

Background

The (public) economy of Finland and many other EU countries has reached a significant turning point. Over the years, several member states have become burdened by debt due to national deficit. The financial crisis that began in 2007–2008 has resulted in the vicious circle of debt taking a rapid turn for the worse. The financial basis of the public sector has weakened strongly as a result of the economic recession and decrease in tax revenue. On the other hand, the crisis has spurred a number of member states to take extensive measures to revive the economy. These joint factors have led to major financial deficits and high levels of national debt in comparison to the GDP, especially in the case of certain member states. This adds pressure for countries to intensify the public sector, cut public expenditure and tighten taxation.

Finland's level of debt is not alarmingly high compared to other member states. However, due to economic recovery measures, public economy (particularly municipal economy) is clearly in deficit, due to economic recovery measures, which is likely to raise the national debt to an unprecedentedly high level in the coming years. This underlying situation also creates extensive pressure on the economy and operations of municipalities in Finland, and will become concretised as various intensification measures and the likelihood of expenditure cuts at some point in time. The tax system is under reform, and taxation is expected to become tighter at least for some forms of taxation. The situation is made worse by the serious pressure on the public economy, affecting both national and municipal finances. In addition, the social transformation phase and changes in service culture will impose additional challenges on service provision.

Public sector operations are extensively regulated by legislation from many different perspectives. Specialisation studies in municipal administration and municipal law include General Administrative Law, Municipal Law, municipal economy and the development and management of municipal service provision. Following developments in some other EU member states, the significance of the third sector emerging between the private and public sectors may also become increasingly important in Finland. Legislation enables public sector operators to arrange service provision in diverse ways. Sometimes the service organisation method may constitute transferring tasks to third-sector associations and non-governmental organisations. The boundary between private and public services becomes obscured as private service providers exercise public power. On the whole, a rise in social entrepreneurship may also be a future development trend in Finland.

The division of tasks and funding system of municipalities and the government have been revised in Finland on several occasions. Following reforms on public-sector planning and management systems, the tasks and responsibilities of municipalities have increased. The municipal sector has sought for efficiency through a municipal and service structure reform, for instance. The reform aims to re-evaluate the organisation, funding and provision of public services in the long term. Municipal structures have been under quick reform particularly during the 2000s, and the number of municipalities has decreased due to a number of municipal mergers. Furthermore, the municipal sector seems to be undergoing a development trend where social welfare and health care operations and education and cultural departments are increasingly harmonised (so-called welfare services).

1.2 Content and Structure of the Specialisation Studies

Specialisation studies in municipal administration and municipal law focus on developing municipal law, municipal economy and municipal management in municipalities and in different types of municipal organisations.

Attention is paid to reform of the legal framework for municipalities, topical issues in municipal economy, and the management and development of the municipal organisation.

The fields of law emphasised in the studies comprise the ongoing reform of municipal structure and the Local Government Act, whose topical changes will be discussed throughout the studies. Attention will also be paid to municipal stability legislation, General Administrative Law, and according to the student's choice the legal framework for management or legislation concerning electronic administrative services.

As for municipal economy, the focus will be on the challenges encountered in financing services for the provision of which the municipality is responsible and on different types of service implementation models. The studies also take up issues related to outsourcing.

The New Public Management approach has had an impact on public management since the 1980s. Public sector structures and policies have been reformed in many European countries by introducing policies employed in traditional business management. The specialisation studies look at municipal management based on the above approach.

Eligible applicants for the degree programme include graduates in Business, Social Services or Health and Sports, or some other relevant programme. The specialisation studies are suitable for persons working in administrative, planning, development, supervision or other expert tasks in municipal services as well as for municipal elected officials.

A Masters Degree Programme in Entrepreneurship and Business (scope 90 cr) will be offered at Hyvinkää Laurea in 2014 (to be confirmed later). Where applicable, completed specialisation studies can be accredited for the Master's degree.

Outcomes of the Specialisation Studies

Specialisation studies must address the changing needs of the employment sector; a workplace-oriented need is required. A need exists for experts in public service development and reform in both the public sector (municipality or state), i.e. service commissioners, and in the private and so-called third sector (e.g. associations and organisations), i.e. service providers. On the other hand, municipalities are the largest customer segment of many companies. The specialisation studies in Municipal Administration and Municipal Law develop capabilities for addressing these diverse needs.

Completing the specialisation studies allows students to deepen their ability to apply theory in practice as well as their analytical skills, project management and R&D competence, and social skills, for example. The cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary character of the studies opens up new prospects.

The aims of the degree programme are:

- to broaden and deepen the students' existing professional competence in the organisation, development and management of municipal services
- to broaden and deepen the students' knowledge of and competence in municipal service provision in relation to its economic, political and legal contexts
- to develop the students' expertise towards multidisciplinary, networked operations in service provision and reform
- to increase the students' skills in developing the workplace
- to encourage students to take on new challenges.

Content

1. Future of and legal framework for municipal services, 10 cr

- topical changes in the Local Government Act
- municipal tasks and organisation in the future
- relationship between municipalities and the state
- municipal self-government
- municipal economic stability legislation
- official and elected official administration
- municipal decision-making procedure

2. Municipal economy and financial administration management, 5 cr

- Differences and similarities between municipalities and companies
- Accounting in financial control
- Financial planning
- Municipal economy stability legislation
- Most recent legislative changes concerning financial provisions

3. Development and management of the municipal service provision, 5 cr

- diverse service provision and organisation methods
- New Public Management approach in municipal management
- customer orientation in municipal service processes
- outsourcing or insourcing - a challenge to the municipal economy

4. Optional studies, 5 cr.

- Legal framework for management, 5 cr, or alternatively
- Reformed administrative information society services and electronic administration regulations, 5 cr

5. Development Exercise, 5 cr

- students deepen their competence in a development project related to their work or the exercise

Implementation of specialisation studies

The specialisation studies are implemented through blended learning, which allows students to study while working. The forms of study are face-to-face studies, assignments, online studies and literature related to the study units.

The implementation of the degree programme applies the Learning by Developing (LbD) model, which redefines the learning process as a research and development process. In the operating model, Laurea's three tasks – pedagogy, regional development and R&D – are merged into a single process of creating new competence and knowledge.

The degree programme aims to provide students with the necessary capabilities for lifelong learning and continuous development of their professional competence. The studies are arranged and study units completed making use of innovative solutions.

		1. year	2. year
OP	STUDIES	30	5
B036	MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND -MUNICIPAL LAW		
B0156	Future of and legal framework for municipal services	10	
B0157	Municipal economy and financial management		5
B0158	Development and management of municipal service provision		5
B0149	Legal framework for management	5	
B0147	Reformed administrative information society services and electronic administration regulations	5	
B0159	Development Exercise	5	
		30	5

B036 MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND -MUNICIPAL LAW, 30 cr

Description:

Specialisation studies must address the changing needs of the employment sector; a workplace-oriented need is required. A need exists for experts in public service development and reform in both the public sector (municipality or state), i.e. service commissioners, and in the private and so-called third sector (e.g. associations and organisations), i.e. service providers. On the other hand, municipalities are the largest customer segment of many companies. The specialisation studies in Municipal Administration and Municipal Law develop capabilities for addressing these diverse needs.

Completing the specialisation studies allows students to deepen their ability to apply theory in practice as well as their analytical skills, project management and R&D competence, and social skills, for example. The cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary character of the studies opens up new prospects.

The student will be able to:

- laajentaa ja syventää opiskelijoiden jo saavuttamaa ammatillista osaamista kuntapalveluiden järjestämisestä, kehittämisestä ja johtamisesta
- laajentaa ja syventää opiskelijoiden tietämystä ja osaamista kuntapalvelujen tuottamisen taloudellisten, poliittisten ja oikeudellisten reunaehtojen suhteen
- kehittää opiskelijoiden asiantuntijuutta kohti monialaista, verkostomaista toimintaa palvelujen tuottamisessa ja uudistamisessa
- lisätä opiskelijoiden valmiuksia työelämän kehittämiseen
- motivoida opiskelijoita vastaanottamaan uusia haasteita.

B0156 Future of and legal framework for municipal services, 10 cr

The student is able to:

How does a municipality work and what are its statutory tasks?

What types of changes can be expected in municipal tasks and organisation?

What is municipal self-government and the relation of municipalities to the state like?

How does the municipal economy work?

What is the municipal decision-making system like?

Contents of the study unit:

Students know the municipal decision-making system and understand the effects of ongoing changes on municipal tasks, economy and decision-making.

Study unit description:

Municipal decision-making is based on public sector norms (the Local Government Act and Administrative Procedure Act). The Local Government Act is undergoing a change and service structure changes will affect the provision of municipal services in the near future. Municipal self-government and municipal economy stability legislation will affect municipal decision-making and development and the actions of municipal officials and elected officials.

B0157 Municipal economy and financial management, 5 cr

The student is able to:

How is municipal economy planned?

How is municipal economy analysed?

What are the norms governing municipal economy?

How is the supervision of municipal economy organised?

Contents of the study unit:

Students understand the provisions governing municipal economy and the basics of financial administration and possess skills for planning and monitoring municipal economy.

Study unit description:

Municipal economy is steered and governed by the financial provisions of the Local Government Act and the municipal economic stability legislation. Municipal financial budgeting is based on an analysis, and the economic effects of different alternatives are compared on the basis of financial statements.

B0158 Development and management of municipal service provision, 5 cr**The student is able to:**

In what ways are municipal services provided and organised?
How do municipalities manage service provision?
To what extent do municipal services address customers' needs?
How is change in municipal service provision managed?

Contents of the study unit:

Students apply their management competence to reforming municipal service provision.

Study unit description:

The provision and organisation of municipal services are statutory tasks of the municipality within the framework of municipal self-government. The purpose of the management of municipal services is to provide services efficiently, economically and in a customer-oriented manner.

B0149 Legal framework for management, 5 cr**The student is able to:**

Description of the study unit: Special legal aspects relating to public sector management

Students will be able to

- Know the legal framework for organisational management, particularly in the sphere of public sector organisations
- Understand the special legal aspects relating to the management of a public sector organisation
- Know the main concepts, principles and provisions of labour law
- Know the legal status of public entity officials as well as the key concepts and principles of law of civil service
- Apply provisions of labour law and law of civil service as well as analyse and solve related legal issues
- Know the special features of third sector labour legislation

Contents of the study unit:

- Special aspects in the management of public organisations
- Labour law and law of civil service; rights, obligations and responsibilities of civil servants
- Collaboration, equality and discrimination provisions relating to the employment sector
- Collective labour law: collective agreement system
- Occupational safety and occupational health care legislation
- Employer's obligation to take out insurance in case of significant social risks
- Contract management for the outsourcing of municipal service provision

Study unit description:

Special legal aspects relating to public sector management

B0147 Reformed administrative information society services and electronic administration regulations, 5 cr**The student is able to:**

The aim is to gain an understanding of present information society services, development stages and projects relating to information society services, and regulations applying to electronic administration.

Students are able to:

- Understand the meaning of the principles of good administration from the viewpoint in question
- Know information management, personal data processing and quality management methods
- Know the legal principles for online communications and guidance
- Know the legal framework for online customer services

- Know the legal framework for online administrative decision-making and related communications
- Know the regulations and other framework for the publicity or privacy of different types of information and data storage and transfer
- Able to take into account the requirements for the obligation to provide information

Contents of the study unit:

- Role of basic rights and general administrative legal principles in online administration
- Provisions of publicity legislation for information society administration
- Legislation applying to customer services offered by public authorities
- Provisions of online communications in online administration
- Legal framework for online information services
- Legal framework for data security and data protection in online administration

B0159 Development Exercise, 5 cr

The student is able to:

Students will be able to act in a collaborative, responsible manner with the employment sector and other partners in the development project and report the results of the project logically and with justifications.

Contents of the study unit:

How is a municipal development project implemented?

Study unit description:

The development task is based on a real-life development challenge. The development project emphasises a research-oriented and developmental approach. The development exercise report reflects new competence related to the development challenge.