanken's various structural branches.

If a trustee, with a justified and essential reason, wishes to act against the Policy Document, a trustee can, through a Student Union decision, with simple majority be granted special permission.

The Student Union should take a stance in political and societal questions that impact its operative work. When the Student Union or a trustee representing SHS is asked to take a stance to a question that is not mentioned in the Policy Document, the trustee is bound to consult the matter with the Student Union's Executive Board. If the time frame allows, this gives the Executive Board enough time to convene for a meeting to discuss the matter. If this proves to be impossible, the trustee is asked to both prioritize Hanken students' interests and act in a foreseeable way.

1.2. The University Structure

1.2.1 The University institution in Finland

The discussion about a structural change within the Finnish university institution continues. In the period 2008-2011, Parliament exposed plans for structural development completed through commercial mergers and restructuring the university network. Lately, commercial mergers have even been made. SHS believes that Hanken should continue to function as an autonomous university.

1.2.2. The Economic- commercial education in Finland

The education entitled in the economic and commercial areas should offer an adequate and diversified education in economic sciences, to be relevant and internationally competitive.

1.2.3. The Swedish- speaking economic education

Hanken should continue its role as bearing the key responsibility of the Swedish- speaking economic education in Finland. SHS works to support Hanken in maintaining this status even in the future. The Swedish- speaking economic and commercial education should not increase further on a university level in Finland. At the same time, SHS supports the collaboration between other universities and vocational universities, to offer a more diverse course selection. Thus, it should be noted that the cooperation does not jeopardize Hanken's position as an independent university or devalue the status of graduates in comparison to a vocational university.

1.2.4. Advocacy in the economic- commercial area

SHS is the only remaining Student Union in Finland with members that exclusively study economy and commerce. This is in aftermath of the structural development where both Helsingin Kauppakorkeakoulu fused with the University of Aalto and Turun Kauppakorkeakoulu fused with Turun Yliopisto. This gives SHS a larger sense of responsibility to look over the advocacy for students in the economic and commercial sector. SHS strives to improve the relationships amongst student organizations to ensure the role of economy and commerce students within university politics.

2. The University

2.1 The Examination structure and the dual model

The University structure in Finland consists of universities and vocational universities. The Bologna agreement makes movement between the two possible. Students should be well informed about the rights that the agreement entails. The development of the bachelor's degree should, in the future be directed in a way that a bachelor's degree is enough even on the Finnish job market.

Thanks to the Bologna agreement, students have the possibility to complete a master's degree even after receiving a vocational university degree. An examination from a vocational university is not comparable to a university degree. SHS believes that Hanken should ensure that students with a vocational degree have enough knowledge to successfully complete a master's degree at Hanken. The Student Union advises that bridge studies complement the previous examination to the entity a student wishes to change to. These bridge studies to a university should include qualifications for academic thinking and science based insightful opinions.

The dual model should be the starting point for universities and vocational universities on all degree levels even in the future. The Bachelor's degree is clearly and distinctly different than a vocational university degree. These two are not comparable. Universities and vocational schools educate experts for different tasks. University studies require an academic and

theoretical thinking already in introduction studies, and due to this, introductory courses cannot be held in unison between university students and vocational university students.

However, collective support functions between universities and vocational universities can be arranged, such as introductory courses in foreign languages. The joint ventures between Hanken and vocational universities, the fact that a degree from a vocational university is not equivalent to a bachelor's degree from a university, should be taken into consideration.

2.1.1. The Two Step Model

SHS opposes the current possibility to change the current model to the two-step-model. To not have study rights for both phases of bachelor and master studies, through the same acceptance process, can increase unhealthy competition among students and further increase the amount of stress and pressure for students to be successful with their studies.

2.1.2. The financial structure of Hanken

The University's main areas of responsibilities include educating, researching, societal interaction and the possibility of continuous learning. The financial model of the University has a focus on students' throughput, but this focus should not be on the expense of exams or teaching.

The cornerstones of the public financing should cover most university costs. SHS takes a positive stance to Hanken's additional collection of private donations and exposes the funding of research to competition. The financial structure should encourage the production of high-level graduates, and not only credit the number of graduates. Hanken shall not become a so called 'diploma factory'. Even the employment of the graduates, regardless of their workplace, location of living, as well as student response among the graduates, should be taken into consideration the financial structure.

2.2 Courses at Hanken

2.2.1. Acceptance to Hanken

The number of accepted applied students should be correlate the need of the current job market. The language test in Swedish should be maintained to ensure that the accepted applicants have adequate skills in the language to be successful in their studies. SHS believes that Hanken should keep the entrance exam for a business education intact, because the branch is not studied in secondary level education. For this purpose, the entrance exam ensures that the accepted applicants have enough knowledge and motivation to be successful students in economics. The English-speaking acceptance rate shall not increase on behalf of the Swedish speaking acceptance rate.

During their first year at Hanken, students at Hanken study basic courses in economics and form a diverse background to the subject. This means that the choice of a major is done at the end of the first study year. SHS advocates that this model is kept in the future and all students can freely choose their majors and minors.

The Student Union believes that students accepted to Hanken should be the best possible. Due to this there should be several different ways of being admitted to Hanken. SHS supports the so called 'secondhand- quota' application system to the university. This quote should be based on accepted applicants through the entrance exam.

2.2.2. Courses at Hanken

The education at Hanken is of high quality and courses should be offered throughout the year. Especially courses that can cause potential bottlenecks should be offered more often, in accordance to request. This allows for improved flexibility in studies. Courses in the summer should be an appealing alternative and a possibility, regardless of a student's major or year of study, to increase effectivity and pace of studies.

Course evaluation should be functional and transparent. Students at Hanken should have the chance to anonymously propose feedback to courses and thus, have an impact on their education. SHS diligently works to make the content useful in accordance to skills needed in the workplace and enhancing tools needed in problem solving situations. This is channeled through modern education methods regarding the fact that the university examination should be research based.

The Student Union supports flexible course choices, test arrangements, education methods and inclusion of studies. SHS supports flexible alternatives in class learning methods but considers that the in-class education should be kept. This should be done to maintain that the instruction is allocated in accordance to different learning methods and a possibility for social communication. SHS works for all these previously mentioned to satisfy students' demands.

SHS works to have its student representatives actively present in the planning of the course availability and expressing their viewpoints regarding study programs and studies at Hanken as a whole.

2.2.3. Languages at Hanken (Swedish and English)

The Swedish language is a perquisite for Hanken's existence. Hanken's purpose is to educate Swedish-speaking economists. The English language is important to maintain competitive advantage within both research and education. Since the role of the Swedish language secures Hanken's position, it must be kept in mind regarding language questions. Cooperation with other universities should not threaten the position of the Swedish language.

2.2.4. University assistance to students

The limited study time stipulates a detailed course plan to be set in place for a student to complete their degree in the desired time. The university should support students in the planning process during their first year at Hanken. Each student is responsible to create an individual study plan that provides guidelines for his/ her studies. Universities should offer advising for this. Since Hanken requires its students to plan their studies on a long-term basis, Hanken should aim to offer courses that are synonymous with the long-term study plan. If needed, Hanken should assist in possible adjustments and/ or updates regarding the study plan. The assistance should not be eliminated after this but maintained on a continuous basis. SHS presumes that the academic advising at Hanken is easily accessible and has student's personal life situation as reference point in the planning process.

2.2.5. Digitalization of studies

Hanken ought to be a modern university and should maintain pace in technological advancements. However, digitalization should not happen on the expense of the social factor. New digital solutions should be used if similar opportunities cannot be guaranteed to

students. In the planning stages of new digital solutions, students with special needs should be taken into consideration.

2.2.6 The Open university and contract teaching

The Open university should be maintained as an educational alternative. The Open university offers students a possibility to increase their level of basic education as well as being admitted to a university, based on the completed courses. However, it should not be possible to complete a full examination through the Open university system. The aim of the Open university is to offer additional education.

The admission percentage through the Open university to Hanken should be limited, since majority of admissions should continue to take place through grades and the entrance exam. This is to ensure that all applicants have equal admittance chance, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

2.2.7. Questions related to Equality

Hanken and SHS are equal and non-discriminating organs. Everyone should have the same opportunities and be respected regardless of situation. Equality representatives are offered at Hanken, SHS and SSHV. These representatives can also be contacted anonymously. SHS has a separate document 'The Equality Policy', that specifies this in more detail. SHS considers feminism and equality to be synonymous concepts. In questions related to equality, SHS chooses to use the word 'equality', since SHS wants to accentuate that language-based questions are taken into consideration.

2.2.8. Internationalization

Finland's international competitive strengths are based predominantly on the country's high level of education and research. The high ranked education produces a distinguished workforce, while the research provides innovations and inspires foreign skills to establish themselves in Finland. For Hanken to compete with the international opponents, the university should profile itself and strengthen its key areas of expertise. Areas of expertise in excellent education and research are sought after. The university should fortify its cooperation with universities abroad.

2.2.9. Internationalization at Hanken

The Student Union believes that Hanken should be the most international university in Finland. Internationalization is important for students since it is one of Hanken's and Hanken students biggest competitive advantages on the market.

2.2.10. Tuition free education

The education at Hanken should continue to be tuition-free for all students regardless of one's nationality and educational background. Every person should have the same opportunity to study, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Possible fees should not threaten talented international students to not apply to Hanken. SHS therefore believes that the current fees implemented for students outside the EU/EES area are constituted as unnecessary.

2.2.11. Collaboration between universities

Collaboration between universities increases the variety of courses available to students at Hanken. SHS particularly supports the collaboration that Hanken has with globally ranked

universities internationally and encourages Hanken to develop the international cooperation to allow all its students to gain from the partnership. The collaboration with other universities shall not pose any risks to Hanken's position as an independent business school.

2.2.12. The exchange period

The Student Union takes a stance regarding the mandated exchange period implemented by Hanken. All Hanken students should have the opportunity, regardless of current socioeconomic status, to travel as an exchange student for a semester or participate in an internship abroad during their study period.

As a part of Hanken's bachelor's degree requirements, are all students required to participate in a semester abroad. This can be done by being an exchange student or through a work internship. Both alternatives support the international experience that the university requests. The two alternatives are considered equal for Hanken students to choose the option that better tailors one's individual current interest and life situation the best.

Flexible exchange opportunities should be formed through university partnerships, where the partnering university's education standards are at least comparable to Hanken. SHS demands that Hanken takes advantage of its valuable international authority and continuously strives to seek new university partnerships on a higher level. The election process should be concise and transparent. Hanken should be able to offer a variety of appealing exchange places that are equal or greater than the standard of studies that Hanken offers its students.

Hanken should support its students to a significant degree, financially, since the exchange period is compulsory. Differences in the academic year should be taken into consideration, to ensure that the departure and arrival (and arrival back to Hanken studies) goes smoothly in relation to the matter.

The Student Union believes that Hanken should in the future be able to offer people in special cases (in accordance to the examination charter 6a§) an exemption to the exchange.

2.2.13. Research at Hanken

The quality of research produced at Hanken is a prerequisite for the existence of the university. The quality of research should be on an elite international level and relevant with developments in the world and the present-day society.

2.2.14. Hanken Facilities

The facilities at Hanken should be maintained in accordance to the needs of students. There should be a variety of areas intended for studying in groups and independently. Hanken students should have the possibility to eat lunch at Hanken even on occasions where the university is hosting external events or seminars or conferences during scheduled class times.

2.2.15. Alumni operation

As a Hanken graduate, one should have the possibility to be part of the alumni operation hosted by the university. Alumni with a background in the Student Union activity should also have opportunity to partake in SHS- UF operational work. The alumni network is a unique way to create a contact field between students and the job market. This can also help a student in his or her career choices. At the same time is the alumni operation a way to uphold the fellowship after graduating.

2.2.16 Student Representatives

Students are an essential part of the university, and rightfully so are students entitled to have a say in the university's decision process. Hanken should be democratic in the sense that students should be treated as equal members in all Hanken's agencies and groups that they are a part of.

3. Government and Municipality support to students during study period

3.1 The Economy

3.1.1. The Study Grant

SHS considers that the current study grant for studies should exist and be balanced with the governmental assistance so that the study grant is not solemnly based on loans. A monthly study subsidy should give all persons the equal opportunity to study. The study grant should not be based on the expected study performance pace which currently stands at five study points per month of assistance. The study grant should be monitored on a regular basis and increase in accordance with development in societal expenses. The study grant should not be affected due to parental income when the person turns of legal age (18 years). SHS takes a positive stance to added support of the study grant for providers (i.e. single mothers/fathers).

The income basis for receiving grants should be in place so that grant assistance is not paid to people who are not in immediate need of the grants. However, the income basis should be high enough so that diligent students are not punished for their hard work. SHS considers the current income basis (2019) to be too low and should be increased in the future.

3.1.2. The Universal Housing Assistance

The Student Union positively supports that students are from now on (2018) part of the general housing assistance system. It is advantageous that the housing assistance is no longer affected based on the number of study points received. At the same time, the housing grant reflects that rent costs are better than before. SHS finds that the government's assumption of shared finances in a household should be investigated.

3.1.3 The Student Loan

SHS position to the student loan is positive. The loan system gives students the opportunity to carry out an affordable loan. SHS considers it positive that students are rewarded when they graduate within scheduled time and for this reason should be able to use a share of the loan. The loan interest is currently at a respectable level but should increase in accordance to developments in economic expenses. An increase in the interest rate of the loan should not be on behalf of the study income received (see Basic income for greater detail of the term).

3.1.4 Basic Income

The term basic income are in normal contexts associated with a type of average citizen's income, where all citizens without counter performance, automatically should receive a monthly sum of money in order to cover basic needs such as food and rent, in addition to other income. The basic income should replace several of the current grants such as

unemployment assistance and the study grant. SHS takes a critical standpoint to the support for basic income, as it requires further research in terms of how it affects occupation and wellbeing before decisions can be reached. Despite this, SHS is open to the idea of basic income or other assistance opportunities if it proves to be a better option for students and the society, in comparison to the current model. If government facilitated investigations are done in the field of basic income, students should be a central part of the investigation.

3.2. Student health services and public policy

3.2.1. Finnish Student Health Service

The wellbeing of students is one of the most valuable prerequisites for successful studies. The Finnish Student Health Service (FSHS) should offer high standard health, dentist, and mental services to students in a way that promotes students' overall wellbeing. The Act on health care for students in higher education will go into effect on January 1, 2021. This change will be significant because the new reform will include expanding health services to students at Finnish vocational universities. SHS should work towards making FSHS a better alternative in comparison to the municipality health services offered to students. There should also be a possibility for special health care at FSHS. It should be possible to receive service in Swedish and English.

It should be easy to contact FSHS and students should be able to get access to health services within a reasonable time, despite the introduction of vocational university students to FSHS. The service fee for FSHS should be kept reasonable. The Student Union takes a positive stance to guaranteed therapy.

3.2.2. Unisport

Hanken has been a shareowner of Unisport since 2018 and both the university and the Student Union are represented in the Unisport governing board with an excellent opportunity to make an impact. SHS should encourage its members to use the services offered by Unisport and work to improve the relationship between SHS and Unisport. Since the gym facilities in Aalto's old building have closed, SHS should seek out new and viable alternatives for Hanken students in Helsinki. The same opportunity to Unisport is not available in Vaasa and therefore SHS should work closely together with SSHV to ensure that similar solutions can be implemented in Vaasa as well.

3.2.3 Wellbeing at Hanken

Stress and mental health are part of many Hanken student's everyday lives. Through Hanken's wellbeing group, the Student Union actively co-operates with other health-actors to improve the daily life of students at Hanken. SHS should ensure that the focus remains to promote student wellbeing and actively works to prevent mental illness. This should not only be done just to increase the pace of study ability, reaching study credits and examination in mind.

3.3. Public Transportation and Living conditions

3.3.1 Helsinki

A functional public transportation system decreases the necessity to move to central Helsinki, where cost of living is significantly more expensive. Since the introduction of the zone system to Helsinki Region Traffic (HSL), student discounts have been negatively affected for many students in the metropolitan area. SHS actively works on re-implementing the previous student discount policy that decreased transportation costs by 50% and discounts on single fare tickets. SHS also supports initiatives to increase the availability of student housing closer to the university, in order to allow Hanken students to have more reasonable living options. A pressing matter is the need of accessible transportation and flexible living alternatives. Biking is an environmentally friendly option and therefore SHS supports the expansion of city bikes in Helsinki as well as improved bike paths, to make biking both safer and a more appealing mean of public transport.

3.3.2. Vaasa

The public transportation system in Vaasa is a possibility but since there is no available student discount on a single fare, many students choose to use other means of transportation for longer distance journeys. SHS works on improving the discount issue on single fare tickets in Vaasa. SHS also supports the use of city bikes in Vaasa as well as improving bike paths to guarantee safety. SHS advocates for increased availability of student housing in the near vicinity of the university in Vaasa. This ensures that Hanken students have more affordable living alternatives.

4. The role of the Student Union in society

4.1 General

SHS acts as an external advocacy organization for its members. The interest advocacy work and legitimacy of the Student Union is based on the principle that all students at Hanken are member of the Student Union of Hanken School of Economics.

4.2 External Social Advocacy

Externally SHS functions as a connection between its students and society. SHS oversees students' interests to represent them on an array of student platforms to ensure that Hanken students' interests are embodied in the best possible way.

A stance on society issues that primarily concern studies, the university, the economic work sector, the Swedish language, or student welfare related questions is the starting point for external social advocacy at SHS. The Student Union carries its social responsibility and can take stance to matters that are of interest to SHS and Hanken students. SHS also a member of the organization SYL, the National Union of University Students in Finland, which represents all university students in Finland. SHS, as its own organization, is not obligated to agree to all SYL's contentions. SHS works to have its students voice heard within SYL.

National matters that impact other university students outside of SHS are primarily handled through SYL. SHS is a politically disengaged organization, but can take stances to political matters and support political parties that actively seek to improve the interests of the Student Union and Hanken students. SHS can support and encourage Hanken students that seek

nomination in municipality elections, national elections, or EU- Parliament elections, if it is done equally and without any financial burden to the Student Union.

SHS is the only independent Student Union for students representing the economic-mercantile sector as well as the largest Swedish speaking economic mercantile education in Finland. This places SHS in a unique position to embody business students in Finland in a diverse set of contexts.

SHS seeks to increase the value of its trademark ‘Hankeit’ among interest groups and the commerce industry. SHS advocates to send press releases about trustee elections and significant happenings in and around SHS.

In cooperation with other Swedish speaking student organizations, SHS is a strong advocate for the Swedish speaking student culture in Finland. SHS supports the existence of an interest associations that advocates Swedish speaking student organizations. SHS should to some extent, if possible and interest, to work together with other Swedish speaking student organizations and student associations in local questions for example, where the Swedish language unites and creates a distinctive synergy. SHS supports the role of the Swedish language in Finland and the Swedish speaking university education.

4.3 Sustainable Development

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges in society today and SHS is a strong advocate for discussions regarding sustainable development and implementing sustainable initiatives that are economically viable. Through the operative work at the Student Union, SHS aims to make its members knowledgeable about global issues and sustainable development. The Student Union should also serve as a forerunner for its members in making environmentally friendly choices. This encourages all activities hosted by the Student Union to have an ecological origin.

4.4 The Student Union Fee

SHS strives to develop its economy to maintain its activities, regardless of the size and amount of the Student Union fee. SHS strives to improve its activities for all its members, to ensure that all members are aware of what SHS does and how every student can benefit from their membership. SHS supports the compulsory student union fee and should actively engage in discussions around the topic.

4.5 Development projects

SHS can choose to participate in a plethora of development projects if there are enough resources and interest to do so. There should be a possibility for the members of the Student Union to be part of and/ or engage themselves in development projects that the Student Union is part of. Financial participation in a development project should be well argued.

4.6 International Students in Finland

SHS supports Hanken’s profile as an international business school and therefore the Student Union is constantly working on improving the integration process of our international students at Hanken. SHS also supports initiatives aimed at encouraging international students to stay in Finland following graduating from Hanken, which simultaneously increases their likelihood to find a job and further assimilate into the Finnish society. Everyone should have the same opportunity to receive an education, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Even international students should have right to a tuition free university education. The decision to mandate a tuition fee for students outside the EU/ESS has thus far not proven effective enough and should be removed, since this law only applies to handful of students and creates unfair injustice. The Student Union fee can also be an additional stress influencer which negatively impacts the wellbeing between students.