

STUDYING AT HOME

At Study Centre South in Ystad all students can participate in the university course virtually at home. This new system makes it possible for interested and qualified people to study when they have time. It may be used also for competence development or for unemployed.

Together with the three Universities in Lund, Malmö and Kristianstad the municipality has created a facility where longer term studies e.g. computer and electronics engineering courses are mixed with IT supported studies in sociology, economy and other shorter courses. All studies are closely connected to the trade and industry in the region, which provide employment possibilities for graduates.

The centre has about 200 students, many of them part-time, who conduct their studies mainly through IT support. All courses are available on the web and students communicate with their teachers at the university through e-mail and by phone. The videoconference technique has mainly been used in Economics thus making it possible for students and teachers to communicate in real-time. The system of communication and methodology has been developed by Lund University and all studies are naturally conducted as a part of normal university education. The municipality of Ystad cooperates with the Fachhochschule Lübeck with the aim to develop this concept of education.

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New Campus of Vaasa University



VAASA - A KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

The importance of knowledge as a factor of production is emphasised in the modern service information society. A great part of new jobs is created in so called knowledge professions.

The business life also favours a many-sided information environment, where the relations and networks create a good basis for establishment of innovations and new enterprises. In the light of these facts the city of Vaasa together with other parties aim at strengthening the position of Vaasa as the educational centre of Western Finland.

First, however, a small package of general information. Vaasa 350 years old traditions as a school town. The city got the epithet of College City in 1968. The college sector has during the past 30 years developed continuously, and today it contains three scientific units of higher education with totally 5500 students. Two units of higher vocational education have 2400 of students. If all other kinds of schools are included, there are daily over 25.000 persons studying in one educational form or another, which is an astonishing number in a city with 56.000 inhabitants.

The University of Vaasa - one of the three units within the sector of higher education - is involved in several interesting projects. In the field of business education entrepreneurship is an overall form of education, starting in kindergarten and continuing up to the university level. There is a special professorship at the university reserved for research in this field, and the university has cooperation partners e.g. in England and Norway. Worth mentioning is the university's special unit - the high-tech laboratory (Technobothnia) that started its activities two years ago. The two other college units have lots of activities with international connections. The newest unit within the higher education, the vo-

ational colleges, offer educational programmes in almost all sectors. In several fields instruction is given in foreign languages (mainly in English and German).

Total early immersion teaching has been an option for more than ten years. In practise this means that Finnish-speaking pupils are instructed principally in the minority language, i.e. in Swedish. The forms of the immersion model have been strengthened further as the European institute of immersion teaching, with its main centre in Barcelona and a branch office in Vaasa, was founded at the international immersion congress in Vaasa in 1993.

An important milestone for the internationalisation in the upper secondary school education in Vaasa was the IB (International Baccalaureate) education that started in 1992. The instruction language is English and, what is interesting, there are as many pupils admitted with Finnish as their mother tongue as with Swedish.

The city tries to create such a knowledge environment that the Swedish researcher Sverker Sörlin has called the new intellectual geography: "In the Knowledge Society the primary regional factor is knowledge. Areas where there is knowledge attract enterprises, organisations and authorities interested in knowledge. The result of this localisation game is a new intellectual geography, a competence landscape with highs and valleys unequally scattered over the territory."

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