

# University Continuing Education Network in Finland – UCEF

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## 1. History of the network

UCEF is a co-operative organization for the UCE institutions in Finnish Universities, it was founded in 1990. Every Finnish university is represented in the network, usually by their UCE director. The network was originally constituted for enhancing the co-operation among the UCE institutions in Finland, and to be able to act as one player from Finland in the European UCE scene as well as to build up the image of UCE in Finland. The needs came apparent at the time – the early nineties – when most of the UCE centres were founded in Finland. The initial came from the various sources from the field of university adult education. Most of the UCE centres were founded by the beginning of the 1990s. The network started as a rather complete one at the beginning.

UCEF was first founded to be a council for the directors of university continuing education centers, the scope was broadened year 2002 to be a network for all employees. The name was also changed during that year.

The Network emphasizes university continuing education in dissemination of university research and innovation. It also enhances regional, national and global policies of knowledge society. UCEF also creates models and methodologies for professional development programs with the member universities.

## 2. Organizational Structure

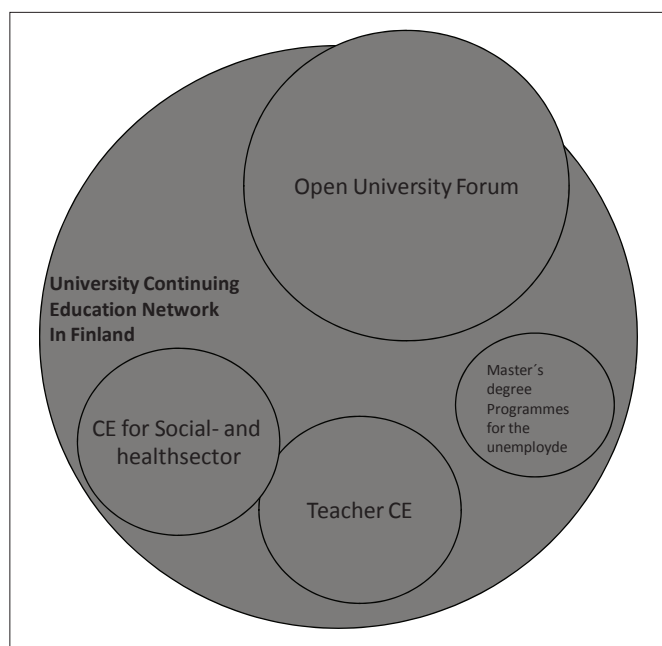
The network has a steering committee, which has seven members and a president. SC has annually approximately eight committee meetings. Network holds an annual meeting, which is the highest deciding body. Starting year 2005 UCEF has had a full-time secretary general and a part-time coordinator. Secretary General is responsible for organizing special projects, task groups, surveys and seminars on current issues, gathering and dissemination of information on current important issues in the university field as well as coordinating the network's national, regional and international co-operation.

UCEF is a non-formal network, and it operates as a project in host university. Secretary General is employed by the host university. The office moved to University of Tampere Continuing Education Centre in the beginning of 2009, before that it was located at University of Helsinki in Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education years 2007–2009 and at the Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli in Helsinki University of Technology 2007.

Operations are funded by membership fees and a grant from the Ministry of Education. Since 2006 the grant has been significant, and it enables the network's full-time secretary general. The objects of the co-operation with the MoW are discussed annually and the actions are reported by the end of each year.

## 3. Members

UCEF has 34 organizational members in 21 universities. UCEF is a network for the member organizations, but it has also sub-networks, which is pictured below. The biggest sub-network is Open University Forum.



Picture 1. The structure of the sub-networks in UCEF.

UCEF organized surveys approximately in every three years to find out what the members consider to be the most important issues the network should work in. In the beginning of 2006 the survey was carried out by webropol.

UCEF works closely with ministries, other educational sectors as well as all labour market organizations.

Currently there are several university mergers ongoing in Finland. This affects also UCEF, because continuing education centres inside universities are also merging.

#### 4. Instruments of the network

UCEF organizes two annual meetings and workshops and seminars on current issues. It gathers and disseminates information on current important issues in the university field. The information is disseminated to the members by email and webpages (www.ucef.fi). The network works closely with the Finnish Universities Rectors' Council, and it has representatives in committees and working groups organized by ministries and other operators. UCEF has succeeded to reach its goal from to be an active and recognized player at the university field.

One important task of the network is to create possibilities and foster mutual projects of the members. Below there is an example of a master's program organized for social and health sector.

During the last years UECF has worked on the universities' salary system, quality assurance in CE, Self-Assessment according to EFQM Quality Model and the competence development programme for CE personnel. Currently we operate in the setting up the National Qualifications Framework and University of Turku CEC coordinates the national project for APL.

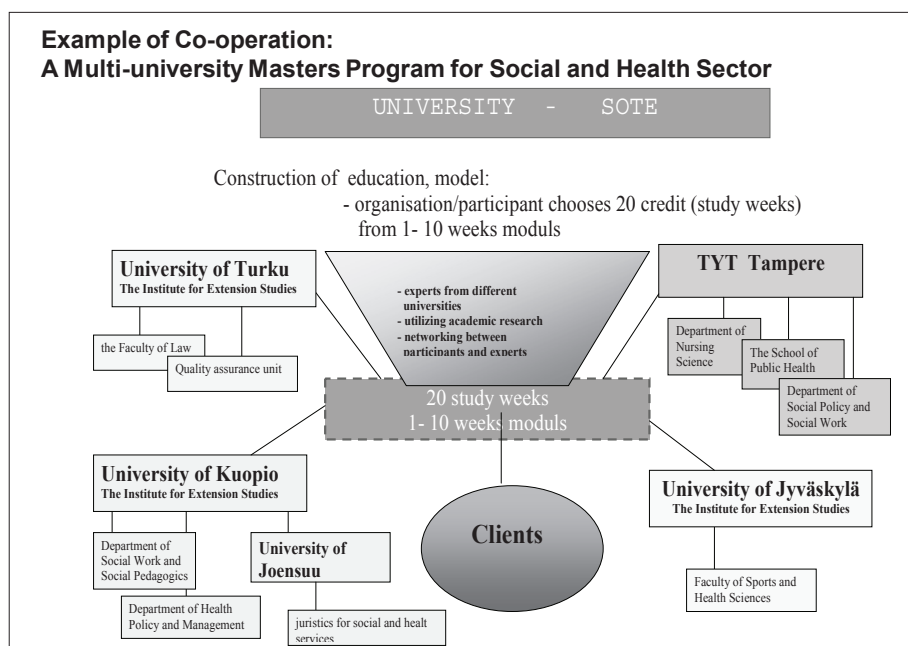
UCEF also had a representative in the Adult Education Reform committee during the years 2006–2009.

#### 4.1 The analysis of the Lifelong Learning Strategies in Finnish Universities

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. After the work of the committee the universities were requested to 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 Sepälä and secretary general Hanna-Riikka Myllymäki, who also operated as a project manager. Director Paula Lindroos and researcher Siru Korkala wrote the analysis and were also members of the steering committee.



Picture 2. Master's Program organized by several member universities

tee. The findings and conclusions of this analysis are those of the writers’.

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 analyzed. The analysis can be found in the networks web pages: [www.ucef.fi/en/news/articles/LLL\\_publication.html](http://www.ucef.fi/en/news/articles/LLL_publication.html)

## **5. Goals today and tomorrow, changes and boundaries of the network**

The changes in educational policy in Finland are currently significant. The adult education reform is ongoing and a new university law is being constituted. UCEF has contributed intensively to the issue that adult education would have an important role in universities. One of the biggest accomplishments of UCEF in the field of educational politics is that Lifelong Learning will be visible in the new university law.

When the new law will take effect on the beginning of 2010, the legal status of the universities will change. Universities will not be state owned anymore, and this will effect also university adult education significantly. It changes for example the employment and economical issues.

The organizational structure of UCEF will most probably change when the new university law will take effect. There are several possibilities on how to continue the operations. The steering committee will make a proposition to the annual meeting about the future of UCEF during the year 2009.

## **6. International co-operation, EUCEN, Project**

The members of UCEF are very active in several international networks. As a network UCEF is very active in EUCEN, there has been a member in the steering committee several years. In EUCEN we operate the National Networks, and through our members in various projects.

Since UCEF is legally non-formal, it cannot operate as a partner itself in European projects. Through member organizations we have operated in for example in EULLearn, Equipe and BeFlex.

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