



The English Department
Åbo Akademi University



INFORMATION FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS
AND RESEARCHERS



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Åbo Akademi University

The population of Finland is 5.3 million (2005 figures), of whom 6.2%, or approximately



300,000, have Swedish as a first language. This Swedish-speaking minority is chiefly concentrated in four areas of the country: the Helsinki region; Åbo (in Finnish: Turku) and its archipelago in the southwest; the autonomous region of the Åland Islands; and in Ostrobothnia, on the west coast. The Finnish constitution guarantees the rights of 'Finland-Swedes' to receive education at all levels in Swedish. The University of Helsinki is officially bilingual, while Åbo Akademi University is unique among the country's universities in using Swedish as the main language for teaching and administration.

The importance of Åbo Akademi to the Swedish-speaking community cannot be underestimated. However, the modern university is international in its outlook; it participates in a full range of student exchange programs in the Nordic region, Europe (through the ERASMUS / SOCRATES schemes), Russia, and the USA, and has bilateral contacts with many universities worldwide. Its research projects are of national, regional and also international significance, and it attracts students, researchers and visiting scholars from all over the world. In 2005, approximately 600 overseas students from 60 different countries were enrolled in the university. Language courses in Swedish and Finnish are arranged for all foreign and exchange students; English is also widely used, and courses taught in English are offered across the university's main subject areas.

The aim of this brief guide is to describe opportunities in the English Department at Åbo Akademi University for students and researchers

from other countries, and to highlight some of the reasons why it may be an attractive option for students considering a period of study abroad.

Brief background

While Finland was still part of the kingdom of Sweden, Åbo was the provincial capital and centre of trade and cultural life, and it was here that the Swedish Governor Per Brahe founded the original Åbo Akademi in 1640. During Finland's period as a Grand Duchy of Russia (1809-1917) the capital moved east to Helsinki, and Åbo Akademi moved with it, to develop into what is today the University of Helsinki.

Yet much of the atmosphere and tradition of the old capital survived, so that it was a natural location for a new university with a Swedish emphasis. Founded in 1918, a year after Independence, the 'new' Åbo Akademi became Finland's second university, giving Swedish Finland a vital cultural and educational focus.

The beginnings of the refounded Åbo Akademi University were very modest. In 1919 there were three faculties, six professors, seven other teachers, and forty-nine students. The buildings were privately donated, and funding was entirely private until the 1950s. From then onwards the university expanded steadily, until, in 1981, Åbo Akademi University became a full, publicly funded state university.

Today, the university is a thriving, modern institution with state-of-the-art facilities, yet one which still enjoys the virtues of being 'not too big': in particular, high quality small-group teaching, and a friendly atmosphere. There are now approximately 8,000 students, about seven per cent of whom are international degree or exchange students, and over 360 academic staff.

The university comprises seven faculties: the faculty of Humanities, the faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, the faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, the faculty of Technology, the faculty of Theology, the faculty of Education and the faculty of Social and Caring Sciences. Of these, five are situated in Åbo and two (Education and Social and Caring Sciences) in Vasa, on the coast 300 kilometres to the north.

The University Library, a copyright library since 1919, currently has over 2.5 million books, one third of which are held in departmental libraries. Moreover, several important museums and institutes are associated with, or owned by, Åbo Akademi University. The library is well equipped to support all aspects of teaching, research and learning. Its range of services include reading rooms, lending, inter-library loans and access to extensive electronic information resources. Those relating to English studies are particularly strong.

The university's educational and research achievements have been aided by various other developments. In particular, there has been close co-operation in many fields, notably the sciences, with the Finnish-language University of Turku (in Finnish: Turun yliopisto), founded in 1921; in addition, the Turku School of Economics and Business Administration (in Finnish: Turun kauppakorkeakoulu) was opened in 1957. These three institutions now form an entity known as the International University of Turku (IUTÅ), a consortium intended to promote international exchange. Exchange students must apply to one of the three institutions, and carry out at least 50% of their studies there; they are then free to choose courses from either of the others.

The English Department

Background



The Faculty of Humanities is the second largest faculty, with 1,600 students. In February 2004, the departments comprising the faculty moved into entirely new accommodation on a single site,

known as Arken ('the Ark'), and their separate departmental libraries were amalgamated to create an extensive, open-access Humanities Library. The move was partly intended to promote interdisciplinary co-operation, which is central to much of the work that is done there. It is an approach that the English Department has always been keen to emphasise, one that is reflected both in the interests of its staff and the structure of the English degree programme.

English is the largest subject area in the Humanities. The Department has two professors, three senior lecturers, one junior lecturer, and an assistant. In addition, there are five docents*, and a number of part-time teachers, most of whom are also research students in the Department. In many years there is also a visiting Fulbright Professor of American Literature (shared with the University of Turku), and from time to time the Department hosts other visiting scholars.

Details of the current staff and their research interests are set out on page 15 below.

* Docents: senior scholars from other universities who have close connections with the English Department, and who may also undertake some teaching.

Undergraduate study in the English Department

Roughly thirty major subject students are admitted each year, selected from about 100 applicants on the basis of results obtained in the matriculation (school-leaving) examination and the Department's own entrance examination. Most have studied English for eight or nine years at school; some 80% are Swedish-speakers, the remainder being Finnish-speakers and overseas students. All the Department's teaching and internal administration is conducted in English.

Overseas students who satisfy the entrance requirements are welcome to enrol for a degree in the English Department. Undergraduate students from overseas universities can also enrol for a part of the syllabus; they are particularly welcome to join advanced seminars and option courses at the M.A. level. Students visiting the English Department in this way could do so within the framework of one of Åbo Akademi University's bilateral exchanges, or as part of the ERASMUS programme. Credits awarded can then be transferred to the students' home universities.

Please note: exchange students must have at least 25 ECTS credits (or one completed year of major subject studies) in English to join B.A. courses, and at least 60 ECTS credits (or two completed years) to join M.A. courses.

Terms

Teaching is organized in two terms, Autumn (early September to mid-December) and Spring (early January to late May), of approximately 15 weeks, each divided into two periods, separated by a teaching-free reading week. Some courses last for one period only; others last for a whole term. Dates for the current academic year can be found on page 16.

The degree structure

In Finland, the great majority of students graduate with a Master's degree. Reflecting the interdisciplinary emphasis, all students study for a combined-honours degree, taking one or more minor subjects at least to B.A. level. Some of the subjects often combined with English are: Finnish, Swedish, German, French, Russian, General Linguistics, Comparative Literature, Art History, and Education.

At the time of writing, the degree structure is in the process of transition to bring it into line with the framework for European degrees laid down by the Bologna Agreement. From autumn 2007, all courses offered by the English Department will conform to this framework. According to this, a Master's degree will consist of a three-year B.A., plus a two-year M.A. Each course carries a number of credits, known as points (normally 5 or 10), equivalent to the credits awarded in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). One point is held to be roughly equal to 30 hours' work: thus a 5-point course will involve a work-load of approximately 150 hours in total, distributed between teaching (in the form of lectures, classes or seminars) and individual study, essay-writing and/or group project work.

A total of 180 points are required for the B.A. (60 points per year), of which major subject students must take at least 70 points in English, and a further 120 points for the M.A., of which major subject students must take at least 80 points in English.

A distinctive feature of the English degree is that all students follow the same programme during the three years of the B.A.: specialization only occurs at the M.A. level. This means that all can benefit from the solid grounding in the major aspects of the subject – linguistic, cultural and

literary – that occupies the first two years of study. In their third year, students write a B.A. thesis in one of these areas.

One of the Department's main educational principles is that there should be as much synergy as possible between the various aspects of the subject. To promote this, basic and intermediate level core courses are interdisciplinary: linguistic analysis, language history, literary analysis, literary history, general and social history are team-taught in conjunction with one another by several members of staff working in close cooperation. In general, teaching at this level takes the form of weekly plenary lectures plus weekly tutorials in small groups.

Thereafter, at the Master's level, students follow one of the Department's three specialist 'lines': the Teachers' line, the Business English line, or the General line. In addition to their specialist subjects, M.A. students are required to take a number of compulsory courses, most of which take place in the autumn of the fourth year. They are also required to spend a period abroad in an English-speaking country for language practice: this may involve study at one of the university's partner institutions, or work of various kinds; many students choose to complete their language practice at some time during their B.A. studies. Students whose mother tongue is English do not do language practice, and instead choose another course from the available options. Much of the fifth year of study is spent researching and writing a Master's (or 'pro gradu') thesis. Teaching for these advanced courses usually takes the form of a weekly 2-hour seminar, but may also involve lectures and classes.

The following tables provide a summary of the range of courses available at each level. Full details of current courses and their requirements can be accessed on the Department's web pages at:

http://www.abo.fi/fak/hf/enge/Courses_2006/Course_Descriptions.html

The BA degree

The Bachelor's degree should take three years to complete and consists of 180 points. English as a Major Subject consists of at least 70 points. As a Minor Subject English consists of at least 60 points, the only difference from Major Subject requirements being that there is no B.A. thesis proseminar. In addition to the obligatory courses, it is possible to take between 5 and 25 points of optional courses. In the table below, optional courses are indicated in italics.

TERM	AUTUMN		SPRING	
	PERIOD 1	PERIOD 2	PERIOD 3	PERIOD 4
Year 1	Post-1945 language, literature, realia (10p)		Overview: language, literature, realia 500-1945 (10p)	
		<i>5p options</i>	<i>5p options</i>	<i>5p options</i>
	Proficiency I (5p)			
Year 2	English Linguistics I (5p)		English Linguistics II (5p)	
	Modernity I (5p)	Shakespeare and Tragedy (5p)	Modernity II (10p)	
	Proficiency II (5p)			
Year 3	B.A. thesis proseminar (10p)			
	<i>5/10p options</i>			

Examples of current B.A. Options*

The option courses available may vary from year to year. Those currently being offered include:

Postcolonial literature

Being British

Computer-Mediated Discourse

Nineteenth Century Literature I

English Words I: word formation

English Words II: history

* Where fewer than five students enrol for a course, it will normally be offered as an individual reading course.

The MA degree

The Master's degree should take two years to complete and consists of 120 points. English as a Major Subject consists of at least 80 points and is arranged in three different Lines: the Teacher's Line, the Business English Line, and the General Line. In addition, on all three lines, some courses are chosen from a list of optional courses.

Teachers' Line		
	Autumn	Spring
Year 4	Literature in the Foreign Language Classroom (5p)	Language practice* (5p)
	The Linguistics of Language Learning (5p)	<i>Option (5p)</i>
	American Literature (5p)	Master's thesis
	English Linguistics III (5p)	
	The Middle Ages (10p)	
Year 5	Master's thesis (40p)	Pedagogic studies in Vasa

Business English line		
	Autumn	Spring
Year 4	American Literature (5p)	Language practice* (5p)
	English Linguistics III (5p)	<i>Option (5p)</i>
	Business Communication (10p)	Web rhetoric I (5p)
		Web rhetoric II (5p)
Year 5	Master's thesis (40 p)	

General Line		
	Autumn	Spring
Year 4	Literature in the Foreign Language Classroom (5p)	Language practice* (5p)
	The Linguistics of Language Learning (5p)	<i>Four options (4x5p)</i>
	American Literature (5p)	
	English Linguistics III (5p)	
	The Middle Ages (10p)	
	<i>Four options (4x5p)</i>	
Year 5	Master's thesis (40p)	

***Students whose mother tongue is English choose another option course in place of language practice.**

Examples of current M.A. Options*

The option courses available may vary from year to year. Those currently being offered include:

Sociolinguistics

Applied Linguistics

Children's Literature

Text and Discourse

Hardy and Lawrence

Translation Studies

Student life in the English Department

Undergraduate students in the Department have the use of a comfortable Common Room, computer and photocopying facilities. Meals and refreshments can be bought in Arken cafeteria nearby. The Humanities Library in Arken provides work places with computer terminals in pleasant surroundings.

English Department students have always been active when it comes to organizing social activities. Britannica, the student association, is open to all students in the Department, and, among other



things, holds film evenings, get-togethers and parties, and also hosts visiting speakers. For more information, visit Britannica's web pages at:

<http://www.abo.fi/~britanni/index.shtml>

* Where fewer than five students enrol for a course, it will normally be offered as an individual reading course.



Postgraduate studies

Undergraduate and postgraduate students are always encouraged to explore the fields which interest them most, and the English Department's record in doctoral training is a strong one. The doctoral degree involves a certain amount of coursework and the writing of a thesis which makes a substantial new contribution to knowledge. The writing of the thesis normally requires a minimum of three years' full-time research. The thesis is published as a book and defended at a public 'disputation'.

The Department is only able to accept a limited number of applications for doctoral studies. However, well-qualified applicants whose research interests are in line with the Department's strengths will be considered. Doctoral students are currently working in the following areas:

- Literature as Communication
- British and Irish Studies
- Children's Literature, pure and applied
- Computer-Mediated Communication
- Translation and Special Languages
- Discourse Linguistics
- Sociolinguistics

Suitably qualified applicants wishing to pursue doctoral research in one of these areas are asked to send a full curriculum vitae, the text of their completed Master's thesis, and a preliminary research plan to the Departmental Secretary (see contact details below, page 16). He will then supply the professors' opinion on whether or not a formal application to the Faculty of Humanities is likely to be successful.

Visiting scholars

We are always keen to welcome visiting members of staff to join our research and teaching teams. One way in which this can take place is under the Fulbright Program, which enables academics from the United States to come to the Department for one term, or one academic year, as visiting Fulbright Professor. This has worked very successfully in past years. Normally, a Fulbright Professor will be asked to offer courses in aspects of American literature and cultural studies, but others, such as creative writing, are also very welcome. The post is usually shared with the English Department of Turku University.

Another way in which scholars can visit the Department is as a Donner Research Professor, for which funding is available from the Department's own H.W. Donner Fund. The aim of such an appointment is to stimulate research in the Department, and to ensure that teaching is responsive to the latest developments within the subject. Recent Donner Research Professors have included: Paul Nation, Professor of Applied Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, and Greg Myers, Senior Lecturer in Linguistics and English Language at the University of Lancaster, U.K.

Research interests in the English Department

Founded in 1937, the English Department has produced significant research in a variety of areas. **H.W. Donner**, the first J.O.E. Donner Professor of English Language and Literature (1937-1951), was a specialist in nineteenth century literature and the world authority on the work of Thomas Lovell Beddoes. His successor, **Nils Erik Enkvist**, who held the chair until 1984, is internationally known for his work on linguistic stylistics and text linguistics. Research in this tradition is now being

carried forward by Professor **Tuija Virtanen-Ulfhielm**, focusing on discourse linguistics and pragmatics. Professor **Håkan Ringbom**, who retired in 2004, is well known for his work in applied linguistics, particularly foreign language acquisition. **Anthony Johnson**, who recently took up the Chair of English at the University of Oulu, did much to develop the Department's interests in seventeenth century literature and imagology. **Roger D. Sell**, the present J.O.E. Donner Professor, is interested in several different periods of English literature, and sees literature as one among other forms of genuine communication, and the critic's role as that of mediator between different positionalities.

In August 2006, the Department hosted a four-day international symposium on the theme: 'Community-Making and Cultural Memory: Literature and Religion 1558-1689', jointly organized with the English Department of the University of Oulu.



Current staff

Professors

- Roger Sell, J.O.E. Donner Professor and Head of Department: literature as communication; mediating criticism; interests in several periods of English literature.
- Tuija Virtanen-Ulfhielm: text and discourse linguistics, pragmatics, English grammar.

Senior Lecturers

- Martin Gill: sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, cultural history.
- Iris Lindahl-Raittila: women's literature, feminist literary theory, auto/biography.
- Brita Wårvik: historical discourse linguistics, computer mediated discourse.

Other teaching staff

- Jason Finch
- Colette Gattoni
- Lydia Kokkola
- Inna Lindgrén
- Pekka Lintunen
- Elizabeth Nyman
- Loukia Prasinou
- Jennie Öhman

Assistant

- Inna Lindgrén

Departmental Secretary

- Antony Fredriksson

Contact addresses

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Åbo / Turku



The English Department's web pages are at:

<http://www.abo.fi/fak/hf/enge>

Useful web links

Further information about Åbo Akademi is available on the university web pages at: <http://www.abo.fi/aa/engelska>

Details of the application process and other information for international students can be found on Åbo Akademi's International Office web pages at: <http://www.abo.fi/fa/ie/indexeng.htm>

For the International University of Turku, see: <http://www.utu.fi/en/studying/studies/iuta.html>

Dates for the academic year 2007-2008

Closing date for applications (exchange students): 28.2.2007

Closing date for applications (degree students): 30.3.2007

Entrance exam: May 2007 (date to be announced)

Autumn Term: 3.9.2007 - 21.12.2007

Spring Term: 7.1.2008 - 30.5.2008