

FAQ - Study psychologists Saure & Häkkinen

(Podcast for students, duration approx. 20 min / episode)

Episode 1: Welcome to the University of Applied Sciences

Mari: Welcome to the Study Counselling Podcast Series at Xamk, South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences. I am study psychologist Mari Häkkinen.

Karoliina: And I am study psychologist Karoliina Saure. This podcast series strives to find answers to the most common questions about studying, learning and wellbeing.

Mari: In this episode, we'd like to welcome you to the University of Applied Sciences. We'll discuss things to consider when starting your studies. We'll answer questions, such as How to prepare to start your studies? How do you get the most out of your studies? And how to prepare for future changes?

Mari: Getting a place to study is a great thing! It also raises a lot of emotions, sometimes contradictory, you might be excited, nervous, apprehensive, overjoyed. You might also start to have some questions about your own future, what sort of career will you have? What doors will studying open for you? Karoliina, what needs to be taken into account when you find out that you have been accepted for university studies and offered a study place?

Karoliina: Firstly, accept the study place! This is the most important thing to do! If you haven't accepted your study place already, do it now! You don't want the opportunity to pass you by. Other practical issues are for example moving to a new region, finding a place to live, and getting to know your new area. It's a good idea to find out how you will travel from your new home to campus. Is it walking distance? Do you need a bike? Which brings us on to planning your finances! Have you made a budget? Remember to submit your student grant and other applications in good time. The sooner the better!

Mari: Housing, travelling and financial matters are indeed important things for everyday life. In fact, it seems there's a lot to do! What can be done in advance to ease the start of your studies?

Karoliina: From a study psychologist's point of view, planning is key. And to help with planning, a calendar is essential. But consider, what sort of calendar you need? Digital or paper? Do you prefer week view or day view? It might take a bit of preparation and work to put everything into a calendar, but it really helps to organize your schedule and simplify your daily life. A calendar is an integral part of time and task management, and these are skills that are needed daily in university studies and work life. It is also a good idea to update your study skills.

Mari: In other words, don't only mark deadlines on your calendar, but also schedule active reading and study planning as well. You can also use the calendar to manage your free time to ensure that as well as studies, there is also enough time for other important things, such as leisure, friends, and hobbies. Karoliina you said something earlier that I meant to ask you about, what did you mean when you said, "update your study skills?"

Karoliina: Well, by study skills, I mean everything from reading to mathematics, time management and stress management. Study skills are quite like work skills. These include workload management, interaction skills, self-compassion and learning techniques.

You can update your study skills by first asking yourself how long it has been since your last studies, and what sort of skills do you already have. Where are you at your strongest? And what is more challenging for you? If for example, using a calendar feels difficult, how could you start practicing it? We have some good tips on our mini webinar series on Xamk's Student Wellbeing YouTube channel. But there are also other great resources on the internet!

Mari: What kind of attitude do you need when starting your studies? I once heard the metaphor that studying is like a journey that everyone makes in their own way.

Karoliina: That's right, I like that metaphor! Comparing yourself to other students is not worth it. It is like comparing apples and oranges! It is pointless. All students are individuals and as individuals have very different paths. Focus on your own path and how you can go forward in a way that suits you. Choose courses that interest you. Get to know people, ask for help if needed. Form a study circle to get to know other students and share the workload. Self-compassion is important, you don't have to be good at everything.

Mari: Thanks, Karoliina, those are really important points. It is always a good idea to remain humble and gracious. The first day at the new school is definitely exciting. How can you prepare for it?

Karoliina: Well, first things first! Find out the place you need to be and the time you need to be there. Arrive a bit early, so that you are not stressed out by being late and you don't miss any important things. Find out what you need to take with you. And remember that you cannot remember everything! During the first few days and weeks, you'll get a lot of new information. The human brain is unable to process that amount of new information. Write notes to reduce the pressure on your brain. You will also encounter new people, places, and things. An open and curious mind will help you make the best of things!

Mari: That is to say, allow yourself to get used to new things and change at your own pace and without pressure. There is no need to worry if you don't immediately remember everything new. Especially if you've made notes and updated your calendar! From what I remember of my student days, there is not enough time to do everything, especially when studying full time. Should there be some sort of prioritization?

Karoliina: Yes, you'll need to make room for studies in your life. Prioritization is definitely needed when the studies are about to begin. It's good to note that studying in university often means also giving up something. What are you willing to give up to have enough time for your studies?

Also, more sophisticated prioritization can be very important during studies. You can use the same method for time, task, and stress management. In its simplest form, you can prioritize using to-do lists. First, list all the tasks and then decide what is most important at the moment. Remember that we can only do one thing at a time and not everything can be done perfectly. University studies last for years, and sometimes there are situations where you must put one course before others. The same situation is often inevitable in work life, and it is good to practice it already while studying. Prioritization is key.

Mari: The calendar is also good for lists.

Karoliina: Yes, and then the tasks can also be scheduled directly into the calendar.

Mari: Great tip! But let's go back to the first day of study. I remember feeling very nervous on my first day at the university. But then I found out that others were also nervous, and they had the same questions and uncertainties as me. I realized that I am not alone, and this observation made everything.

I visited the campus the previous day to see the place, because there were so many buildings, I was concerned that I would have gotten lost. I felt safer starting the first day knowing where to go. Karoliina,

what was it like when you started your studies at university? Do you remember the first day? Or the first semester?

Karoliina: It certainly was exciting, and I felt nervous. Although I am often nervous about new situations. I can remember meeting nice students from the first year, a good atmosphere in the department, and a general feeling that it's cool to study. These memories probably symbolize what was most important for me at the start of my studies.

Mari: It's great to reflect on this and discover that we both had similar emotions and experiences on our first days of study.

Mari: That's all we have time for, thank you for joining us for our Podcast FAQ Episode with Study Psychologists Saure & Häkkinen. We hope you found some tips and useful hints that will make it easier for you to get started in university.

Until the next episode, bye bye!