



GRADUATE SCHOOL GUIDE

TURKU CENTRE *for* COMPUTER SCIENCE

2007

1. TUCS in a nutshell

Turku Centre for Computer Science (TUCS) is a joint education and research unit belonging to the three universities in Turku/Åbo: Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku, and the Turku School of Economics. TUCS coordinates research and education within the field of information technology at these universities.

The participating departments are:

Åbo Akademi University:

- Department of Information Technologies
 - o Computer Engineering
 - o Computer Science
 - o Information Systems

University of Turku:

- Department of Information Technology
 - o Bioinformatics
 - o Communication Systems
 - o Computer Engineering
 - o Computer Science
 - o Electronics and Software Productization
 - o Information systems
 - o Microelectronics
- Department of Mathematics

Turku School of Economics:

- Institute for Information Systems Science

2. TUCS Graduate School

TUCS Graduate School offers a framework for studying for the doctoral (Ph.D.) degree in computer science, mathematics, information systems, computer engineering, communication systems, and microelectronics. The study time for gaining the doctoral degree is expected to be four years.

The Graduate School offers supervision for students within existing research projects. Each student is placed in one of TUCS [research laboratories](#), and is assigned a personal supervisor from one of the three universities. The students can attend advanced level [courses](#) within the field of information technology offered by the participating departments. The language of instruction of these advanced level courses is English.

The Graduate School is open for students from everywhere. Presently about 30 per cent of the students come from abroad, which means that the environment at TUCS Graduate School is highly international. There are no tuition fees at Finnish universities at the moment, since the universities are financed by the Finnish Government. Doctoral students are entitled - but not obliged - to join the Student Union of their home university, and this involves a minor annual fee (see [5.5](#)).

3. Student positions at TUCS Graduate School

TUCS board, the decision making body within TUCS, makes the decisions about which students are accepted to TUCS Graduate School. Students can be accepted with or without funding from TUCS own budget or from existing projects at the departments. The different categories to which students are accepted and their time of validity are explained below. The students at TUCS Graduate School are entitled to a certain number of benefits, which are explained in [5.4](#).

3.1 TUCS status

Students with the *TUCS status* have a student position at the TUCS Graduate School, and they are entitled to the benefits that are related to the student positions. They, however, have no monthly funding from TUCS. Part-time status is given when full-time research for PhD studies is not possible. Continuation of the student status depends on the study report submitted once a year.

3.2 TUCS funding

The maximum time of having the TUCS funding is limited to four years starting from the day the student begins at TUCS. Doctoral students who get a salary are entitled to the benefits of the Finnish state employment relationship, for instance occupational health care. The participating departments have employer responsibility of TUCS PhD students. The final salary level is determined according to the principles of the new salary system in the Finnish universities. In the case your department is going to pay a grant TUCS strongly recommends foreign students to take a medical insurance in their home country before arriving in Finland. The insurance should cover at least medical expenses in case of an accident or an acute illness. For further details, please consult your supervisor or department administration.

4. The admittance procedure

To be admitted for doctoral studies at TUCS, Graduate School requires two decisions. The first decision is made by TUCS board. The board's decision of accepting a certain applicant to the Graduate School consists of defining to which financial category the student is selected, who will be his/her supervisor(s) and in which laboratory he/she will be placed.

The second decision, which relates to the student's formal right to pursue doctoral studies, is made by one of the three universities participating in the TUCS cooperation. The decisions concerning the admittance of students and the awarding of academic degrees are always made by the universities. (Since TUCS is not a university or a faculty in itself, TUCS cannot formally admit students or award academic degrees.)

This two-phased acceptance procedure means that the first thing a student accepted by TUCS board should do, is to start preparing the application to the university (except for those students who have already made the application and

already have the right to pursue doctoral studies). Foreign students should note that this application requires their presence in Turku/Åbo since the application is done with the supervisor. The application to the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences - University of Turku, to the Faculty of Technology – Åbo Akademi University or to the Turku School of Economics should be done as soon as possible after arriving in Turku/Åbo.

The university, to which the application for doctoral studies is directed, is the same as that of the supervisor's who has been assigned to the student. The application includes a study plan accepted by the supervisor, and is formally supported by TUCS board, who has evaluated the academic merits of the applicant. In some cases the decision about accepting the study plan (thus giving the right to pursue doctoral studies) is made by a department. This might be the case of students who will pursue their doctoral studies at the same department, from where they got their MSc degree.

Once the faculty has accepted the application (please note that the decision-making can take some time, and this is why the application should be submitted as early as possible), the student is formally admitted for doctoral studies, and officially considered as a doctoral student. This university will be the student's home university, and when the doctoral studies have been completed, this university will award the doctoral degree.

5. Studies at the Graduate School

When a student has received the formal decision of acceptance from the faculty, he/she should bring it to the student services/faculty office at his/her (new) home university, in order to be registered as an attending student (the procedures for this vary according to the faculties). At this point, the student will get a matriculation number (student number), and some time after that the student will receive a free e-mail account.

5.1 Courses, student numbers and registration

The co-operation agreements between the University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University, and the Turku School of Economics, together with the TUCS co-operation between the departments, give the TUCS students the possibility to participate in courses at all four participating departments, with some minor restrictions.

Each university keeps its own study records. The study credits should be transferred to the study records of one's home university regularly. Information about the transfer of credits can be obtained from the student services or the faculties. In order to attend the courses and to get the credits registered, a student number (matriculation number) for each university is required. All students must register as attending at each of the universities, where he/she will be attending courses, at the beginning of each academic year.

Information about taking courses at the departments participating in TUCS can be seen on <http://www.tucs.fi/education/courses/>.

5.2 Study time

The study time for a full-time doctoral student for gaining the doctoral degree is expected to be four years, which is also the maximum time for receiving TUCS support for funding. All students must submit a study report once a year (in the early spring) to show their study progress during the previous year. In this study report the supervisors also give a statement about the student's progress.

5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum for the doctorate follows the Finnish standard requirements:

1) *Coursework requirements*: A new credit system was introduced in the autumn of 2005 in Finnish universities. All courses are measured in credits (opintopiste/studiepoäng). A Finnish Bachelor's degree is worth 180 credits; a Master's degree an additional 120. A full credit load is 60 credits for one academic year. The credit system corresponds to the ECTS system (European Credit Transfer System).

2) *Doctoral dissertation*, to be approved by the Faculty Council or the Council for academic research and education for following its publication and public defence. The doctoral degree is awarded by the university, which has admitted the student for doctoral studies.

5.4 Benefits of students at TUCS Graduate School

In addition to providing the students with a laboratory, a supervisor, and in many cases support for funding via departments, the students at TUCS Graduate School have a number of other benefits.

The participating departments have the employer responsibility of TUCS PhD students. The department arranges a working room for full-time doctoral students at TUCS premises or at the premises of the departments, equipped with a computer for personal use and a telephone. The doctoral students may use the laser printers, copying machines and fax machines of TUCS premises, or at the premises of the department.

All students (full-time and part-time) at the Graduate School are entitled to publish within the TUCS publication series, see <http://www.tucs.fi/research/series/>. All students are also entitled to apply for travel grants. For more information, see http://www.tucs.fi/education/information/travelling_instructions.php

5.5 The Student Unions

Doctoral students are entitled to enrol in the Student Union of their home university. Membership in the Student Union, which is voluntary, will entitle the student to use the subsidized services of the Student Health Care Center and enable him/her to take part in the activities of the Student Union, which organizes different kinds of events. The membership fee for a doctoral student is about € 60 a year.

6. Information for foreign students

6.1 Visas and residence permits

Nationals from other than the Nordic, EU and EES countries need to obtain an entry visa and/or a residence permit before entering Finland. The time for processing the application for a residence permit varies. Therefore it is recommended that the application is made as soon as possible after having received the acceptance letter from TUCS. The application is submitted to the [Finnish diplomatic mission](#) in the country of origin, or if the candidate lives abroad, to the Finnish diplomatic mission in the country of residence.

Nationals of the EU and EEA countries can apply for their residence permit after arrival in Finland. The application is submitted to the local police station in Turku on Eerikinkatu/Eriksgatan 40-42.

For the students coming outside the EU is required the following. A residence permit will be issued if the candidate can prove that he/she has sufficient funding for the studies: either a grant or a bank deposit. In the case of needing a bank deposit, it has to be approximately € 6000 on a Finnish bank account on his/her own name, and with no condition limiting the use of the account. The deposit of € 6000 is required for each academic year. For more information, please contact the [Directorate of Immigration](#).

6.2 Social security

The Finnish social security system is administered by the Finnish Social Insurance Institution (in Finnish: *Kansaneläkelaitos (Kela)*, in Swedish: *Folkpensionsanstalten (Fpa)*). The social security system is based on *residence* and on *employment*. Social security is financed out of tax revenues, and by contributions from insured persons and employers. All employers pay social security and pension payments for their employees.

Foreign students receiving a *grant* are generally not entitled to Finnish social security:

- They are, in general, not entitled to social security benefits based on their *residence*, since the *Kela/Fpa* does not consider them as residing in Finland on a permanent basis.

- They cannot get the *employment-based* social security benefits either, since they are not considered to be in an employment relationship to the organisation, which is paying them the grant (no taxes are paid by the student, no social security payments are paid by the employer).

Nationals of the [EU](#) and [EEA](#) countries are, however, entitled to some benefits if they are in possession of the E109 form, which can be obtained from the social insurance institution in one's home country. More information can be obtained from the [Social Insurance Institution of Finland](#) and from the social security institution of the foreign candidate's home country.

6.3 Health care

There are two parallel systems of health care in Finland: the private sector and the public sector financed by the government and municipalities. The private sector is available to all but it is more expensive to the patient than the public sector. The health care services of the public sector (municipal health care services) are available to all who are registered as residents of the municipality in question.

Student health care

Students who are members of the Student Union of their university have a health care centre of their own (they may of course also use the public or private ones). Membership of the Student Union, which is voluntary for doctoral students, will entitle them to use the services of the Student Health Care Centre. The services include a wide range of health services: regular medical consultations, appointments with generalists, specialists, and health nurses, x-ray and laboratory testing, and basic vaccinations. The fees are very low since the Finnish Government subsidizes these services. The Finnish Student Health Service is open during office hours. If you become ill during the weekend or evenings and need medical attention, you should turn to the municipal health care services or a private health care station.

Employment health care

In Finland there is also a system of employment health care services. Those doctoral students who get a salary are entitled to use these services. Please note that students who are receiving a grant are not considered to be in an employment relationship to the universities, and are therefore not entitled to use the employment health care services.

6.4 Housing

Universities in Finland are not responsible for the accommodation of their students. The Turku Student Village Foundation is an independent foundation that provides housing for students. The rent for these flats varies from around € 200 to € 400. The rent includes electricity, water and heat. The flats do not have a telephone or household utensils, curtains, bedding, pillow, towels or carpets. These have to be provided by the tenants themselves. There are different kinds of flats varying from furnished single rooms with a common kitchen to three-room family apartments. To apply for such an accommodation you need to show a proof of student status in Turku/Åbo (such a certificate will be sent to you by TUCS when you have confirmed your position). Further information and housing application forms are available on the Website of the [Student Village Foundation](#).

In case the Student Village Foundation has no free flats, students have to arrange their accommodation on the free market. For names and addresses of the agencies, see *Asuntovuokratoimistoja / Bostadsförmedlingsbyråer* in the yellow pages of the telephone directory. There are housing agencies that specialize in serving students.

6.5 Registration as a resident of Turku/Åbo

The basic data on all Finnish citizens as well as on foreigners residing in Finland are entered in the Population Information System. Registered information includes name, date of birth, nationality, familial relationships and address. A Finnish municipality of residence is registered for a foreigner who has moved to Finland if he or she plans to stay here permanently or if he or she has a residence permit for at least one year.

Those having a Finnish municipality of residence are entitled to a *personal Finnish identity number*. This number is used for identification purposes for example in banks, hospitals and in registers of different authorities. What is perhaps most important for a foreign student, the personal ID number will entitle him/her to use the municipal health services. The registration is free of charge and takes place at the local register office (in Finnish: *maistraatti*, in Swedish: *magistrat*). The registered information is used, among other things, in the organisation of elections, and for taxation, health care, juridical administration, and statistical purposes.

To register as an inhabitant of Turku/Åbo, foreign students accepted at TUCS Graduate School have to bring the documents mentioned below, as well as their translations, to the register office within three days after their arrival in Turku/Åbo. The documents must be translated in Finnish, Swedish, English, German or French. All documents must be notarised originals and all documents must be translated by authorized translators:

- *Passport including the residence permit.*
- *Birth certificate.*
- *Marriage certificate if you are married.*
- *Birth certificates of any children you might have if you want them to be registered in Turku/Åbo.*
- *A certificate from TUCS proving that you are a student at the Graduate School.*

More information about registration and about the Population Information System can be obtained from <http://www.maistraatti.fi/en/index.html>.

6.6 Costs of living

Living in Finland is expensive. The minimum living expenses for a single student amount to about € 600 a month depending on accommodation costs and personal expenses. For more information about student life in Turku/Åbo, check the [Survival Guide for International Students and Scholars in Turku/Åbo](#).

6.7 Tutors

TUCS Graduate School arranges student tutors for all new foreign students at the Graduate School. A tutor is a fellow student at the Graduate School, who helps the foreign student with practical details when settling in Finland. For instance, the tutor can meet the foreign student at the airport/railway station/bus station/port, and the tutor might also be able to pick up the key to the student apartment in advance, if necessary.

6.8 Useful links

In addition to the links included in this guide previously, the following links might be useful for you:

Studying in Turku/Åbo

- Survival Guide for International Students <http://www.iuta.org/>
- Åbo Akademi University <http://www.abo.fi>
- University of Turku <http://www.utu.fi>
- Turku School of Economics <http://www.tse.fi/>
- Centre for International Mobility <http://finland.cimo.fi/>

Social Issues

- Turku Student Village Foundation <http://www.tys.fi>
- The Finnish Student Health Services <http://www.yths.fi>
- The Finnish Social Security Institution (Kela, Fpa) <http://www.kela.fi>

Student organisations

- The Student Union at
 - o at the Åbo Akademi University <http://www.abo.fi/karen>
 - o at the University of Turku <http://www.tyy.fi>
 - o at the Turku School of Economics <http://www.tukkk.fi/ky>
- The National Union of Finnish Students(SYL/FSF) <http://www.syl.fi>

Finnish state regulations

- Finnish diplomatic missions abroad <http://formin.finland.fi>
- Directorate of Immigration (visas and residence permits) <http://www.uvi.fi>

General Information

- Virtual Finland <http://virtual.finland.fi>
- Travel in Finland <http://www.travel.fi>
- The Finnish Tourist Board <http://www.finland-tourism.com>
- General Information on Turku/Åbo <http://www.turku.fi>
- Current Weather in Turku/Åbo http://at8.abo.fi/cgi-bin/en/get_weather

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University of Turku

- Department of Information Technology
- Department of Mathematics



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