

The Lifelong Learning Strategies of Finnish Universities

Paula Lindroos
Centre for Continuing Education
Åbo Akademi University

Siru Korkala
University of Helsinki
Palmenia Center for
Continuing Education

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Layout: Kati Rosenberg

Additional information: Secretary General Hanna-Riikka Myllymäki

University Continuing Education Network in Finland (UCEF)

c/o University of Helsinki

P.O Box 58, 00014 University of Helsinki

tel. +358 50 463 3364

<http://www.ucef.fi>

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Foreword

The Finnish Ministry of Education had a committee on lifelong learning in universities during year 2005. The committee was set up to look into the universities' lifelong learning strategies and their implementation in degree education; the use of open university instruction in degree education and in other adult education; and to look into the situation, structures and financing base in university continuing education. This committee published a report which focuses on the University Lifelong Learning and its development. In this report universities were recommended to review and revise their Adult Education Strategies. The Ministry of Education also requested that the universities formulate their lifelong learning strategies as part of the review of their 2007 operations.

The Ministry of Education made a proposition to University Continuing Education Network in Finland UCEF to analyse the lifelong learning strategies that universities formulated. This proposal was accepted, and UCEF formed a steering committee for this project in cooperation with the Finnish Universities Rectors' Council. The members of the steering committee were secretary general Liisa Savunen, director Kauko Hämäläinen, director Kari Seppälä and secretary general Hanna-Riikka Myllymäki. Director Paula Lindroos and researcher Siru Korkala wrote the analysis and were also members of the steering committee. The findings and conclusions of this analysis are those of the writers'.

Introduction

Lifelong learning is defined as one of the guiding principles in Finnish Education policy. At the same time knowledge, skills and the opportunity for acquiring them and staying up-to-date has become one of the main issues both in succeeding in working life and in active societal participation. In 2002 the Finnish Parliamentary Committee on Adult Education raised the issue of having opportunities for developing and updating the knowledge and skills of the academically educated. This analysis of lifelong learning in the universities was completed based on the data provided by the universities to the Finnish Ministry of Education in February 2007. The Strategies on lifelong learning by 16 different universities were analysed.

In addition to the contents analysis, the report also aims to provide background information on the development of continuing education as part of the European educational policy and references to how the resources are allocated when responding to challenges. The analysis has taken into account the current governmental programmes referring to university level continuing education, the draft proposal regarding The Education and Research Development plan and as applicable the university operational and financial plans with regards to the status as well as plans for the further development of institutes of higher education and the work relating to this.

In addition the report considers the challenges of the university policy reforms in the context of lifelong learning. This analysis, completed during autumn 2007, was a project requested and financed by the Finnish Ministry of Education and was carried out in mutual co-operation by The University of Helsinki, Palmenia Center for Continuing Education and Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Center for Continuing Education. The process of strategy analysis was co-ordinated by an advisory group which had representatives from the Finnish Council of University Rectors and the Continuing Education Network in Finland.

1 Lifelong learning in Finnish Universities

At government programme level, the know-how and lifelong learning are seen as premise for Finnish prosperity, industrial policy and as a starting point for competing at an international level. The development of globalisation has been a strong determining factor with both societal and financial implications. The high level of competence of the Finnish population, excellence and the rapid transfer of innovations into production process are seen as the factors for Finnish competitive edge in the global market. The changing and ever-increasing demands of the working life are responded with a targeted, high quality education, the access to which the Finnish system aims to safeguard. This necessitates even closer cooperation between the education providers and the working sector.

The draft Teaching and Research (2007–2012) Development programme by the Finnish Ministry of Education highlights adult education as one of the key areas for development. The adult education programme includes the complete reform of vocational and professional adult education, the opening of new opportunities for adult learners and utilising former knowledge by making the recognition of qualifications, knowledge and experience gained abroad more flexible.

The forthcoming *Professional Continuing Education reform* starts from the premise that the opportunity of updating the knowledge of the academically educated would be equal to those educated at other levels. The financing opportunities of further university education are in a pivotal position with regard to the university legal entity reform. For example, the financing models and opportunities in extension studies and projects are currently under review.

The short-term challenges for the universities, amongst others, are the opportunities to respond to the changing needs of working life, the diverse learners and the needs of the students in different phases of their life. These issues are highlighted in the National Education policy even more than they were when the strategy of university lifelong learning was formulated. As an example, in 2007 the government programme highlighted a proposal for apprenticeship type education at university level extension studies.

1.1 Continuing Education as part of Lifelong Learning in the Universities

Lifelong learning is defined as "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence within a personal, civic, social and /or employment-related perspective".

The definition of lifelong learning in the universities is traditionally linked to adult education, i.e. the part of education which is not directly part of compulsory or further education.

From this basis it must also be understood that the universities often see themselves as a key service provider for lifelong learning including the interaction with surrounding society, which also manifests itself as connecting the lifelong learning within working life. The Universities Act defines the role of adult education as influencing society by promoting the societal impact of its activities.

Also, according to the Universities Act (645/1997, 715/2004), the universities shall confer education leading to (various) degrees. In addition the universities may also provide continuing professional education and Open University education.

The decision by the Ministry of Education regarding the Open University education fees (83/1993), defines the Open University education as a public revenue earning deliverable. So far only the fee status of specialisation studies, not of extension studies as a whole, is defined by the Act. The university specialisation study programmes and other extension study policies should be developed in such a way that different faculties can provide meaningful university level educational and syllabus packages.

Those participating in university extension studies will endeavour to improve and deepen the professional skills they require at work. Open University students may have other educational objectives, some of which relate to professional development as in extension studies – the other may relate to more general non-formal educational goals.

1.2 The mature student at university

OECD state in their report, *Education policy analysis* (2001), the definitions in different countries to be very varied, sometimes based on age and/or educational background and at other times on the forms of education provision. The internationally comparable definition takes student attributes as the starting point, defining an adult student as someone aged 25–64, who has rejoined the education system sometime after the first stage.

According to this definition, the university level mature students include the basic Masters and conversion study programme participants as well as the students entering via the open route. The actual university level continuing education is organised mainly as part of Open University studies, extension studies and specialisation studies (The Finnish Ministry of Education publications 2007:26).

The fore mentioned OECD report states that in Finland the definition of adult education has formerly been linked mainly to the educational methods offered by any particular institution or education provider. Lately the definition, however, has been based on the qualities of individual participants.

In 2005 approximately a quarter of the new students entering the university were aged 25 or over. (The Finnish Ministry of Education publications 2007:26). Manninen ja Engblom (2004) highlighted the age profile of Finnish university students significantly differing from those in other European countries.

The reasons for this are that the majority of undergraduate university students start their studies relatively late and their end goal is usually to reach the Masters level.

The ever-increasing proportion of Finnish university students are other than those entering from the upper secondary level education. Although these students are not classified as mature students by definition, the relatively large proportion of mature students set new challenges for the university, for example by having to provide opportunity for part-time studying.

2 The key areas of EU lifelong continuing education

At the centre of the European Continuing Education policy is the Communication from the European Commission 2006. *Adult learning: It is never too late to learn*. Brussels, *It is always a good time to learn*, and the *Action Plan on Adult Learning, It is always a good time to learn* (2007). The general objective of the Action Plan is to implement the five key messages established in the Communication *It is never too late to learn*: to remove barriers to participation; to increase the quality and efficiency of the sector; to speed up the process of validation and recognition; to ensure sufficient investment; and to monitor the sector. Education is seen to be the key element both in achieving the Lisbon Agenda as well as enabling personal development. The EU defines adult education as any education that is completed after the adult basic education.

Particular attention is given to recognising prior learning, developing European Quality systems and taking advantage of research more effectively. Adult education is increasingly seen as forming part of the labour, social, and immigration policy. Particular attention must be paid to re-training due to changes in the needs of the working sector. Although the needs of working life are strongly emphasised in the various discussion papers, also securing a wide-ranging non-formal general education and voluntary adult education is also mentioned, although not as strongly. (Hämäläinen, 2007).

According to the conclusions reached by Hämäläinen (2007), following take the centre stage in Continuing Education in Europe:

- the long-term competence training of specialist expert groups
- solving the issues relating to problems caused by changes in age distribution of population
- providing the tools for continuing education to solve future problems in the specialist fields
- to enhance the integration of basic education and continuing education to create a continuum between basic and extension studies within the different fields
- increasing the visibility of continuing education at the meetings of the EU Ministries of Education

Finland is clearly at the forefront in the provision of university continuing education as demonstrated by several projects and reports such as the European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN) projects and the research paper *Adults in Higher Education* (Mark et al, 2004).

Removing barriers to participation is highlighted in the fore mentioned EU communication, whereas in Finland the widening participation is already at a very high level. Also the effect of basic education being a determining factor in entering continuing education is lower in Finland than in other European countries.

2.1 The Challenges of University Lifelong Learning

The agenda for lifelong learning in Europe challenges the universities to develop course options and to open their doors to a diverse range of students. The wider study opportunities thus form a key component in lifelong learning.

The European University Association (EUA) in their Trends V (2007) report found that although lifelong learning could be presumed to have a key role in the universities development process, this does not seem to be the case. On the contrary, it is mainly the structural development that has been brought to the forefront. However, either the economic development or the demographic changes seem to have brought the issue to the forefront again. Due to an ageing population, the universities are getting into a situation where it will become necessary either to recruit increasing numbers of foreign students or students of

varying ages. Thus, one might think that the universities are actively looking into broadening the scope of their courses and directing their activities to a diverse range of student groups.

The Trends V-report by the EUA mapped out how the focus on educational policy is visible in the universities operational environment. According to the report there are only a few signs, or in some cases none at all, of the national debate for lifelong learning strategies. So although lifelong learning has been highlighted in the education policy debate throughout the Bologna process, on a national level it has not really led to much action.

2.2 The widening of study opportunities and student profiles

The educational opportunities and the development of the working population, linked to university level continuing education, have been considered in the European Education Policy. The objective of widening the access to higher education, in order to ease increasing the competence level, is outlined in the EU commission communication *Action Plan on Adult Learning* (2007).

The significance of the Universities in continuing education is also growing as an ever-increasing portion of the ageing population are highly educated and hence providing the opportunity for updating qualifications must be taken care of. It is also estimated that approximately half of the new job vacancies require higher education.

2.3 The Bologna process

The reactions to pressure for change have varied within the EU member states and the universities within the EU. Although basic education has been harmonised according to the Bologna declaration, the outcomes for continuing education still vary in different countries. Recognising and accrediting prior learning and determining the key competences are considered important and discussion on these has started but both are still at an early stage of deliberation.

The implementation of ECTS system will also be a big challenge. The system is based on measuring the learning results and the student workload. This also touches university continuing education. At the same time, the universities have the opportunity to review via the key competences, those syllabus areas which should be learned during basic education and those that can be taught during extension studies.

The university continuing education is being further developed as part of the Bologna process BeFlex-project, co-ordinated by the EUCEN. In this project, seven university continuing education organisations consider the lifelong learning structures and practices conformable to the Bologna process. In Finland the University of Helsinki is taking part in this project.

2.4 The Organising of Continuing Education

Organising continuing education within the universities also varies. In those countries where the provision of continuing education is strong, such as in England, France and Finland, there are separate institutions focusing on continuing education. In some countries within the university administration, there are officers who assist the faculties in organising continuing education. In several countries the focus of continuing education is on offering part-time masters degree level education to those with lower degrees.

The universities in most European countries organise continuing education and Open University tuition as part of their tertiary level role and in order to strengthen them locally. Although the methods of organising and financing their tuition vary significantly, the target groups are similar and the contents broadly speaking the same (Open University, vocational and professional continuing education, studia generalia and the University of the Third Age). Very few of the European university continuing education centres have their own research and development activity, which is common in Finland.

The Finnish University Continuing Education system is considered to be top class at a European level and even the rest of the world, in terms of level of participation, courses on offer and quality (Schaeper, 2007). The Finnish structure based on centralised activity, independent institutes and at the same time the co-operation between the faculties guarantees professionalism, cost-effectiveness and quality. The nationwide coverage is also unique in the Finnish university continuing education system. The Finnish university continuing education stands on a strong foundation, from which the development of lifelong learning can continue to be further built upon.

2.5 The financing

The general proposal by the EU is that the governments of the Member States will be responsible for the new long-term continuing professional development and training the groups with special needs (immigrants, long-term unemployed etc). (The European Commission, 2007). One reason for the government and EU participation in professional development and the updating training is that the business organisations find it difficult to commit to training which may substantially facilitate staff changing jobs. The significance of training provided by the employers will be emphasized as a competitive factor as the labour shortage grows. (Hämäläinen, 2007).

The OECD report *Promoting adult learning 2005* outlines the role of the government as: 1) promoting well-designed co-financing arrangements, 2. creating the structural preconditions for raising the benefits to adult learning, 3. improving delivery and quality control and 4. working to improve policy coordination and coherence. Especially the need for developing the financing of non-vocational education is emphasized and their general educational role when compared to the universities.

3 The content analysis of the strategy of university lifelong learning

The content analysis of the strategy of university lifelong learning has been completed based on the material and documents provided by the universities to the Finnish Ministry of Education. The analysis includes a description of how willing each university is to promote lifelong learning. The strategies do not necessarily answer all the questions. For example it was not possible to extract the assessment from the documents on how well the universities see themselves as having achieved the development goals set in their strategic plans. The university lifelong learning strategy forms part of the strategic process in each university, which is why the content and success level vary from university to university. For example, the university, which had completed a wide-ranging analysis on adult education with an action plan and recommendations, had not listed all the issues in its lifelong learning strategy. This is why no conclusions should be drawn on how complete or up-to-date any particular university strategy is. For the analysis, the Lifelong learning strategies of 16 universities were examined.

The following documents, delivered to the Finnish Ministry of Education in February 2007, were analysed:

- University of Turku Strategic and Financial Plan 2008–2011
- Helsinki School of Economics Strategic and Financial Plan 2007–2010
- Lappeenranta University of Technology Lifelong Learning Strategy
- Turku School of Economics Strategic and Financial Plan 2008–2011, attachment Lifelong Learning Strategy 2007–2011
- University of Oulu, Lifelong Learning Strategy 2007–2010
- The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration Strategic and Financial plan 2008–2011
- The Sibelius Academy Continuing Education Policy Guidelines 2004
- The Åbo Akademi University Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2007–2011
- University of Joensuu, Lifelong Learning Strategy 2007–2011
- University of Vaasa, The strategy implementation plan for 2008–2011, attachment Lifelong Learning Strategy
- University of Kuopio, Lifelong Learning Development Programme 2007–2010
- University of Helsinki, The draft proposal for the University Lifelong Learning Plan 2007–2009
- University of Jyväskylä, Lifelong Learning Strategy
- Helsinki University of Technology, Lifelong Learning Strategy
- Tampere University of Technology Strategic and Financial Plan 2008–2011
- University of Art and Design Helsinki, The draft proposal for the University Lifelong Learning Strategy

The strategic plans requested for this analysis were not available from some universities. Accordingly, the following universities are not included in this analysis: The University of Lapland, the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, the National Defence University and the University of Tampere. The Theatre Academy is included in the analysis as regards the IADE co-operation with the University of Art and Design Helsinki. IADE (Institute for Art, Development and Education) is a joint institute for training and development on the field of creative arts between the University of Art and Design Helsinki and the Theatre Academy.

The analysis is not compiled using the traditional method of classification and quantifying the occurrences of specific events, instead the approach is based on themes and direct questions. The aim of the analysis is not to differentiate between the universities, instead to highlight the similar approaches to promoting lifelong learning.

The lifelong learning strategies are seeking to answer the following questions: 1) How do the lifelong learning strategies connect to the overall strategic processes? 2) What are the universities key tasks, aims and plans in promoting lifelong learning? 3) What guiding principles and values the universities highlight in their strategies? 4) How the provision of continuing education is organised in each university? 5) How do the universities take into account lifelong learning in their operations, customer relations, internal co-operation, staff development and management procedures? Finally, the key strategic development areas are also examined.

The majority of the universities under review have compiled a separate lifelong learning strategy, in addition to their overall university strategy. Three of the universities under review have covered the university lifelong learning strategy as part of their strategic and financial plan. The Helsinki School of Economics and the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration deal with the matter under the chapter on societal interaction within the strategic and financial plan.

The University of Turku and the Tampere University of Technology include a separate chapter on lifelong learning and continuing education within their strategic and financial plan. The rest of the universities have compiled a separate lifelong learning strategy.

Table 1:

Lifelong learning strategies within the overall university strategy and within the Operational Strategic and Financial Plans

Part of the Operational Strategic and Financial Plans	A separate lifelong learning strategy
Helsinki School of Economics	University of Helsinki
The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration	University of Joensuu
	University of Jyväskylä
Tampere University of Technology	University of Kuopio
University of Turku	Lappeenranta University of Technology
	University of Oulu
	The Sibelius Academy
	The University of Art and Design Helsinki
	The Helsinki University of Technology
	Turku School of Economics
	University of Vaasa
	The Åbo Akademi University

The common goal for all the universities is the continual development and maintenance of lifelong learning as part of the overall strategy. The promotion of lifelong learning is mentioned in the university strategy, whether the university has compiled a separate strategy or the subject matter is dealt with as part of the overall strategic and financial plan. The universities highlight their profile as providers of lifelong learning services, where linking the studies such as Open University learning, studying towards a degree and post-graduate extension studies are possible. The Open University also holds an important role as a provider of studies suitable for achieving students' personal goals. In addition the universities emphasise in their strategies the significance of local research and development activity as part of university profiling. The societal impact of the universities and the role of the active debater in their specialist field are considered part of the key activities of the organisation.

3.1 The tasks, aims and short-term plans of the universities

The basic role of the universities is to provide quality research and research-based teaching. The concept of lifelong learning is promoted by providing continuing education in their specialist fields and local research and development activity. The role of the university is to provide flexible and high quality study opportunities to students of varying ages and in different life situations and to serve the needs of the working life in a changing society.

In addition the role of the university is to create the conditions for setting up and developing research and educational networks. The main actions, as listed in the university strategic plans do not significantly differ from each other. The universities want to nurture prosperity and success in their area of operation.

Each university and institute of higher education aims for excellence within their area of specialisation both nationally and internationally. The Schools of Economics and the Universities of Technology in particular mention the vision to be one of the leading institutes of higher education in Europe. The most important success factors highlighted in the continuing education are research-based education policies followed by academic principles alongside the equality and provision of quality teaching.

The academic university principles are examined from three different angles:

a) The Continuing education as part of lifelong learning.

Among others the University of Joensuu and the Lappeenranta University of Technology state in their strategy, that the studies are closely linked to the undergraduate degrees, the teachers are principally academic university teachers and the target groups are the academically educated.

b) The connection between scientific research and research-based principles.

At the University of Turku the connection to scientific research is a characteristic of continuing education, accordingly the learning experiences are science-based and the studies include a critical approach and the search for something new. The University of Technology in Helsinki state that extension studies are at an academic level, which is characterised by continual regeneration and active participation in national and international co-operation such as research and education networks, the EU programmes and co-operation with the national centres and clusters of excellence.

c) The connection with societal impact

For example, at the University of Vaasa responding to the challenges of better working life, changes in educational structures and internationalism. Lifelong learning supports the societal impact by improving the regional accessibility.

The university definition on lifelong learning conforms to the European Commission definition, according to which the lifelong learning includes *"all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and /or employment-related perspective."* (European Commission). The following introduces the detail in the documents provided by the universities on how lifelong learning is defined and what targets and actions are included in them. Some universities have listed many actions, this analysis summarises the most relevant of them.

At Helsinki School of Economics Continuing Education is increasingly becoming a key function within the University.

Aims	Actions
1) Increasing Business Excellence in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading the university know-how via the Open University pathway
2) The ever-closer connection between an MBA-education and the strategic development of the HSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the awareness of the MBA-programme • Developing the Educational and Research Institute connections
3) Promoting entrepreneurship in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the operations of small enterprises

At the University of Helsinki lifelong learning means a continuum, in which a person as an individual and a member of the community processes the information acquired in different ways and generates new knowledge based on that.

Aims	Actions
1) Developing the content of lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the educational needs using prior knowledge and the collaborative networks • The educational content meeting the current learning needs • Developing degrees in order to continually match the needs of the working life
2) Developing the viability of Lifelong learning services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring customer-orientation • Developing degree structures which enable the diversification of the study options
3) Developing internationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the degree and extension study options in English • Increasing international innovation and research operations • Increasing international collaboration between the continuing education organisations
4) Developing the pedagogy and study options suitable for adult learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the needs of students, who also work, into consideration • Supporting the development of working communities and learning at work • Developing Study Counselling
5) Developing the Lifelong learning entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing co-ordination • Ensuring continuity and quality

At the University of Joensuu the aim of continuing education is to increase the overall educational level of the population and to promote educational equality and lifelong learning

Aims	Actions
1) Meeting the needs of lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catering for the needs of mature students
2) Strengthening the regional collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close co-operation with the other continuing education organisations • Strengthening the partnerships • Participation in the regional, national and international Development Programmes • Promoting the co-operation amongst the Universities of Eastern Finland
3) Increasing international activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation with Russia, regional co-operation • Developing the study services provided in English

The University of Jyväskylä's definition is congruent with the European Union definition of lifelong learning being any learning undertaken throughout life.

Aims	Actions
1) High Quality Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring science-based education • Ensuring the pedagogic competence of the staff • Utilising flexible study opportunities and developing co-operation with the polytechnics/universities of applied sciences
2) Innovative learning pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The long-term strategic plans of continuing education providers • Supporting internationalisation • Strengthening study guidance and counselling • Strengthening the acknowledgement and recognition of prior learning
3) Ensuring the strategic conditions necessary for lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University Teaching Council monitors and assesses the implementation of strategy and co-ordinates continuing education • The faculties will have appointed contact persons on extension studies • The negotiation and contract procedures on the provision and organisation of teaching will be developed

University of Kuopio

A positive culture promoting lifelong learning will be created, where all staff and student groups will be accommodated.

Aims	Actions
1) Steering and developing the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arvike co-ordinates the process of lifelong learning• Ensuring high quality as part of the teaching quality management system
2) Administration of the customer base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing the customer group specific systems, marketing and services
3) Developing teaching and the conditions for study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognising the needs of the business and science community• Enabling easy access• Developing the open university pathway and defining the disciplines leading to degrees• Developing support services
4) Securing adequate resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing the pedagogic competence of the teaching staff• Strengthening research-based teaching• Promoting teaching supported by Information and Communications Technology
5) Promoting collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting collaboration with Eastern Finland• Active participation in the university networks

Lappeenranta School of Technology offers high-quality study opportunities to students of varying ages and at different stages of their career.

Aims	Actions
1) Showing more consideration to the needs of the working students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part-time basic education leading to a degree• Developing open university education• Developing the modes of teaching and studying
2) Counselling, tutoring and support processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing the setting up of teaching, tutoring and planning groups• Clear procedures on recognising and accrediting competence and prior learning and pedagogic development
3) Developing organisational management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing management systems• Quality Assurance
4) Developing collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing collaboration with the Universities of Eastern Finland• Regional co-operation• Utilising the university's own facilities

At the University of Oulu Lifelong learning is seen as a process which is a lifelong process.

Aims	Actions
1) The lifelong learning services fill part of the role of a societal influencer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating up-to-date procedures and processes and ensuring the provision of a quality service • Taking advantage of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
2) Lifelong learning is considered in all academic activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closer co-operation between basic and extension studies, internal job responsibilities and co-ordination to be clarified • Provision of extension studies via the regional learning network to be developed
3) Lifelong learning forms part of the international profile of the university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferral into the qualification process as stated in the Bologna process

At the Sibelius Academy the role is, amongst others, to create societal and regional impact by promoting artistic, scientific and pedagogic activity.

Aims	Actions
1) To ensure continuing education is of the highest quality and internationally recognised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To systematically plan long-term which will form the foundation of continuing education
2) To ensure that continuous development is an integral part of continuing education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking at a regional, national and international level

The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration According to the School strategy, the core activities, in addition to research and education, is to promote lifelong learning.

Aims	Actions
1) Continuing Education upholds economic excellence in the business sector and the society as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen business contacts
2) Increasing importance of continuing education in the activities of the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the re-organisation of continuing education
3) The financial and developmental support of the Open University activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Open University course fees will be commensurate with the scope of the course

The University of Art and Design Helsinki wants to follow the principle of supporting learning throughout the human life cycle.

Aims	Actions
1) Promoting the opportunities for lifelong learning in the creative fields and across disciplines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the lifelong learning strategy through mainstreaming all university activity
2) Promoting interaction between the university and the society as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the knowledge of the business and scientific working sector amongst the staff and the students and transferring the new knowledge and know-how to our society
3) Consistent lifelong learning functions and elimination of duplication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closer collaboration between the different players Developing branding and providing high-quality further education packages.

Tampere University of Technology follows the goals and principles of lifelong learning in its continuing education.

Aims	Actions
1) Developing the provision of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversification of study programme options and introducing new web-based learning opportunities
2) Increased consideration towards customer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the Open University study guide, enrolment procedure and financial management Increasing co-operation with other educational institutes Implementing Professional Competence Development Programmes
3) Strengthening customer business excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast and proactive approach to business development challenges

The Helsinki University of Technology directs its activities in such a way, that it will be known as a forerunner of lifelong learning, especially continuing education and development activities.

Aims	Actions
1) Increasing student competence and motivation to study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the pedagogic competence of the teaching staff and developing their Individual Study Plan -support services
2) Implementing a credit system for the continuing education model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing collaboration with the Finnish Association of Graduate Engineers Developing study counselling services and the provision of new courses

3) Continuing education to meet the needs of technically specialised academics and their work community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the alumni network • Developing services arising from the diverse needs of the working life
4) The role of continuing education is to form a foundation for collaboration between the working sector, university activity and the international science world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving the aims and the performance indicators set for continuing education • Increasing collaboration between the different disciplines
5) Strengthening the role of continuing education in international scientific and technical operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring academic level quality and branding • Flexible study modes
6) Foreseeing the developments in the working sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up working groups for each discipline • Utilising the opportunities provided by the digitalisation in the development of working processes
7) Developing co-operation between the units providing continuing education and clarification of responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess which parts of continuing education can be provided in business form

Turku School of Economics continuing education is seen as part of basic university function and providing societal service.

Aims	Actions
1) Safeguarding the opportunity for lifelong learning at university level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing barriers to learning and studying • Highlighting the level and quality of academic continuing education
2) Building up and providing total educational packages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating flexible leaning pathways • Alumni being an important target group
3) Collaboration and networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing internal co-operation • Closer regional co-operation
4) Improving learning culture, the education system and competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the needs of the working sector • Considering the needs of international target groups • Managing new learning methods
5) Increased awareness of their functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper understanding of the target groups • Building an overview of the services provided

University of Turku sees itself as continuously developing lifelong learning especially highlighting the following:

Aims	Actions
1) Research-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of lifelong learning with a close connection to research
2) High Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilisation of competitive knowledge networks
3) Multidisciplinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarification of the education service mix

University of Vaasa promotion of lifelong learning in the areas of the education leading to a degree, Open University and extension studies

Aims	Actions
1) Utilising the new degree structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a Masters Programme based on the needs of working life Developing learning pathways for students with a polytechnic level degree
2) Recognition and accreditation of prior learning, knowledge, skills and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learning targets of degrees and programmes are specified within each faculty The applied working competence to be part of the degree The faculties and the Levón-institute to search together for ways of accepting extension studies as part of basic education
3) Developing the Open route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Faculties study programmes to include a plan for provision of Open University education
4) Opportunity to participate in basic education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating opportunities for those via the Open University and the polytechnic route to take part in the normal study
5) Developing the collaboration between the Open University and the providers of non-formal adult education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide open university education via the community non-formal adult education network
6) Extension studies to be part of the university's strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a knowledge bank in the web to supplement extension studies, to be updated by the Levón-institute and the faculties

At the Åbo Akademi University lifelong learning is seen as an action which promotes active citizenship, multicultural dialogue, equality and self-fulfilment.

Aims	Actions
1) Continuous development of ways to recognise the needs of continuing education in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active interaction with the business world and the rest of society
2) Developing study modes suitable for adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising and accrediting prior learning, knowledge and skills Developing learning in the workplace Catering for the needs of students in working life
3) Promoting the long-term planning of continuing education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the Open University three-year plan

3.2 The values, guiding principles and the university support services

The principles relating to lifelong learning follow the generally recognised, guiding principles and values of the universities. The following summary lists the values and guiding principles.

Table 2:
The values and the guiding principles

Helsinki School of Economics	Quality, Encouragement, Diversity, Communalism and Democracy, National and International Responsibility
University of Helsinki	Knowledge, Truth, Culture, Criticality, Autonomy, Welfare and Prosperity, Creativity
University of Joensuu	Independent and Critical Thinking
University of Jyväskylä	Educational Equality, Internationalism
University of Kuopio	Equality
Lappeenranta University of Technology	Flexibility, Equality
University of Oulu	Openness, Flexibility
Sibelius-Academy	Educational Equality
The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration	Sustainable Development, Social Responsibility
The University of Art and Design Helsinki	Multidisciplinarity, Innovation
Tampere University of Technology	Internationalism, Credibility
The Helsinki University of Technology	Internationalism, Innovation
Turku School of Economics	Internationalism, Diversity, Competence, Reward and Recognition, Innovation, Communalism
University of Turku	Ethicality, Criticality, Creativity, Communalism
University of Vaasa	Personal Development, Communalism, Societal Success
Åbo Akademi University	Quality, Equality, Education, Creativity, Sustainable Development, Welfare and Prosperity

The university policies focus on educational equality and the provision of high-quality education throughout all stages of life. In addition the operational principles of continuing education are emphasized by the qualities of research-based and academic education. The lifelong learning opportunities are being developed according to customer needs as stated in the University of Helsinki strategy. The continuing education service users demand flexibility and cost-effectiveness in particular.

Maintaining customer relationships means amongst others; collecting the customer feedback forms, providing cost-effective services and study modes suitable for adult learners. The aim is that the universities service users become familiar with the various opportunities in the different universities. These various opportunities and pathways have been illustrated in the strategic plans of the universities of Helsinki, Kuopio and Vaasa, as well as the Lappeenranta University of Technology strategic plan. The common themes in the university strategies included the following points of customer service:

- multidimensional combinations of education
- multiform and e-learning
- functional advisory, counselling and support services
- combining work and study
- client-specific marketing, customer and partnership questionnaires

The institutions organising continuing education participate in designing the services also as part of the regional projects.

3.3 Organising lifelong learning at the universities

Most of the strategies state that the university takes the overall responsibility for lifelong learning. For example, in the University of Helsinki strategy it is stated that it takes responsibility for the conditions of lifelong learning in all those disciplines, for which it provides undergraduate education.

3.3.1 Co-ordination and Control at the universities

The implementation of lifelong learning at the universities is guided by management-by-objectives agreements. In some universities lifelong learning is managed by the use of performance reviews and co-operation agreements between the units.

The university lifelong learning package is developed by improving co-ordination and internal division of responsibilities, thus improving education and training supply and avoiding duplication. For example the strategy of the Lappeenranta University of Technology states setting up of educational tutoring and development group, whose task is to co-ordinate, monitor and develop the implementation of lifelong learning strategies, dissemination of good practices and to make proposals for development and improvement. On the other hand, Universities such as Jyväskylä and Turku already have education councils and in Turku reporting to the Council, a continuing education committee. The Helsinki University of Technology has a Continuing Education Council, which monitors the implementation of university lifelong learning and co-ordination of continuing education.

3.3.2 Faculties

The faculties are responsible for providing the university undergraduate and scientific post-graduate education. As regards continuing education, the responsibilities are often divided in such a way that the faculty will have responsibility for both the content and the role of the education provider and the specialist units of faculties are responsible for co-ordination, organisation and developmental planning.

3.3.3 The university units specialising in continuing education

The units specialising in continuing education usually manage the co-ordination, services and developmental planning of both the Open University and extension studies. Some universities have the Open University and extension studies in separate units and in a few the responsibilities are broken down even further, one unit being responsible for just one or a few programmes (e.g. MBA, Executive Education).

The common feature in the operations of these units is the co-operation and developmental planning tasks and close co-operation with the faculties. The University of Turku states that the continuing education centre functions as the expert organisation for lifelong learning by providing and developing the education services and by maintaining and renewing the specialist know-how and knowledge base.

The roles of Continuing education units also usually include others, so called tertiary roles, such as University of Oulu Teaching and Research Services, which manages the regional operations via the learning centre networks (the universities regional units and other local partners). The same unit is also responsible for co-ordinating the primary and secondary education and the University of the Third Age. As stated on the University of Oulu strategy "so that other lifelong learning services (adult education) can be carried out efficiently and professionally, central co-ordination and organisation is needed, which is steered by the Education and Training and Research Services".

Although lifelong learning services cover all levels of education, the focus of the analysis was on the varying types of university continuing education units. According to the strategies, Open University education is carried out in all the universities under analysis. At the universities of Helsinki and Jyväskylä, the open education is organised in separate units and in some universities it is operated via the study office. The majority of the universities organisations have a separate continuing education unit principally responsible for adult education.

Project activities promoting lifelong learning are directly mentioned in the strategies of five universities. In a few of the universities, the faculties are mainly responsible for continuing education. Alumni activities as part of continuing learning are highlighted by the technological universities and the Schools of Economics.

3.4 The changes in the operational environment

The university continuing education operations are not possible without appropriate response to the operational environment. The universities operate in active interaction with the surrounding society. The following is an extract of the key operational areas from the universities lifelong learning strategic planning. It is noted, however, that although some areas of operations are not specifically mentioned within the university strategic plans, it does not mean, that issues such as demographic changes are not considered in their operations.

Table 3:
Changes in the operational University environment

International development, internationalization of the education market	University of Helsinki, University of Jyväskylä, University of Art and Design Helsinki
Development of society and business environment	University of Helsinki, University of Joensuu, University of Kuopio, The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration
Utilising prior knowledge & information	University of Helsinki
Demographic changes	University of Turku, Lappeenranta University of Technology, University of Joensuu, University of Kuopio, Turku School of Economics, University of Oulu
The impact of increase in education level in working life	University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University, University of Art and Design Helsinki
Development of Entrepreneurship in society	Helsinki School of Economics, University of Art and Design Helsinki
Technological Development	Lappeenranta University of Technology, Helsinki University of Technology, Tampere University of Technology
Changes in the field of continuing education and new regional education providers	Sibelius-Academy

3.5 The internal forms of co-operation and networking

A functional and customer-oriented continuing education system requires a flexible approach and co-operation between the continuing education service providers and the faculties. All of the universities identify in their strategies facultative collaboration as a key factor in guaranteeing lifelong learning service quality. In addition to faculty and organizational co-operation, the universities invest in co-operation between the regions and educational institutes. The polytechnics and universities of applied sciences in especially within their specialised field of operations are considered important working partners. The networks of professionals and the stakeholders are seen as essential collaborative partnerships in the provision of lifelong learning services and when developing the visibility of these services.

3.6 Staff development and management in lifelong learning

Skilled staff are an essential resource in ensuring the provision of high-quality research and education. For example the strategy of the Lappeenranta University of Technology includes training of all staff in the concept of lifelong learning and education. The universities encourage their staff to maintain and develop their own professional skills i.e. to follow the principles of lifelong learning also in their private lives. At the University of Kuopio staff training planning is in use as part of the development discussions and the annual performance review. The Åbo Akademi University in turn rewards the faculties for their investment in continuing education and creates structures which motivate teachers' commitment in this field. The common strategy for all the universities under analysis is an active human resources policy, safeguarding the universities competitiveness in the education market.

Management is referred to in the strategies only as regards the personnel training. For example at the University of Helsinki the important focus of staff development is on leadership and management training. The University of Vaasa states in its strategy, that the promotion of lifelong learning is taken into account in educational management. The Lappeenranta university of Technology calls for a comprehensive management of lifelong learning and setting up of common rules, the development of the managerial organisation is one of the improvement areas of the university. The University of Turku operational and finance plan states the development of staff management and the management organisation as a critical success factor.

4 A summary of lifelong learning strategies

The universities' lifelong learning strategies contain many areas for development, these being common for all the universities. The development opportunities and actions are expressed in many different ways however the main idea is the same. The following points emerge as areas for development.

1) Developing the provision of services

- Recognizing and meeting the educational needs of society and the working sector
- Clarifying the educational service mix, managing customer lifelong learning needs, visibility
- Developing teaching and conditions for learning and studying, new methods of studying

2) Collaboration and networking

- Strengthening the universities' internal co-operation
- Strengthening regional co-operation, collaborating with other educational institutes
- Utilising the professional networks effectively

3) Internationalisation

- Increasing international operations

4) Quality

- Securing the prerequisites for the implementation of lifelong learning strategies and ensuring quality.
- Research-based: Science-based teaching

The Bologna-process is referred to in the strategy of many of the universities. The structural education reforms are considered a developmental challenge for the universities. The provision of academic continuing education for the working sector is perceived as an important mode of societal interaction. The universities endeavour to ensure that their lifelong learning strategies comply with the universities' overall strategy. In the documents analysed, one of the main strategic development points was the question of internal division of responsibility, functioning of which varies from university to university. The development of new innovative learning pathways and staff development, especially ensuring the teachers' pedagogic competence – guarantee high quality learning services in the universities. Structural development, such as setting up joint units strives for cost-efficiency. The universities' learning services (undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, extension studies, Open University education and co-operation with other education providers) ought to be seen as a continuum, which is visible and flexible from the customers' point of view. Guaranteeing university level continuing education is the objective each university wants to achieve.

5. The status of continuing education in the university entity

The content analysis of the strategies provided background on the presence of organisation, tasks, objectives, principles and values of lifelong learning as well as the way in which the universities cater for lifelong learning in their operations.

The key areas for improvement are seen as enabling the continuum of lifelong learning and the university opportunities to meet the needs of different learners and the students at different stages of their lives. The learning services provided by the universities must tie in even closer together and from the individuals' point of view, to be part of the lifelong learning continuum. The competence gained through a university degree will not be life-long, due to the changes in working life, but must be continually updated. This creates expectations both for the content of the degree courses and for the opportunity of refreshing skills. The basic education must create a sustainable foundation for the lifelong learning of an academic expert and connect to both the further and extension studies.

The principle is to provide research-based, university level education with continuous quality assurance. International activity is an important aspect of the training and developmental role of the continuing education sector. Other points highlighted in the strategies included developing university services in response to societal changes. These issues will be solved in the following ways:

- Improving the ability to react to the changes of the working life in order to secure a competent and skilled workforce.
- In response to the ever more diverse student profiles, enabling education continuum and meeting the needs of the varying types of students in different stages of their lives.
- Contribute towards regional and international networking and partnership with the working sector in order to strengthen the social capital.

5.1 The university profiling

The lifelong learning strategies highlight the importance of internationalization, the regional role, the opportunities for Open University education, supplementary training and education, the professional development and the developmental role of the university. In addition to these, the universities profile in accordance to their area of specialisation, for example, technology, art, business and finance. Multi-disciplinary universities include the University of Joensuu, which has defined its own curricular areas of specialisation (co-operation with Russia, societal development of local and border districts and interaction of cultures), whereas the University of Helsinki states that it will meet the needs of lifelong learning in all the fields in which undergraduate education is provided. A few of the universities will endeavour to strengthen their standing as pace-setters and enablers of lifelong learning and as adult educators.

5.2 Continuing Education as part of the lifelong learning entity

Lifelong learning has increasingly become an integral part of the university operations. According to the strategies, university lifelong learning can be: 1) full-time undergraduate education leading to a degree, 2) part-time undergraduate education leading to a degree 3) science-based post-graduate degree education, 4) open university degree (incl. University of the Third Age) 5) extension studies (incl. specialisation studies) and 6) co-operation with the providers of primary and secondary education.

In their strategies, the universities promote the lifelong learning entity by developing their continuing education in such a way that it can form part of both the basic undergraduate and the science-based post-graduate continuing education. Simultaneously, the various study options are being developed to better meet the needs of the students of varying ages and in different stages of their lives.

For the developments in working life, universities will respond, above all, through continuing education which enables flexible and rapid response to the varying educational needs. Developing the working life environment is closely linked to the planned, so called, work-based Masters degree programmes as well as the industrial Doctoral and Working Life Doctoral Programmes.

The link between continuing education and basic university education is also reflected in the way the contents and the teaching methods used in the continuing education are also passed over to basic education. The units specialising in continuing education provide educational packages to meet the needs of working life. In recent years the focus of teaching methods development has been on e-learning. As stated on the strategy of Sibelius Academy, "The content of continuing education has been thoroughly reviewed and developed with the outcome that many of the developments have also been used in basic education. Web-based e-learning has been actively further developed."

Clarifying the definition of student profile and the student status has been highlighted as an area for development. Universities are preparing to receive a wide range of students by providing international courses, developing teaching methods and increasing tutoring and communications activity.

Several universities are to develop the part-time study opportunities of mature students, especially via the Open University route. On the other hand, as an example, the university of Joensuu states in its strategy that a review of numbers of part-time undergraduate students within each faculty (those present during lectures and actually actively studying) will be carried out and are planning to explore the opportunities for formulating methods to facilitate part-time studying.

5.3 University innovative learning pathways to be developed

Academic continuing education is seen as an important and innovative regional activity. In addition to providing high-quality basic education, finding new and surprising combinations and implementing these, often requires wider and more up-to-date knowledge and competence than that provided by the basic level education. Providing new academic content to study packages and thus guaranteeing quality is challenging. There were several suggestions for developing the study methods:

1. The Open University as broad-based study system.

The Open University in co-operation with the faculties is to develop opportunities for the working-age population to complete Bachelors level degrees in accordance with their personal and regional needs. This is supported by the universities three-year plan on provision of Open University education and its use in student selection. The problems in matching supply and demand and the challenges related to this have been noted amongst the feedback from the Finnish Ministry of Education to the universities, in the education policy statement and the European Commission line on *It is never too late to learn* -communication.

The further development of the University of the Third Age is also seen as an area for strategic development.

2. Supplementary Education and specialisation studies organised as extension studies.

Improving the opportunities for updating knowledge and skills of those with academic degrees by the provision of supplementary education is one of the tasks and responsibilities of university continuing education. Clarifying and further developing the specialisation study opportunities is often seen as connecting the university basic and adult education. The extension studies organised as specialisation studies after the Masters degree is to be developed in such a way that for most of the disciplines there would be a continuum of natural study pathways available.

Many of the universities are endeavouring to define the equivalences and study point systems in such a way that the extension studies could also be included as part of the university degrees. In order to secure the continuum and ease the planning, it is suggested by some of the universities that joint open university and extension education three-year plans are to be set up.

Possible methods to internationalise the studies are the development and collaborative work, the provision of courses in English and increasing the extension study opportunities for immigrants.

3. The Masters Programmes and science-based extension studies

The Masters Degree Programmes are being developed further into multi-disciplinary forms and providing international solutions to the rapid changes in working life. As an example, the Lappeenranta University of Technology is planning for each faculty to have at least one programme at a Masters level, targeted for part-time i.e. working students. A few of the universities mention developing and supporting science-based extension studies of the working students.

4. Recognizing prior learning and on-the-job learning

The recognition and acknowledgement of prior learning is mentioned as an opportunity for development by several of the universities. Academic Apprenticeship training has been brought alongside as well. In relation to these plans, as an example, the Universities in Turku work jointly to develop the methods for recognising and accrediting prior learning including the development of methods for academic level on-the-job training.

5.4 Developing the model for financing continuing education

In international education policy, strengthening the role of the state in adult education has been emphasised in several studies and reports (see Ch 2.5). On this issue, the University of Oulu states in its strategy that the financing model for adult continuing education is to be developed to meet the needs of the European lifelong learning principles.

In Finland, the financing of university continuing education is approx. 15.9m euros and its share of the total financing of adult education is approx 2.6 % (The Finnish Ministry of Education budget 2007). This expense is shared by the Open University (81 %), lowering the fees of extension studies (3 %) and supporting the product and service development partnerships (16 %).

A Parliamentary Committee (2002) considered the improvement of operational facilities and quality improvement. According to the working group, the role of the university extension studies is to meet the continuously changing developmental needs of the academically educated. In the beginning of this millennium, the state budget again included the option for reducing the fees for extension studies and product development co-operation as a possible form of financing. The question of financing extension studies has also been highlighted on the Finnish Ministry of Education University Lifelong Learning working group (2005) report.

Strengthening the status of continuing education in institutions of higher education and widening the opportunities for participation on extension studies have been brought up as areas of future focus on the Finnish Ministry of Education, the draft *Teaching and Research (2007–2012) -development programme*.

The universities have also highlighted the concerns relating to the opportunities of financing continuing education. Within the disciplines and the sectors of society in particular, where the capability to self-finance is limited, it will be the responsibility of the universities to ensure that the continuing education services will be accessible for all. For example, the Sibelius Academy states in its strategy that according to the principle of educational equality, everyone must have the opportunity for supplementary education. Thus, as an example, a fee subvention system ought to be set up for the disciplines such as Arts, which is based on low self-financing responsibility, state financing the costs exceeding the set amount. Similar rationale is found in the strategy of Åbo Akademi University, whereby the resources used for providing fee-reductions is essential thus enabling wider participation.

The university strategies also highlight the management of resources in such a way that those units and institutions which provide lifelong learning are to receive adequate resources for their operations. The University of Helsinki support to its continuing education unit facilitates collaboration between the faculties and the provision of their key tasks, particularly from the point of view of societal impact. The Helsinki University of Technology will further develop the internal co-operation and the setting up of clear responsibilities, as well as defining the financial status at a divisional level by taking into consideration the tertiary role of the university and other responsibilities set by the Finnish Ministry of Education.

5.5 The main structural development policies in accordance with the strategies

The setting up of university lifelong learning strategies took place mainly during 2005–2006, thus universities responding to the challenges known at the time. Since then, however, new challenges have arisen, one of the most significant of which being the university entity legal reform. The following addresses the issues mentioned relating to the structural changes as referred to in the strategic policies.

In order to achieve provision of successful academic continuing education, development of co-operation between the universities and clear division of responsibilities are called for, both nationally and internationally. The basis of successful co-operation does not necessarily require structural organisational changes, but as illustrated within the strategies, flexible co-operation through the use of various ways of managing contractual agreements. Essentially, the organisational structure in the universities is set up in accordance with their lifelong learning strategy, the function in continuing education and the set policies and procedures. Further development of co-operation as stated in the regional strategies, is also mentioned in the lifelong learning strategies.

The operational development in supplementary and Open University studies, especially by structural reform and by increasing unit sizes is considered an important aspect of overall university structural development planning.

Development projects have been launched in the universities, with the aim of improving the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of lifelong learning. The projects cover viewpoints of structural development and productivity. In practical terms, it is a question about the division of responsibilities and co-operation. It is important that as a result of different projects, both the individual universities and the university clusters (in some cases including participation of polytechnics) can make independent decisions on the appropriate organizational and operational arrangements relating to the operational environment and provision of service. The co-operation between universities and other institutions is determined by the close link to academic research.

For example, the following projects related to structural development:

- **IADE.** The development of University of Art and Design continuing education and supplementary studies strategic and structural policy has lead to the University of Art and Design and the Theatre Academy founding the Institute for Art, Development and Education in Finland in January 2007.
- **The Turku -consortium.** The preparations for setting up a consortium between the University of Turku and the Turku School of Economics have begun. The co-operation between continuing education and the regional projects related to these, is being developed in a project which also include the Åbo Akademi University and the continuing education unit of Turku University of Applied Sciences participating.
- **Eastern Finland.** The universities of Joensuu, Kuopio and Lappeenranta are exploring the opportunities for co-operation in the field of continuing education as part of the structural development programme of the institutes of higher education. The co-operation between the universities continuing education and development units is being widened with immediate effect. As per the policy strategy, the aim is to form a joint unit by 2010.

5.6 The co-operation between the universities and the polytechnics/universities of applied sciences

The co-operation and division of responsibilities between the universities and the polytechnics is being developed predominantly by providing continuing education which complement each other. The objective of this co-operation is to set up clear responsibilities for provision of lifelong learning services with the polytechnics and the universities of applied sciences using the dual model format.

The Åbo Akademi University states in its strategy the development of co-operation with the polytechnics providing education in Swedish in such a way that, together a complete entity on provision of continuing education would be formed. The Åbo Akademi University also participate in a joint structural development project with the Turku University of Applied Sciences.

At the Lappeenranta University of Technology basic and continuing university education partnerships, especially with the universities of Applied Sciences of South-Karelia, Kymenlaakso and Southern Savonia are being developed based on partnership agreements and plans. Within the framework of co-operation, the local knowledge possessed by the regional units will be advantageous when reviewing the local educational needs. The university will support the educational continuums of each region as relevant to their fields of specialisation.

5.7 Internationalism and export of continuing education

The opportunities for the internationalization of education have improved through export since these strategies under analysis were completed. The government proposal for allowing the universities (and the polytechnics/universities of applied sciences) to provide be-spoke training on demand leading to a degree for the non EEA citizens was approved by the Council of State on 4th October 2007. The be-spoke training can be organised for groups and the customer can be an individual or a public legal entity. The change in law is expected to take effect from 1st January 2008.

The universities are developing internationalism within their organisations, for example, by increasing the number of courses provided in English, which also is improving the study opportunities for foreign and immigrant students. Acknowledging and recognising prior degrees and the provision of supplementary specialisation studies, Open University learning or professional development training are also seen as ways of promoting the employability of immigrants.

The provision of multiform and web-based education in English is also stated in the university strategies as an opportunity for increasing internationalism.

As an example, the University of Joensuu offers specific courses aimed at the international market, on specific fields of science which will promote the university profile.

The Finnish Universities have been at the forefront of university continuing education in Europe. A good example of this is that, as initiated by the Sibelius-Academy, since 1998 continuing education has been one of the themes of the European Association of Conservatories. Continuing education at the Sibelius-Academy is considered to be leading the way and providing a model of continuing education to other Institutes of Higher Education in music.

The internationalism of the university continuing education is being promoted, usually, via project and network partnerships. Although the international continuing education co-operation has been active in the EU funded projects for a long time, the actual export of education provides a new opportunity for internationalism, which the universities have cautiously included in their strategies. The most active in this field is the Helsinki School of Economics, which sees, that in order to genuinely serve the global companies, it must be able to offer services in those market locations which the companies operate. The current export markets for the institutes of higher education are mainly in Asia. The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, on the other hand, is planning international co-operation with the Stockholm School of Economics. The aim is to set up a joint partnership between the Schools.

A few of the universities express in their strategies that they are creating conditions for exporting continuing professional education. The University of Technology, Helsinki aims for the branding of continuing professional development and training in its quest for creating strategic partnerships with the best of the international providers and thus exporting the Finnish know-how to the international markets. The University of Helsinki is developing competitive, international professional development packages and increasing the number of international Masters Programmes as well as increasing international innovation and development activity which forms the basis of lifelong learning.

5.7.1 The internationalization of the continuing education model

The Finnish Universities are at the forefront of the international continuing education field in many ways. Active participation in the international development operations has increased continually. In recent years, the Finnish Universities have been participating and/or been in a leading role in hundreds of European projects requiring special development responsibility. For example, the Finns have a strong role in the operations of the European Continuing Education Network EUCEN. Any opportunities arising should be utilised in the forthcoming years when creating the European continuing education policies and practices. Strong input into the development of continuing education within the EU is supporting the special status and interests in the road of knowledge and competence both nationally and internationally.

6. Proposals for future actions

1. Strengthening the provision of lifelong learning in the universities as being one of their fundamental roles.

The essential quality of both academic continuing education and Open University education is the close connection to research and unique provision of research-based lifelong learning services. The university lifelong learning strategies unequivocally highlight the educational cohesion of these methods as being one of the fundamental roles of the universities.

2. Developing the role of the lifelong learning entity

As proposed by *The Finnish Ministry of Education, Teaching and Research (2007–2012) -development programme* -policy, strengthening the status of the university continuing education as part of the overall institute of higher education role and providing opportunities for extension studies for the academically educated. For university continuing education this represents:

- Open University education is to be further developed to be part of a wide-ranging study system. Universities to develop the opportunities of working age people to complete university studies leading to a Bachelors degree in accordance with their personal and regional needs.
- Extension studies post the Masters degree, to be developed further so that many of the fields are to gain a system of natural continuum of education. At the same time to clarify the status of post-Masters degree professional level scientific studies completed as specialisation studies. The university specialisation programmes and such extension study titles are to be developed in such a way that the different faculties and areas of specialisation will have meaningful study packages and modules.
- Teaching and Learning methods are to be further developed, more effectively recognising and acknowledging prior knowledge and qualifications and investigating the appropriate use of academic level apprenticeship training as part of continuing education.

3. Strengthening the funding base of Open University and supplementary continuing education

Educational equality is to be revised by allocating an increased share of the continuing education budget towards the development of Open University and supplementary education. Opportunities for part-funding are also to be developed in order to cover the costs of educational provision.

4. Clarifying the definition of a mature student

Due to demographic changes the proportionate number of mature students updating their knowledge and competence is increasing amongst the university students. The universities are to prepare for the future by developing models for enabling part-time studying and studying alongside work.

5. Supporting staff lifelong learning

Most of the university strategies emphasize the importance of promoting staff professional development. The opportunities for updating staff competence have been highlighted, for example, on the *Action plan on Adult Learning – It's never too late to learn* (2007). In the Action Plan the continuing education personnel includes the teachers, training instructors, career guidance personnel, advisers, managers and administrative staff. Promoting lifelong learning also necessitates the universities to find new operational models, often including the co-operation of several personnel groupings. *Teaching and Research (2007–2012) -development programme*-draft highlights the increasing demand for adult education teachers, i.e. as a result of the immigration policy solutions.

6. Promoting the internationalisation of Continuing Education

The universities have highlighted in their lifelong learning strategies the internationalisation of continuing education, which is evidenced by exporting the Finnish continuing education model and the further development of the Masters Programmes.

The challenge for the universities in the future will be having the opportunity and implementing the provision of requested training and export of education coming into effect from 1st January 2008. (see Ch 5.7) The universities will increase their co-operation in order to develop the export of know-how within their areas of specialisation. The universities will utilise the long-running experience and good practices in organisation of fee-funded courses. The Universities Continuing Education Network will be promoting the export of know-how, for example, by providing extension studies as well as participate in export of degree programmes.

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