

### **Operating environment**

The social services operating environment changes constantly. Globalisation, changes in the economy and industry, and technological advances are reflected in the lives of individuals, families and communities. Some of the challenges faced by the social services are the aging of the population, multiculturalism and socio-economic differences. The welfare service structure is shifting from being system- and sector-focused to providing customer-oriented, networked services. The significance of immediate communities and private services is growing in welfare service production. Welfare technology will continue to open new doors, although interpersonal work is also increasing in importance. Service innovations are required in order to respond to the challenges faced by the welfare sector.

Laurea's area of operation, the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, is highly dynamic. It is characterised by population growth, strong economic and technological development, internationalisation and multiculturalism. The lifestyles of people in Uusimaa region vary from typical urban cultures to rural small community cultures. The aging of the population is the single biggest challenge faced by welfare services. Other challenges are related to supporting the everyday lives of families with children living in widely different conditions, to various social problems and to factors that cause social marginalisation, such as unemployment, homelessness, substance abuse, mental health problems and crime.

### **Expertise**

The aim of the Degree Programme in Social Services is to train experts in social services. This means providing training in issues related to education, rehabilitation, prevention and the maintenance of abilities, from the points of view of relationships between people, social situations and the society as a whole. The value base of social services is founded in respect for people and social justice. Graduates of the Master of Social Services degree are experts in development work based on the values and context of the sector.

Skills in interpersonal work, interaction, empathy, responsibility, individual and group management, and holistic encounters with people form the core of competence in the field. The societal nature of problems, resources and support is also emphasised. Work in the field is closely linked to the structures of the welfare society. The operating environments of the sector are built on the basis of social policy decisions. Bachelors of Social Services are executors of social policy decisions, providing guidance to customers in the use of welfare services; on the other hand, their core competence also includes providing social influence and supporting citizens through social change processes. The Master of Social Services degree emphasises the societal perspective even more than the Bachelor's degree, the crucial thing being to understand customer encounters and development work within a broader social and global context.

### **Competences**

Competence in existing social service methodology and a deep understanding of the social viewpoint form an essential part of expertise in social services. However, work with customers living in different conditions and with changing social situations emphasises the need for a research-oriented and developmental approach instead of one where ready-made solutions are adopted. Also needed is a constant self-evaluation of one's own work and learning, i.e. reflective professionalism. Social efficiency requirements and a focus on citizens' rights and the effectiveness of social service work have brought about an emphasis on evaluating services and work methods, on quality and on leadership. The Master of Social Services degree emphasises evaluation of operations and work methods that involve citizens interactively.

The degree aims to respond particularly to the following competence challenges:

- The need to develop work in the social services and other closely related sectors, and to find innovative ways of operating and organising work.
- The shift from a public sector-run welfare service system to multiple service provision forms creates many challenges. A project-based work method is an important tool in responding to them.
- The development of welfare services is focusing increasingly on the citizens' point of view, i.e. the citizens' rights to appropriate, high-quality services, in addition to the system's perspective.

The programme aims to respond particularly the specific challenges of the welfare sector in the Helsinki metropolitan area.

Graduates of the Master of Social Services degrees are experts in citizen- and region-based development activities. The degree focuses on the values and context of the social services sector on the one hand, and on skills in developing the work environment on the other.

The core competences of a Master of Social Services are:

- Ethical competence in social services
- Customer work and work method development competence
- Skills in and development of the service system in the sector
- Skills in social analysis
- Strengthening communality and participation
- Skills in social influence
- Management competence
- Research and development competence

A research-oriented and developmental approach is an essential part of any work in social services. Research and development competence is emphasised particularly in the Master's degree. Graduates are well versed in work development methods and can evaluate development activities using applied research methods. They can analyse and conceptualise change processes in social services. They can develop work by critically applying data from scientific research as well as experience and knowledge acquired from practical development activities. They can reform practices in social services with the use of systematic knowledge generation.

The degree programme also focuses on social analysis skills; Masters of Social Services can carry out critical analyses of social change and predict social impacts. They can analyse the global trends in the conditions affecting people's social behaviour. They can break down and analyse the causes and forms of social problems.

Students deepen their value bases in social services. There is a particular emphasis on citizens' rights and needs as the basis for all activities and development efforts in social services. Civil participation is emphasised in welfare work.

### **Description of the Degree Programme**

Education in social services is founded on a conception of humanity that emphasises development opportunities, activity and resources. Learning situations promote active information processing and focus on a creative, experiential and interactive approach. The starting points for learning lie in reflecting on forms of interaction and experience and critically examining one's own experiences and information structures built during life. Throughout their studies, students are encouraged to adopt a research-oriented and developmental approach, to increase their ethical awareness and to assume critical ethical reasoning and responsibility.

### **Studying in the Degree Programme**

The studies progress according to the progress principles of citizen- and region-oriented development projects. The students' learning process is closely linked to workplace development activities. At the early stages of the degree it is essential to adopt the citizen- and region-based context and to analyse citizens' needs. Students learn to plan and manage development operations and acquire methods in citizen-based customer work and networking. The later stages of the degree focus on acquiring diverse evaluation, reporting and influencing skills.

|       |                                                         | 1. year | 2. year |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| OP    | STUDIES                                                 |         |         |
| 168   | SOCIAL CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT WORK                      |         |         |
| 00557 | Citizen and Regional Orientation as a Basis for Welfare | 10      |         |
| 00558 | Welfare Services in the Social Service Context          |         | 5       |
| 169   | DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT             |         |         |
| 00559 | Research-Oriented Development Methodology               | 10      |         |
| 00560 | Planning and Managing Development Operations            | 10      |         |
| 170   | CITIZEN-BASED METHODS IN SOCIAL SERVICES                |         |         |
| 00561 | Participatory and Activating Practices                  | 10      |         |
| 00562 | Customer-Oriented Networking                            |         | 5       |
| 148   | THE THESIS AS A DEVELOPMENT PROCESS                     |         |         |
| 00415 | Thesis                                                  |         | 30      |
| 125   | ELECTIVE STUDIES                                        |         |         |
|       |                                                         | 0       | 0       |

#### Annual themes and competences

| Study |                                                         | Extent | Competences                        |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| 00557 | Citizen and Regional Orientation as a Basis for Welfare | 10     | Globalisaatio-osaamisen kuvaus (H) |
| 00559 | Research-Oriented Development Methodology               | 10     | Innovaatio-osaamisen kuvaus (H)    |
| 00560 | Planning and Managing Development Operations            | 10     | Eettisen osaamisen kuvaus (H)      |
| 00561 | Participatory and Activating Practices                  | 10     | Reflektio-osaamisen kuvaus (H)     |
| 00562 | Customer-Oriented Networking                            | 5      | Verkosto-osaamisen kuvaus (H)      |

H - Personal competence level

O - Organisational development level

Y - Social reform level

## **168 SOCIAL CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT WORK, 15 cr**

### **00557 Citizen and Regional Orientation as a Basis for Welfare, 10 cr**

#### **The student is able to:**

Analyse the challenges of regional welfare with a basis in living conditions, inhabitants and customers. Students know the Finnish welfare service system and can analyse it in relation to other regional and international welfare production methods. They understand the challenges related to new expertise and citizen-orientation in social work, and can analyse their own expertise. Then can conduct a citizen- and region-based needs analysis and direct their development operations accordingly.

#### **Contents of the study unit:**

Welfare state and society, international welfare production methods, European welfare policy

- Open and dialogic expertise
- Citizenship and civil society
- Citizen- and region-based needs analysis

### **00558 Welfare Services in the Social Service Context, 5 cr**

#### **The student is able to:**

Evaluate the quality of services and the effect of their development work in relation to the target organisation's operations and the results and usefulness of the operations. Students can assess their own development efforts as a part of the development of the Finnish welfare society and put their work in relation to international trends. They can use the methods of citizen-based social influence.

#### **Contents of the study unit:**

- Service quality, quality systems, unrestricted and equitable services
- Customer- and citizen-based evaluation of service quality and effectiveness
- Focal points and international challenges of the development of the Finnish welfare society
- Citizen-based influence on an individual, community and societal level

## **169 DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT, 20 cr**

### **00559 Research-Oriented Development Methodology, 10 cr**

#### **The student is able to:**

Understand the characteristics, progress logic and methodology of development activities and are familiar with development methods. Students understand the significance of knowledge generation as a part of development activities. They can plan and implement theoretically justified data acquisition methods. They can produce research data in participatory ways and know how to analyse them. They can analyse the theoretical and methodological background assumptions of evaluation research. They understand the relativistic and value-based nature of evaluation data and can produce them.

#### **Contents of the study unit:**

- Concept of knowledge, knowledge interests and generating new knowledge with a basis in citizens and regions
- Nature and methodological basis of development work, plan- and process-oriented development, project cycle, action research development and significance of participation in development work
- Nature and significance of the research process in development work
- Producing and analysing qualitative and quantitative research data
- Reporting and scientific writing
- Different trends in evaluation research and their theoretical-methodological assumptions, creating an evaluation setting, gathering and analysing evaluation data and utilising acquired information

### **00560 Planning and Managing Development Operations, 10 cr**

**The student is able to:**

Plan and manage development projects. Students can use various project management methods. Students can manage change processes from the point of view of development work and manage and develop multidisciplinary work communities and networks more broadly. They are familiar with development work in social services and with legislation that regulates network partnerships

**Contents of the study unit:**

- Project planning, management and monitoring; project manager's role and duties
- Shared leadership as a part of a networked community of experts
- Process management, issue management, HR management
- Welfare protection regulations, social legislation and networking regulations

**170 CITIZEN-BASED METHODS IN SOCIAL SERVICES, 15 cr****00561 Participatory and Activating Practices, 10 cr****The student is able to:**

Use, apply and develop participatory, activating and empowering methods when working with diverse customers, customer groups and communities and when developing work. Students know the basic principles of sociocultural work. They can critically evaluate social work methods and practices, taking into account research and ethical principles.

**Contents of the study unit:**

- Participation and empowerment in social service customer work and work development
- Participatory methods
- Social and structural change methods
- Sociocultural, cultural and multicultural work
- Nature of data created through participatory activities, documentation and utilisation of data in work development

**00562 Customer-Oriented Networking, 5 cr****The student is able to:**

Work flexibly in a multicultural expertise network, developing and managing them. Students understand the interpretive nature of social networks and the organisation culture challenges of networking. They can use networking methods in customer-oriented ways. They can work as opinion leaders with various stakeholders, using diverse influencing methods.

**Contents of the study unit:**

- Changes in the service system and in expertise, seamless service chains
- Customer-oriented networking and its methods
- Activating operations in diverse networks, initiatives and projects
- Working in a shared expertise group; decision-making in groups

**148 THE THESIS AS A DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, 30 cr****00415 Thesis, 30 cr****125 ELECTIVE STUDIES, 0 cr****Description:**

Students use elective studies to deepen and broaden their competence in various themes and ge-neric competences. Students should choose study units to align the content of their studies with their own personal interests and career objectives.

**Content:**

Each curriculum contains a theme consisting of elective studies. In the students' personal study plans, the theme should be made up of the study units chosen by the student from Laurea's language studies, Laurea's shared studies or another degree programme's curriculum. Any studies completed at another higher education institution (university of applied sciences, university, Online University of Applied Sciences, foreign institution) that cannot be recognised for the degree programme but that the student wishes to include in the degree should be classified under this theme. The number of credits from elective studies can be set separately for each degree programme, taking into account recommendations for the field of study. The aim is to have at least 15 cr of elective studies in each degree programme