

# Future Trends in Higher Education and Research in Finland

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## Keywords

HEI's, future, trends, education, research, national perspective

## 1. Summary

There is an endeavor in the higher education sector in Finland to identify and predict the future trends that will have the most impact on the sector within the next 5 to 10 years. The aim is to provide a national outlook on what is to come; to convey one possible picture of what the future of the Finnish HEI's, and perhaps also the international higher education and research communities, will hold. The work is done with the goal of helping the institutions in finding a common ground when planning ahead, thinking anew their ecosystems, and in identifying possibilities for working together.

## 2. ABSTRACT

The field in which the institutions of higher education in Finland operate in is in flux, partly due to the recession. The institutions have to cut back, but at the same time there is a need to invest in digitalization, as this is seen as a way to ensure growth in the future.

A common understanding of the possible future changes is needed to steer the strategic decisions for the future. Thus, it is important to know what the vital areas are where change is imminent, and what to focus on in the long run.

In the higher education sector in Finland there is an endeavor to identify and predict the trends that will have the most impact on the field within the next 5 to 10 years. The starting point for gathering information was Educause 2015 conference, on the basis of which the representatives of the HEI's in Finland have compiled a list of the future trends in higher education and research. Finnish HEI's student administration staff, support services, experts on pedagogy, digital education and learning, and experts on research administration are now processing the list further, and adapting and localizing it to better suit Finland and the European higher education area. The results from this will be presented in the Finnish rector's ICT meeting in September 2016.

Future changes are inevitable and preparing for them well in advance is crucial. Work like this has been done already, mostly from an IT perspective. Indeed this analysis builds on Educause and the work by Gartner, among others. However, a local perspective is needed, especially in a small market like Finland. The aim for this work is to provide a national outlook on what is to come; to convey one possible picture of what the future of the Finnish HEI's, and possibly also the international higher education and research communities, will hold.

The work is ongoing and the final paper is expected by the end of 2016, but the results available now already give good grounds for discussion in an international context. The early results show that in the future even some of the core tasks may be outsourced and acquired from organizations outside the institutions' traditional ecosystems. Cooperation within the institution and faculties, but even more importantly between the institutions, will make a greater success factor in a small market. Business intelligence thinking is inserting itself in the Finnish HEI's, and academic and learning analytics will be utilized to a greater degree. There is also some indication that the core structure of the institutions is changing, affecting the roles of staff in various ways.

This analysis hopes to serve as a toolkit for the rectors of the HEI's in Finland; identifying the key issues and making predictions for the future may help the institutions in finding a common ground when planning ahead, thinking anew their ecosystems, and in identifying possibilities for working together.

### **3. AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**



The author currently works as a coordinator at CSC - IT center for Science, an organization governed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland. The work at CSC aims at helping the HEI's in their efforts in digitalizing the processes and services in the field of education, mainly by facilitating the work of different interest groups. The author has a Master of Arts degree from the University of Helsinki. More information about the author can be found on LinkedIn: <https://fi.linkedin.com/in/outitasala>