

# Degree Diak for students



Degree Programme in Social Services  
Diaconia University of Applied Sciences

## Degree Programme in Social Services

Focus on Community Development Work  
with an option for Youth & Community  
Development Work and Diaconia

Degree: Bachelor of Social Services, 210 ECTS

## If you...

- would like to study social services and community development in an international context
- want to develop the skills needed to make a difference in locally
- would like to study in English

Diak offers you the opportunity to learn in an open multicultural environment.

Diak values are based on Christianity, therefore we emphasise the human dignity of each person. Diak is committed to social justice, solidarity and the empowerment of people.

Diak aims to train people to influence social change, work for a multicultural society and fight social exclusion.



The international Degree Programme in Social Services aims to develop the professional knowledge and skills needed to work with people and communities in different countries. We have a special focus on community development work.

**NEW!** Students who apply to join this programme may also choose an option in Youth and Community Development Work and Diaconia. This option also enables students who are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland to be ordained Deacon as well as gaining a recognised qualification in social services.

The course is located at the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Diak South, Järvenpää. Our campus is in a beautiful lakeside setting, yet it is in the Metropolitan area of Helsinki.

## Aims of the Programme

The curriculum aims to train professionals who have a broad view of society and can address the rapid changes which are affecting people and communities. Because of our value base, Diak is especially concerned with poverty and social exclusion. This means that graduates will develop their knowledge and skills in order to:

- work for communities and a wider society which are more inclusive and offer greater chances for participation
- address the challenges of differences in culture, race and religion
- develop social services which encourage the participation of those affected by different issues in their lives and in their communities
- have a European and international perspective on social policy



The expertise of the graduates will be developed to enable them to relate their local work to the following issues:

- the impact of globalisation on local communities and working life in urban and rural areas
- the increasing interest in civil society and local communities as they impact on welfare and social action
- changes in work and employment and the rise of unemployment
- the questions of identity such as age, gender and race which impact on personal life and employment

Other themes such as work on issues of disability and human rights may be taken up in elective studies organised as part of the programme. Students may follow their own interests through placements and research within the field of the programme.

The course is ecumenically open and relates Christianity through dialogue to the multi-faith context.



## Option for Youth & Community Development Work and Diaconia

Diaconia is a ministry of the church which is focussed on social issues and spirituality. It is organised differently in different countries. Within this degree programme, there is a possibility follow the Option for Youth & Community Development Work and Diaconia.

Graduates who follow this option and are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland may be ordained Deacon, as well as having the qualification Bachelor of Social Services. This qualification may be recognised by other churches.

This option is especially focussed on the issues faced by marginalised young people, as well as other deprived groups. Students will follow the course outlined on the previous pages, but this specialised option will:

- provide a grounding in theological disciplines relevant to **Church social work**, social service and youth work
- have a special focus on the problems facing young people as well as marginalised groups in society
- link the church's social engagement to the core skills of community development, people's participation and empowerment
- understand the nature and importance of contextual theology related to local communities and groups
- be able to contribute to worship and spiritual growth in different contexts

In addition to the studies, students will be expected to do placements in local churches or diaconal organisations and may develop diaconia related research.

## Studies in the degree programme

The programme starts with the student's own interests and there is strong interest in community based learning. There different organisations including municipalities, church and faith communities and civil society are engaged in developing the welfare of people. This 'network' approach is an important element in the skills learnt. The learning is close to 'real life' and the campus based learning uses a variety of methods. Students often work in small groups and teams related to specific themes of each semester.

Research is a key part of the degree programme and this is linked to the issues encountered in placements or being tackled by Diak and its partners, locally or internationally. Diak has many international links and students are encouraged and supported in undertaking an international placement.



## Possibilities for work after graduation

Community development work and participatory social work are the basis of the flexible expertise needed in rapidly changing societies. Graduates will be able to work for public and private organisations, non-profit organisations and faith communities in the following contexts:

- with people on the local level to address pressing social and economic problems
- with organisations to develop networks and build strategies for change and development
- on research and evaluation to improve the effectiveness of social services and develop new knowledge

Graduates will be able to work as social service workers in the Finnish context and as social workers in many other countries. In Finland the designation 'social worker' is reserved for those with a Master Degree of a science University.

Those who take the option for Youth & Community Development Work and Diaconia will be eligible for ordination as Deacon if they are members of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church. It may be that other churches will recognise this qualification in future.

## International Opportunities for Graduates

Graduates will be able to work in their own country or in other countries. Those at the cutting edge of social service work are often involved in international projects and networks. English is most often the preferred language of international projects. Graduates of this programme, which deals with development work, will therefore have a head start in such projects. Those who take the option Youth & Community Development Work and Diaconia will also be well equipped to work in international and ecumenical projects.

## Applying to study in the programme

The course is open to students of all ages, from Finland and abroad. It is preferable that applicants have some experience of social service in a voluntary or paid capacity. Applicants should have a high school or vocational high school leaving diploma, an aptitude for the profession and be able to follow a course of study, practical and written work in English.

The selection will be based on qualification and the quality of the application form, a written examination and an interview.

## Application Process

Diak is a member of the national joint University application system and for the application procedures you should consult the web site: [www.admissions.fi](http://www.admissions.fi)

Please check the specific requirements for applicants in good time. The web site details the qualifications needed and the need to have proof of proficiency in the English language (for example applicants may need an IELTS or TOEFL certificate).

## Further Questions

If you have further questions about the course please consult the web site: [www.diak.fi](http://www.diak.fi) click on 'Pages in English' and follow the links via 'Studies in English'

If you have other questions please write to [admissions@diak.fi](mailto:admissions@diak.fi)

## About Diak

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) has four units nationwide in Finland, with more than 3,000 students. Diak is a University level institute which offers innovative degree programmes emphasising a close relationship to practice and working life. Diak is the largest provider of training for the health and social services field in Finland.

### DEGREE PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL SERVICES

Focus on Community Development Work  
also with Optional Programme for Youth  
& Community Development Work and Diaconia

#### Diak South

##### Järvenpää Campus

Järvenpääntie 640  
FI-04400 Järvenpää  
Finland

[www.diak.fi](http://www.diak.fi)

Click on Pages in English and follow the links



