

LAUREA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Degree Programme in Service Innovation and Design, in English, HYA213SJ

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0316 THESIS, 30 cr

Description:

The aim of the Master's thesis is to develop the students' ability to carry out a demanding service development project independently. The aim is to allow students to deepen their ability to apply theories in practice, their analytical skills, their project management and R&D competence and their social skills. According to the Government Degree (423/2005), the aim of the Master's thesis is to develop and demonstrate students' ability to apply research data, to use selected methods for analysing and solving work life problems and to carry out demanding specialist tasks independently.

The student will be able to:

- plan, carry out and evaluate a service development project within a given timeframe by applying appropriate methods
- manage and transform work contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches
- identify and formulate problems and solutions critically, independently and creatively
- use the specialised problem solving skills required in research and innovation in order to develop new procedures and knowledge and to integrate knowledge from different fields
- take responsibility for contributing to professional practice and knowledge
- carry out and manage project tasks, take initiatives, adopt a developmental approach to work and initiate and implement change processes
- adapt the necessary abilities for lifelong learning and the continuous development of their own professional competence
- guide and coach others and develop good communication and language skills required by work
- develop the skills required for international interaction and operation

Content:

The thesis process progresses as a collaboration between the student, its commissioner and the supervisors. Students' thesis is guided through workshops and personal tutoring..

Learning process:

In the thesis process students acquire and produce highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of service innovation and design, as the basis for original thinking and research. One or more supervisor(s) is set for the thesis. The task of the supervisor(s) is to work with the commissioner of the project and with other participants to direct the thesis process while promoting interaction between Laurea and the business partners. The commissioner's representative and the supervisor(s) can form the thesis tutoring team together. The main responsibility for completing the thesis lies with the student.

The thesis process involves participation in thesis workshops. In them, students generate a project theme and ideas and present and discuss their theses with supervisor(s) and their student peers.

Students start by creating a thesis plan containing the main stages and deadlines for the work. This is presented to the supervisor(s) or the tutoring group and to other students. The plan is a compulsory and essential preparatory stage in the thesis process, whose aim is to set the actual thesis project in motion. The thesis plan allows students to discuss their intentions with as many people as possible (e.g. supervisors, other students, business partners) and to receive valuable feedback.

In the thesis plan, the student explains why a project is necessary, sets objectives for it, links the project to earlier research and projects, presents the methods to be used and the planned progress of the project, outlines the content and schedule of the project and lists the main sources of information. The plan is typically specified and updated as the project progresses. The thesis plan also includes dates for reporting on the progress of the work. Students are recommended to keep a sufficiently detailed work journal and must report on their progress according to plan.

As the studies progress, the topic and objectives of the thesis are specified and focused on. Regardless of how practical the orientation of the project is, students must familiarise themselves with existing research and demonstrate this by providing a bibliography report. The student selects an appropriate method for the thesis and discusses it with the supervisor.

The stages of the thesis depend on the nature and the extent of the development project. Familiarisation with the task begins when the student discusses the subject with the commissioner of the project and with other stakeholders. The thesis is further defined as the process continues, and initial task descriptions can change. The choice of tasks and solutions must be professionally justified. Creative thinking is used in seeking new solutions and weighing up alternatives. Completed theses are presented to different parties and feedback sessions are arranged as a part of the evaluation process.

01031 Thesis, 30 cr

Contents of the study unit:

o service development project

0317 BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP COMPETENCES IN SERVICE INNOVATIONS, 15 cr

Description:

The aim of the theme is to enhance the students' business and leadership competences as well as their methodological skills in gathering and processing information. The students aim to obtain insights into the service business as well as into changes and future trends in the business environment. The students will acquire methodological skills in futures research and begin to adopt an approach of permanently anticipating innovations as well as learning to relate positively and curiously to constant and ever-faster change and the opportunities it creates in their own operating environments. The students will also study cultural leadership issues related to service design implementation as well as to managing and controlling service business.

The student will be able to:

- examine, specify and analyse the business environment and future trends and anticipate new opportunities for developing services
- create deep insights into the structures and processes in the business
- foster service culture and leadership
- compare factors influencing the profitability and asset structure of different types of service businesses and follow and analyse economic phenomena in a service organisation

Content:

The theme consists of 15 credits of compulsory studies. The studies reflect the contemporary theoretical and methodological aspects of futures thinking and foresight methodologies, service leadership and management accounting and control in services.

Learning process:

The theme consists of 15 credits of compulsory studies. The studies reflect the contemporary theoretical and methodological aspects of futures thinking and foresight methodologies, service leadership and management accounting and control in services.

01032 Futures thinking and foresight methodologies, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- understand the principles of futures thinking
- use foresight methods and practices

- apply foresight in the decision making process

Contents of the study unit:

- Recognising and monitoring change
- Critically evaluating change
- Outlining possible development paths
- Defining objectives
- Determining appropriate development paths
- Familiarisation with quantitative and qualitative methods
- Utilising outcomes

Study unit description:

The study unit consists of three modules: 1) Knowing the future which includes principles and tasks, 2) building the future which includes methods and practices and 3) preparing for the future, which includes strategies and skills. We cannot know the future, but we must plan for it. Foresight is a combination of futures thinking, planning and networking and it encompasses a number of techniques that have been developed to help decision makers be better prepared for the future. Foresight aims to identify megatrends and weak signals in the operating environment, point out development directions for the sector, and evaluate the effects of recognised change drivers and change processes on the sector or business cluster in question. Finally, we will create strategies based on alternative futures, including the flexibility to deal with surprise events and situations.

01033 Change leadership and service culture, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- o support organisations in becoming more service and customer focused
- o act as a leader in strategic development projects
- o adopt a proactive and responsible attitude towards change and manage emerging issues
- o promote trust and creativity

Contents of the study unit:

- o Customer and service oriented organisational culture
- o Employee motivation, engagement and empowerment
- o Assessment of structural and competence needs in change situations
- o Quality leadership and strategic excellence in service encounters
- o Effective communication and interaction skills

Study unit description:

Ultimately, frontline staff are the face of a service company. A service oriented company needs to turn the organisational pyramid upside down. In order to provide enjoyable service experiences, frontline staff should be involved and properly trained to understand the needs of different customers and have the necessary autonomy to deliver a personalised service. Successful service companies have a participatory culture in place, which allows employees to be involved in the sharing of ideas and discussion on company development. Frontline employees should be able to listen to and understand customer needs and pass on any potential concerns to management.

A strong organisational culture and values driven leadership are important prerequisites for implementing a new or changed service concept. Core values, a strategic focus on customer driven processes, roles, responsibilities and skills support the change management needed to embed innovation in an organisation. Leaders and managers need to have the ability to attract and retain talent, respect individual concerns and develop competencies and commitment while business undergoes continuous change. In service organisations, effective internal communication is crucial for staff engagement and the clarity of a company's strategic goals.

01034 Management Accounting and Control in Services, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- understand the importance of cost accounting and budgeting for decision making
- use key performance indicators in services
- prepare a cash budget, budgeted income statement and balance sheet for a small company
- use activity-based costing to analyse customer profitability
- set a price for a new service

Contents of the study unit:

- Profitability of new services and customers
- Budgeting and its role in planning, control and decision making
- Financial reporting that supports management decision making
- Pricing methods

Study unit description:

There should be a tight link between the budget and the strategic plan of an organization. New or changed service concepts will be exposed to a business analysis, including market viability and profitability analysis. Management accounting introduces several methods and tools to analyze profitability and make budgets and forecasts to help the decision-making process of the management.

Management accounting is undergoing changes and faces several challenges in the future. There is a need to integrate management accounting more into the business and operations of an organization, as part of development and innovation teams, and not only as a separate specialist function. A key objective is to develop students' competences in management accounting, cost and revenue management, as well as budgeting and financial reporting. The students will also discuss the use of different methods in pricing services.

A9068 Capital Investment Analysis, 5 cr**The student is able to:****The students will be able to**

- identify cash flows associated with capital budgeting decisions
- understand the time value of money and why discounting cash flows is important
- use NPV, IRR, payback period and accounting rate of return to determine whether or not a project is acceptable
- understand how sensitivity analysis can help in decision making

Contents of the study unit:**Content**

- capital investment planning process
- cash flow analysis
- investment profitability criteria: NPV, IRR, payback period, accounting rate of return
- sensitivity analysis

Study unit description:**Description**

Capital investment decisions are often very large and need careful planning. Both qualitative and quantitative factors must be considered when making decisions about future investments. To get a project approved in an organization, managers need to identify the future cash flows generated by the investment project. A cash flow forecast helps to understand and analyze the amount and timing of cash inflows and cash outflows generated by the investment. There are multiple methods available for evaluating capital investments. Discounted cash flow techniques, such as Net Present Value and Internal Rate of Return, are often used. Other capital budgeting methods are for example the Payback Period and Accounting Rate of Return.

The students are introduced to the investment planning and decision-making process. They understand how capital investment methods can be used in investment planning.

Previous studies:

Prerequisites

None

01043 Management of business networks, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- Evaluate the historical aspects of the network theories, key principles, and contexts of application, organizational structures, and their impact on managing them
- Develop 'shared value' and principles that can be applied across the business
- Come up with creative (radical) ideas in developing, leading, and managing business within networks
- Outline a 'good practice' approach to management of business network
- Evaluate and improve organization's network context

Contents of the study unit:

- Network theories, models, and principles
- Types of networks, systems of networks
- Networked society, service business in networked context
- Management and beyond in leading networked organizations
- Complexity science and service science approaches towards the networks
- Key principles and dynamics in network management
- Interaction and action in networks, the actors in networks
- Development of business within networks

Study unit description:

The aim of the study unit is to enhance the students' business and leadership competences in network context. Service systems are typically made up of number of firms collaborating, i.e. networks. This study unit is looking in the development of networked society in general and more specifically, how organizational forms and types, and relationships have transformed. The history of network theories and models are analyzed. This study unit moves further in thinking of the future of networks and their management. This course takes the management perspective on networks. How to manage different networks and what are the managerial challenges. Students learn the historical development of networks and their management..Further, they will learn to interact within the network. The focus is inter-organizational networks, not on intra-organizational networks.

01042 Entrepreneurship in services, 5 cr

The student is able to:

deepen their professional expertise

Contents of the study unit:

Entrepreneurship in services

Study unit description:

The study unit offers students an opportunity to supplement their personal learning plan by participating in courses and project work within their own institutes, as well as in other fields and other institutions of higher education.

00669 English for managers and professionals, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- communicate in international professional environment

Contents of the study unit:

- Written and oral English for business administration and security management

Study unit description:

The course emphasizes language skill in English important for managers and professionals. It develops students' communication skills for varying managerial situations.

0318 VALUE CREATING COMPETENCES, 15 cr

Description:

Students learn to critically evaluate and purposefully, creatively and profitably develop the strategies, revenue models and concepts for a service business. Students will be able to understand service value, create a vision, develop it, put it into action and successfully commercialise it. The aim of the theme is to gain proficiency in critical evaluation and in the systematic and innovative development of service businesses.

The student will be able to:

- understand the strategic foundation of service development work
- envision new opportunities for service development
- put into practice novel and sustainable models that stand out from mass supply and evaluate the impacts of such models
- adopt a proactive approach to developing an organisation
- identify new opportunities for innovation by looking at a whole system of service delivery
- understand the principles of open innovation; including customers in the earliest stages of a service development process and thus bring together a unique value network

Content:

The theme consists of 15 credits of compulsory studies. The studies focus on the contemporary theoretical and methodological aspects of innovative service strategies, new service development and services marketing. Students will acquire highly specialised knowledge in the field of service strategies, innovative business models, service development as well as the marketing and selling of services.

Learning process:

The theme consists of 15 credits of compulsory studies. The studies focus on the contemporary theoretical and methodological aspects of innovative service strategies, new service development and services marketing. Students will acquire highly specialised knowledge in the field of service strategies, innovative business models, service development as well as the marketing and selling of services.

01035 Strategic service innovations and changing business models, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- understand the strategic shift to service business and its impact on corporate level
- assess service strategy and strategic choices
- master the key concepts, principles and methods of strategic management
- formulate innovative business models for a service business
- understand the impact that a new innovative strategy has on corporate business model and competitive advantage

Contents of the study unit:

- Strategic thinking and principles
- Strategy process: formulation and management (planning and implementation)
- Formulation of radically new business strategies and innovative business models
- Competitive advantage and edge in service business
- Impact of a new business strategy on organization

Study unit description:

For any organization, it is important to exhibit a clear vision about its goals and strategies. A strategy defines strategic objectives for the organization, provides direction for growth and success, and prioritizes activities. Basically, the strategy influences organizational attitudes and culture towards the creation of value for customers through services. The strategy and vision for the future has to be based on an understanding of the business, where a business is now, who are the customers, what is offered to customers, and how the company has come to this point. It is also important to know, how profitable the business is, how successful the company is doing compared to its competitors, and what are the core capabilities and strengths of the organization. The study unit looks at the significance and methods of strategic process, planning and management in the context of a service business. The emphasis is on radical strategy reforms, and on looking for and producing strategic innovations in a rapidly changing business environment. Students will learn how to use the basic tools to formulate strategy, strategic objectives and implementation through strategy action plans.

Prerequisites

None

01036 New service development and innovative service systems, 5 cr**The student is able to:**

- develop service logic into a business
- develop and model innovative service systems, concepts and processes
- evaluate and improve an organisation's service development processes

Contents of the study unit:

- Innovative service businesses
- Customer-centred development processes
- Developing service systems, concepts and processes
- Service blueprinting
- Developing value for the customer and value for the service provider

Study unit description:

In this study unit, students practice to create a definable value proposition. In the new service development process, strategic objectives are typically converted into portfolios of services by the generating and screening of various ideas and the selecting of one or some of them for actual development. Developing new value propositions includes the ability to understand how customer needs are fulfilled by customers' experience and valuation of a service. It is important to look holistically at the whole service system and ensure that the new or changed service is consistent with all other services, and that all other services that support or depend on the new or changed services are consistent with the new service.

01037 Service Marketing and Selling, 5 cr**The student is able to:**

- understand the evolution of services marketing thought
- understand the strategic approach in service marketing
- establish, maintain and develop customer relationships
- conceptualize and sell services

Contents of the study unit:

- services marketing thought
- strategic marketing management in service business
- customer relationship management
- selling of services

Study unit description:

Students become familiar with the key concepts and methods of service marketing. They will deepen their managerial skills in service marketing and in customer relationships. The students will also learn how to sell services in business to business market.

01044 Cross cultural issues in service development, 5 cr**The student is able to:**

- identify and deeply understand cross-cultural issues related to service development
- plan and implement intercultural strategies and processes
- manage multicultural teams and projects
- support and develop frontline personnel's intercultural communication competences
- involve diverse customers in the service design processes.

Contents of the study unit:

- Understanding and managing diversity based on chosen cultural theories
- Cross-cultural knowledge in strategic service development (back office)
- Intercultural competences in service business (front office)

Study unit description:

Services are often offered globally and to customers and end-users from different cultures. Deep understanding of cultural needs and preferences are a prerequisite for effective service design.

This study unit offers understanding of the theoretical basis of cross-cultural and intercultural perspectives and enables the student to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills for service design.

0319 USER-CENTRIC SERVICE DESIGN COMPETENCES, 15 cr**Description:**

The aim of the theme is to develop the students' ability to design compelling service experiences directly with service customers and users. The students practice their ability and sensitivity to anticipate changes in customers' behaviour, needs and expectations, which is the starting point in the successful design of better services and new service concepts. They learn to acquire deep insights into the unarticulated needs of the customers and take a genuinely people centred, empathetic approach in service design.

The student will be able to:

- adopt a people centred, empathetic approach to service design
- use customers and users as an essential source of information, innovation and creativity
- understand the factors that affect demand and customer behaviour in services
- foresee complex changes in customer behaviour and envision the new opportunities they bring
- use various service design methods
- include customers and users in the earliest stages of service design

Content:

The theme consists of 15 credits of compulsory studies and an elective study unit. The studies focus on the contemporary theoretical and methodological aspects of design thinking, service design and customer and user behaviour. This theme will present an opportunity to examine and discover service design methods. Methods may include, for example, interviews, observational methods and ethnographic studies, narratives, contextual inquiry and usability testing, participatory techniques and workshops, and the role of visual description within the design research process as expressed and analysed through drawing, collage, modelling, photography and diagramming. The theme will provide students with the necessary tools to determine appropriate methods for specific design research needs, to find supporting resources, and the ability to critically evaluate existing research.

Learning process:

The theme consists of 15 credits of compulsory studies and an elective study unit. The studies focus on the contemporary theoretical and methodological aspects of design thinking, service design and customer and user behaviour. This theme will present an opportunity to examine and discover service design methods. Methods may include, for example, interviews, observational methods and ethnographic studies, narratives, contextual inquiry and usability testing, participatory techniques and workshops, and the role of visual description within the design research process as expressed and analysed through drawing, collage, modelling, photography and diagramming. The theme will provide students with the necessary tools to determine appropriate methods for specific design research needs, to find supporting resources, and the ability to critically evaluate existing research.

01038 Design thinking, 5 cr**The student is able to:**

- analyse and assess design from the perspective of its relations to other disciplines and business activities

Contents of the study unit:

- Definitions of design
- The collaborative nature and the social context of design
- Conceptualising
- Sketching
- Prototyping
- Communicating

Study unit description:

Design is a central feature of our culture and everyday life. This study unit contributes to the understanding of design as an integrative activity and gives participants the resources to develop their creative processes and team work skills.

The main focus of the discussions will be on the design activity. How does design differ from other activities and how may it be characterised in its own terms? The discussions, lectures and exercises will deal with the concept of design from the perspective of its relations to other disciplines and business activities. The designer's work will be discussed through different concepts and approaches that are relevant to the contemporary disciplines of new media, interaction and service design.

01039 Deep insights into customers and end-users, 5 cr**The student is able to:**

- identify factors related to customer behaviour in services
- anticipate complex changes in customer behaviour and envision the opportunities this opens up
- discover unarticulated customer/user needs
- apply the results of the latest research and methods in his/her own operating environment
- deeply understand customers'/users' experiences across all the touch points of an organisation

Contents of the study unit:

- Customer behaviour as a multidisciplinary research subject
- Customer/user values, attitudes, needs and expectations
- Ethnographic research, the practice of studying customer behaviours in their natural environment
- Customer experience design

Study unit description:

This study unit provides a solid basis for the customer-centred design of services. The study unit looks at change

factors affecting service demand and customer behaviour, on the basis of which students are able to start designing new kinds of services to meet customer needs. The students practise understanding emotional (psychological) aspect in services.

The students become familiar with the multidisciplinary field of customer behaviour research and apply the latest research outcomes and methods in practice. Research methods are mainly based on deep customer empathy (e.g. ethnography). Focus is on the whole customer journey – not merely on the touch points

01040 Service design process and methods, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- get to know the principles of service design
- use service design processes and methods
- use innovative methods to generate ideas for new services
- value generated ideas and concepts from customer's point of view
- prototype services
- create a service offering, where the service provider's brand is a part of a customer's experience

Contents of the study unit:

- Service design processes
- Methods for gathering customer insight and generating service ideas and concepts, methods for user-centred design, co-design
- Prototyping (visualisation, creating service evidence, bodystorming etc.)

Study unit description:

During this study unit students become familiar with the key principles, processes and methods of service design. They learn various idea generation and service design methods, e.g. brainstorming, sketching, observation methods, probes, customer journeys, service safari, and personas. They examine what happens before, during and after the actual service delivery, for both service providers and customers. This includes an analysis of all the points of contact between the service provider and the user. Students practice to translate intangible service propositions into desirable, often more tangible offerings. Prototypes allow emerging ideas to be expressed, modified, and shared with users and other stakeholders in a very tangible and emotive way.

01041 Current topics of service design, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- deepen their understanding of service innovation and design
- acquire and share new knowledge by participating in and analysing the content of scientific and professional seminars, conferences and workshops
- reflect upon their learning and create their own framework around service innovation and design competence

Contents of the study unit:

- service innovation and design seminars, conferences and workshops (to be agreed with the supervisor)

Study unit description:

This elective study unit consists of service innovation and design seminars, conferences and workshops. The students participate in conferences or full day seminars and workshops during this study unit. They prepare a report on all the events, consisting of the content of the event and a personal learning diary. The students present their learning and insight in group meetings during the study unit. The aim of this elective course is to help a student to deepen their self-interest in the field of service innovation and design.

01351 Tools for visual communication in service design, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- communicate and share service development ideas and objectives by using graphic software
- visualize a service development process or a service concept by using and editing 2D computer graphics (photos, graphic elements and charts)

Contents of the study unit:

- Photographing basics for creating prototypes, cartoons, story boards, persona maps etc.
- Basics of image editing (e.g. Adobe PhotoShop)
- Advanced slideshows (e.g. MS PowerPoint)
- Basics of print publishing (e.g. MS Publisher /Adobe InDesign)
- Elective tools such as process modeling, video or audio editing, online tools for shared service development

Study unit description:

The aim of the study unit is to provide skills for using some practical visualization tools to support design work and communication in service design processes. Service development is a process that usually involves several experts from different disciplines and responsibility areas. Being able to visualize service ideas, share and communicate effectively the development objectives, the process and the concept becomes therefore very important.

A9067 Service Design in digital context, 5 cr

The student is able to:

The students will be able to

- understand how to create digital interfaces and basic understanding of interaction design
- use service design skills in designing digital interfaces
- analyze clients digital strategy in the service design perspective
- work with co-workers and clients in co-creative digital service interface projects
- have basic knowledge how to manage digital service design projects

Contents of the study unit:

Content

- Basics of interaction design
- Service design in creating digital interfaces
- Practices analyzing digital interfaces with strategy and service system alignment
- Practices creating digital interfaces

Study unit description:

Description

Students become familiar with basics of interaction design and (digital) interface design. Students analyze different digital services and digital interfaces of real companies. Dynamic outline for planning and managing digital service design projects with clients. Students will learn how to co-create digital service interfaces and digital services with co-workers and clients. Students will understand how to create digital services that are aligned with clients strategy and service system.

Previous studies:

Prerequisites

None

A9102 Social Innovation and Social Responsibility, 5 cr

The student is able to:

- know the principles of user-centred and user-driven design
- understand the concept of social responsibility
- operate in international networks taking into account social, economic and environmental dimensions
- form an overall view on social, cultural, cognitive, technical, experiential and aesthetic factors related to the usefulness and attractiveness of product and service entities
- be aware and attentive towards sustainability issues

Contents of the study unit:

- Living Lab approach
- User-centred design and methods
- Service design
- Social (population, consumerism, fair trade), economic issues (corporate social responsibility) and ecological issues (e.g. environment, green building, renewable energy)
- Social responsibility and social economy
- Societal impact of new business strategies that change human behaviour towards a more ethical framework

Study unit description:

This study unit is arranged in cooperation with the partners of UFISA (User-centred design for Innovative Services and Applications) project: Aalto University School of Science, University of Lapland, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), University of Botswana (UB), and the Polytechnic of Namibia (UN).

The study unit focus on question: How can User-centered and user-driven approaches promote social responsibility, ethical values and sustainability?

Previous studies:

None