

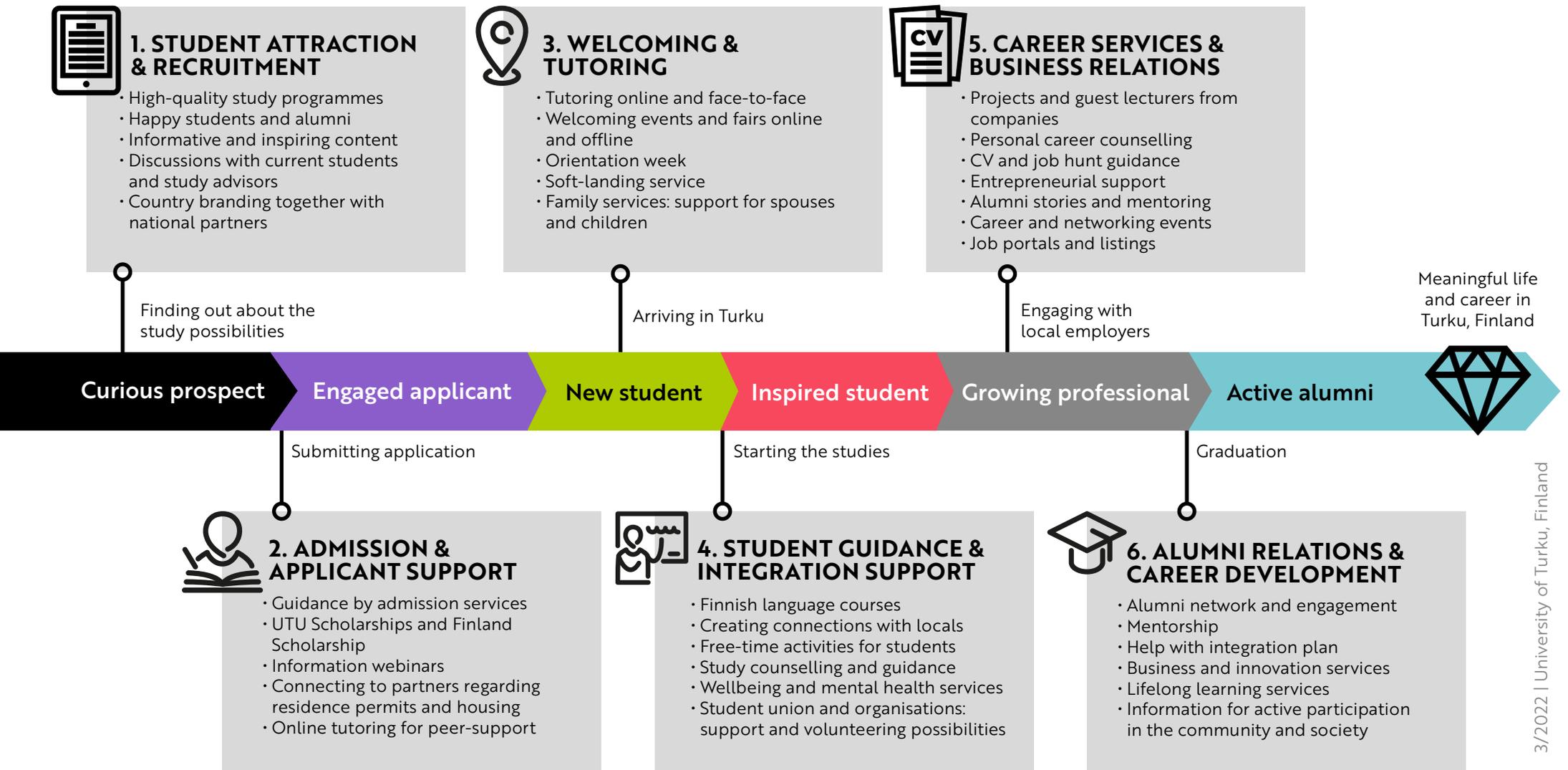
Get inspired by Turku.

The journey of international Bachelor's and Master's degree students goes from prospective higher education applicants to active alumni working in Turku, Finland – how do the University, City and their partners support students to study and stay?



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

An international degree student's journey: study and stay in Turku!



Curious prospect:

Learning about the University, Turku and Finland

The prospective applicant can learn about study opportunities in Finland through a variety of sources. With recruitment marketing, the applicant is provided with information and inspiration to assist them with making the decision to study in Turku.

> High-quality programmes

Student attraction is based on interesting programme offerings. When deciding where to study in the future, potential applicants value promising career prospects, innovative programmes, and high-quality research the most¹. New programmes are established based on the University's strategy and strengths in research.

> Collaboration in national and regional branding

The higher education institutions and the City of Turku have joined forces to promote Turku as a student city: events, marketing videos, alumni stories, and other content are all produced together under the Study in Turku brand.²

The University and the region of Turku benefit from Finland's national promotion as a study

destination. Country branding is handled by organisations such as Study in Finland³, Talent Boost⁴, and Team Finland Knowledge network⁵, among others.

> Information and inspiration through digital channels

The University is promoted to new prospective international applicants mainly through digital channels: education portals, social media, virtual fairs, events, and via digital campaigns. The University also works with verified international representatives in certain countries⁶.

A prospective applicant may plan studying abroad for several years before actually applying. To stay connected with them during this period, the University provides them with relevant information via newsletters, social media and events such as Virtual Open Weeks. Answers to questions can be found 24/7 via websites, student blog⁷, chatbot, and tutorial videos.

Through student and alumni stories, potential students can gain a taste of everyday life in Turku and career prospects after graduating. Student ambassadors⁸ provide relatable peer-to-peer insight into studying in Finland by participating in events, student chats, and social media takeovers.

> Further educating immigrants

International House Turku (IHTurku)⁹ and the University (via SIMHE)¹⁰ offer advice and guidance to local international talents interested in higher education, including how to choose a university, how to apply and accreditation of previous studies completed outside of Finland.



BEST PRACTICE

Happy students and alumni are the best marketing method, and real conversations are convincing: creating and sharing content about real-life success stories and providing prospective students with forums to engage with students, alumni, and study advisors.

Engaged applicant: Deciding on the future study place

The prospective student is guided through the application process with timely communication and admission support. Engaging communication needs to continue also after the admission offer is sent, because the applicant may have to pick between numerous universities.

► Guiding through the admission process

As there is only one application period annually, it is important to start reminding prospective applicants about deadlines well in advance. Right information is provided at the right time via monthly newsletters, website content, and social media posts, such as tutorial videos.

Study advisors are available for questions via email and webinars. Student ambassadors provide peer-to-peer advice and help persuade applicants to choose Turku as their study destination via social media and private chats¹¹.

► Scholarships for best applicants

The University supports merited and motivated students who are subject to tuition fees with schol-

arships. The UTU Scholarships cover the tuition fee, and the national Finland Scholarship¹² also includes a grant to help start the studies. Scholarships for outstanding performance are offered to students starting their second year who did not receive a scholarship for their first year, but succeeded in their studies.

► Engaging after the admission offer

Following the admission offer, admitted students will receive frequent information newsletters until the start of their studies to ensure the transparency of the application evaluation process and timeline. The newsletters inform applicants not only about the admissions process, but also about immigration issues, their studies, student life, housing, Turku, and Finland.

Admitted students can learn about the available services and support in informative webinars with programme staff, admission services, and advisors from IHTurku. They are also invited to webinars and private chats with current students.

Tutoring begins online as soon as the admission offers are sent. Tutors assist admitted students in deciding on a future study place by offering their expertise and practical knowledge in online chat groups.

► Connecting to services

The University is not able to provide all the services necessary for a student to

relocate to Finland. In issues like residence permits and accommodation, the University provides the student with links and contact information to local and national organisations. The University works closely with IHTurku, which can advise admitted applicants on immigration and other formal matters.



BEST PRACTICE

Online tutoring starts right after admission letters have been sent. In chat groups consisting of tutors and admitted applicants, the applicants get a community of peers for discussion and support; to share excitement and experiences.

New student:

Preparing for the move and settling in Turku

Moving to a new city and country to study is a major life change. The first few days and weeks of the student's experience might set the tone for the rest of the studies. Proactive assistance and teamwork between the University staff, Student Union, tutors, and city services ensures a smooth arrival.

> Tutoring online and face-to-face

Tutors are domestic or international students who have volunteered to help new students get a smooth start in their studies. They help with the practicalities and guide the student through student life in Turku. Tutoring starts in the spring as online and mobile tutoring and continues until the orientation and the start of the studies in autumn.

Tutoring is organised together with the Student Union so that the new students are closely linked to both the University and the student union activities from the start.

> Events and orientation to kick-start the studies

At the University's Welcome Fair, students are introduced to the different University services and

student organisations. The Study in Turku fair, on the other hand, sheds light on the services and recreational activities of the City of Turku, and local companies and associations.

The 'Welcome to Turku!' series¹³ from IHTurku includes webinars on key topics and in-person networking events for new international residents and their families.

> Soft landing to the new home

The soft-landing service from IHTurku supports international students with getting started in their new home. Talent advisors can provide guidance relating to topics such as networking, accessing public services, housing, free-time activities and finding a job.

IHTurku also provides multilingual advice and guidance services regarding employment, education, social services and completing official paperwork. These services are available in-person or online.

The Student Union of the University of

Turku (TYY)¹⁴ offers support, guidance and advice for newcomers related to different matters such as housing and studies.

> Support for spouses and children

For students moving with their families, the Spouse Programme by IHTurku match-

es unemployed spouses in Turku with mentors in local companies. Participants also receive language support and job coaching services.

Turku International School offers primary, secondary and upper secondary education in English.



BEST PRACTICE

International House Turku is a new service concept comprising of several local projects relating to internationalisation and immigrant support. By bringing individual projects together and working closely with related stakeholders, new international talents are efficiently directed to the most suitable service.

Inspired student: Finding their place in the student community

The student's integration into the local community can be strengthened as a two-way process by supporting communality and multiculturalism. Well-being services, free-time activities, news and events, and career counselling need to be easily accessible for students coming from diverse cultural backgrounds.

> Personal support for studies

The study advisors and programme coordinators help the student with questions concerning their studies. In addition to the degree curriculum, the student may also take optional courses and tailor the studies to fulfil their interests and ambitions. If needed, the Study Psychologist Services help the student find solutions to problems in studying and learning skills, motivation and time management.

The Student Union has an important role in advocacy work and makes sure that international students are always considered when making important decisions both in the university and in the student organisations.

> Bilingual student activities

The University constantly develops communication and services in English.

On the Study in Turku channels, the student can find information on free-time activities and learn about current issues in the student city of Turku.

All degree students are required or encouraged to include Finnish courses in their degree, offered by the Centre for Language and Communication Studies¹⁵. The University and SIMHE¹⁰ also offer Finnish courses for advanced learners, and IHTurku arranges free Finnish Language groups of different skill levels.

The Student Union is bilingual and international students can participate in all levels. It also regularly educates different student organisations in bilingual communication and inclusion.

> Services and hobbies for well-being and mental health

The student can find sports services for an affordable price at CampusSport¹⁶. In addition to gyms, instructed sports classes, and ball sports, it provides sports tutors who encourage students to exercise more.

The University supports students' mental health with the early support model. The student can find help through the chat, helpline, conversations with support students, and other services gathered under the On my Mind website¹⁷.

If a student encounters harassment or inappropriate behaviour they can also turn to the Student Union and utilize the means of interventions offered.

> Connecting Finns and international students

Participation in the Student Union's and student organisations' events and networking possibilities helps the students find their place in the student community.

The Friendship Programme¹⁸ offers a chance for mutual cultural exchange by connecting international students and locals in Turku.



BEST PRACTICE

International students are informed about the University news, events, jobs and partner organisations' news in English in a student newsletter which is sent every two weeks during term time.

Growing professional: Developing career skills and networking in the region

The University supports the international student's integration and career development during studies so that the student can achieve the most out of their potential as alumni. Connections to local employers are created already during studies, and both the University and the City provide services for the student's career development.

► **Connections to employers**

During their studies, a student can join courses that include collaborations with University partner companies or other local employers. The collaborations can be guest lecturers, projects facilitated by a company, or writing a thesis as an assignment.

Study in Turku offers digital and physical workplace visits for students in Turku.

Students can arrange meetings with Advisors at IHTurku about practical matters after graduation.

► **Work possibilities already during studies**

Internships create important first contacts to working life in Turku. The University guarantees an internship subsidy once during studies for all degree students going on internships in Finland¹⁹.

The JobTeaser portal²⁰ and specific campaigns such as the Summer Trainee campaign²¹ promote open vacancies and internship positions for students. The information is spread via different newsletters, events, and websites.

► **Alumni stories and mentoring**

Alumni stories about internationals working in Turku encourage students to look for career possibilities in the region. Alumni articles, videos, and podcasts are produced together with Study in Turku, universities, and the city. Ambassadors of international backgrounds, like the #TalentedByNature ambassadors²², showcase life and work in Turku on social media.

The University is about to expand the international multidisciplinary mentoring programme also for Master's students. The programme aims to prepare students who are about to graduate for the transition into working life.

► **Career events and services**

Career events, such as Study and Stay in Turku²³ and Empower Wednesdays²⁴, offer practical advice regarding job-seeking and networking platforms.

The University's Career Services²⁵ organises CV guidance and support for efficient job and internship seeking. Personal career counselling is offered for all students and recent graduates, and degree students can also take online courses about working in Finland²⁶.

► **Boost for an entrepreneurial mindset**

The University enhances entrepreneurial attitudes, behaviour, and culture across the University²⁷ and offers entrepreneurship studies in English. Students can also participate in local entrepreneurship societies and programmes, like Startup Kit²⁸ and Boost Turku²⁹, already during studies.



BEST PRACTICE

When there are several great initiatives and organisations working on the career development of internationals in the region, the most effective action for a university is to connect students with these initiatives with regular communication.

Active alumni:

Integrating into Finnish working life

After graduating, the transition from the university to working life in Finland can be challenging for the international student. The University Alumni Network, Career Services, various city services, and local employers together help the recent graduate to build their career and stay in Turku.

► **Staying connected with their alma mater and friends**

Active alumni collaboration supports the employment and networking of international talents. Alumni can stay connected to the University through regular alumni communication³⁰, including newsletters, blogs, alumni stories, social media content, and alumni events.

To improve alumni relations without borders and connect alumni all over the world, the University will establish an online platform aimed at global alumni engagement.

► **Mentoring for alumni**

Alumni can benefit from the mentoring programme either as a mentee or after gaining experience in Finnish working life, as a mentor. Mentors are working life professionals who wish to share their

working life experience and knowledge as well as their professional networks with students and recent graduates.

► **Support for employability**

Talent Turku³¹, the local higher education institutions, local companies, and the city work together to make sure that the Turku region is an attractive place to study and stay, and that the region's employers want and are able to recruit international talents. Open vacancies with no Finnish language requirements are listed in national³² and local³³ portals.

The Career Services of the University and SIMHE¹⁰ continue providing support after graduation. IHTurku serves as a one-stop desk for advice in integration plans, starting a business, work permits and contracts and other formal matters.

Practical entrepreneurship advice is provided by for example IHTurku, Turku Business Region, and Boost Turku's accelerator programmes³⁴. Graduates can also get help

in turning an idea into an enterprise from Turku Science Park Ltd³⁵.

► **Assistance in staying after graduating**

In addition to employment, IHTurku offers multilingual advice and guidance in housing, work permits and contracts, free-time activities, and family life, for example applying to kindergarten and registering to preschool. Together with TE-offices, it helps with the integration plan.

► **Lifelong learning and doctoral studies**

Alumni can continue supplementary studies after graduation during the two following academic years.³⁶ Alumni Network provides support and lifelong learning possibilities.

A Master's Degree provides eligibility for scientific postgraduate degree studies, for example at the University of Turku Graduate School³⁷.



BEST PRACTICE

Regular communication and participation opportunities to university events instills within the alumni community a sense of positive nostalgia, identity and results in meaningful alumni engagement.

References and further reading

Student recruitment marketing:

- 1 Annual student survey of the University of Turku, 2021.
- 2 Study in Turku | [website](#)
- 3 Study in Finland | [website](#)
- 4 Talent Boost | [website](#)
- 5 Team Finland Knowledge network | Ministry of Education and Culture [website](#)
- 6 Admission Representatives of the University of Turku | [UTU website](#)
- 7 Student life at UTU | [blog](#)
- 8 UTUambassadors | [UTU website](#)
- 9 The official International House Turku website will be live in spring 2022 at www.ihturku.fi. Until that, please see [the old website](#)
- 10 SIMHE: Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland | [website](#)

Admission and engaging:

- 11 Talk to a current student | [UTU website](#)
- 12 Finland Scholarship for Master's students | [Study in Finland website](#)

Welcoming and tutoring:

- 13 List of Welcome to Turku series and other events by IHTurku | [Career in Southwest Finland website](#)
- 14 Student Union TYY | [website](#)
- 15 CeLCS | [website](#)

Student life and integration support:

- 16 CampusSport | [website](#)
- 17 On My Mind | [project's website](#)
- 18 The Friendship Programme by Study

in Turku | [Study in Turku website](#)
19 Internship subsidy to all undergraduate students, | [news article](#)

Career services and business relations:

- 20 [JobTeaser portal](#) for UTU students
- 21 Summer Trainee Campaign | [Career in Southwest Finland website](#)
- 22 Talent Ambassadors of Southwest Finland | [website](#)
- 23 Study and Stay in Turku career event | [website](#)
- 24 Empower Wednesday event series | [website](#)
- 25 UTU Career Services | [website](#)
- 26 How to Work in Finland | [online self-study package](#)
- 27 The Entrepreneurial University | [website](#)
- 28 The Startup Kit | [Turku Business Region website](#)
- 29 The Boost Turku entrepreneurship society | [website](#)

Alumni relations and career development:

- 30 For alumni | [UTU website](#)
- 31 Talent Turku | [Turku Business Region website](#)
- 32 Jobs in Finland | [online portal](#)
- 33 Job openings in Southwest Finland | [online portal](#)
- 34 Startup Journey Accelerator | [website](#)
- 35 From Idea to Enterprise | [Turku Business Region website](#)
- 36 Supplementation period after studies | [UTU website](#)

37 The University of Turku Graduate School | [UTU website](#)

Read more about talent attraction:

- Better Together for a Better World. Policies to Promote Internationalisation in Finnish Higher Education and Research 2017-2025. | [Valto \(valtioneuvosto.fi\)](#)
- Suomalaisen korkeakoulutuksen ja tutkimuksen kansainvälisyyden edistämisen linjaukset 2017-2025. Toimeenpano-ohjelma. | [PDF](#)
- Sustainable Growth Programme for Higher Education in Finland | [Ministry of Education and Culture website](#)
- Ulkomaiset tutkinto-opiskelijat suomalaisissa korkeakouluissa : Miksi Suomeen on päädytty ja kiinnostaa-ko työskentely Suomessa opintojen jälkeen? | [Valto \(valtioneuvosto.fi\)](#)
- Talent Boost | [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment \(tem.fi\)](#)
- Talent Boost Cookbook Finland | [Future Place Leadership](#)
- Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön ja Turun yliopiston välinen tulossopimus 2021-2024, LIITE 1 ja LIITE 2 | [okm.fi](#)
- The International programme 2021-2030 of the University of Turku | [utu.fi](#)
- International House Turku in Monitorissa | [Turku.fi article](#)
- International House Turku maahanmuuttajien tukena | [Turku.fi article](#)
- UNICOM – Uniting Companies and International University Talents | [Career in Southwest Finland website](#)

Context:

Turku is a great place to study and stay. Every 5th citizen is a higher education student, and Turku is also home to fascinating career opportunities for international talents. Many international students already in Turku appreciate the city's passion for science, culture, sustainable development and quality of life.

From 2020, the goal of the University of Turku is to double the number of international Master's degree students by 2030. Across the region, the higher education institutions, the City and their partner organisations work together to achieve also the national goal of the Talent Boost programme: to get 75 percent of international students to stay and find work in Finland.

There is a lot of work to be done. Collaboration is key: good practices need to be shared, both locally and nationally.

In this model, a journey of a student of the University of Turku is used to visualise the common journey of an international student in Turku. The model has been created in collaboration with experts and international alumni of the University of Turku, City of Turku, and Student Union of the University of Turku.

Hopefully, you find it useful and join the conversation to help more students study and stay in Finland!



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