

Research Service Days 2025 – What Universities of Applied Sciences Can Learn

12.9.2025

In August 2025, the national Research Service Days (Tutkimuspalvelupäivät) brought the Finnish research administration community together in Tampere. Organised this year by Tampere University and Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK), the three-day event (20–22 August) was the largest annual meeting point for professionals supporting research, development and innovation (RDI).

Although the event gathers universities, research institutes and funders, it is equally relevant for universities of applied sciences (UAS) such as Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (SEAMK). For UAS institutions, research services are essential for regional innovation, internationalisation, and building effective partnerships with business and society. Networking with other actors opens doors to new collaborations, increases visibility in international contexts, and creates opportunities that would not arise in isolation.

UAS Perspective on the Programme

The conference opened with a Business Finland and EUTI workshop on research–business collaboration and EU projects. For UAS, where cooperation with companies and public actors is at the core of RDI activity, this provided practical insights into how to succeed in Horizon Europe and other EU instruments. Strengthening UAS access to international projects is particularly important, as these bring not only funding but also valuable networks and long-term regional impact.

Artificial intelligence was another key theme, discussed from the perspectives of academia, industry and the City of Tampere. This strongly resonates with UAS priorities: applying AI to support SMEs, develop services, and drive regional digitalisation. Later, the “Retro Gang” panel reflected on the professionalisation of research services in Finland, reminding us that UAS have in a short time built their own strong support functions – often combining project preparation, innovation services and stakeholder engagement.

Policy-focused sessions featuring the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Research Council of Finland were also highly relevant for UAS. Updates on RDI funding, research security and impact assessment shape the frameworks within which UAS operate. For SEAMK, which works closely with regional companies and municipalities, understanding national directions ensures that local development aligns with Finland’s broader RDI strategy.

Why It Matters for SEAMK

For Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, Research Service Days provided both knowledge and networking that directly support our mission:

- **Strengthening regional innovation ecosystems:** SEAMK connects SMEs, municipalities and international partners. Lessons from Tampere on how to foster collaboration between researchers and business are highly transferable.
- **Enhancing internationalisation:** Sessions on EU projects help SEAMK increase participation in cross-border research, vital for bringing new knowledge and resources into the region.
- **Harnessing artificial intelligence (AI):** Discussions highlighted how AI can accelerate research, improve SME services and open new opportunities for applied research.
- **Promoting open science:** Transparency, data sharing and open access publishing build trust with stakeholders and ensure that research results are widely accessible.
- **Developing professional services:** The conference demonstrated how research services evolve from administrative support to strategic enablers of impact – especially important for UAS, where resources are limited but expectations for societal benefit are high.
- **Building networks:** Informal encounters – from guided city walks to the retro evening party – foster connections across Finland. For SEAMK, these contacts strengthen cooperation with other UAS and universities in future projects.

“For SEAMK, Research Service Days is not only about hearing the latest policy updates. It is about building the capacity of the staff, the tools and partnerships that allow SEAMK to better serve the region,”
says Dr. Taru Mäki, RDI Manager at SEAMK.

Takeaways for Regional Development

The Tampere discussions underlined that research services are not only about compliance or funding – they are strategic tools for regional development. For South Ostrobothnia, this means:

- Better prepared and more competitive EU and Business Finland applications.
- Stronger capacity to support SMEs in digitalisation, AI and sustainability transitions.
- Improved visibility of UAS-driven innovation at the national policy level.

Looking Ahead

As Finland works towards raising RDI intensity to four percent of GDP, the role of universities of applied sciences is becoming increasingly central. UAS bring applied expertise, regional reach and strong industry links – but these contributions require equally strong research services.

By participating in Research Service Days 2025, SEAMK strengthens its ability to support researchers, project managers and partners. The conference is not just about learning new tools; it is about ensuring that South Ostrobothnia remains an active player in Finland's knowledge-based growth.

See you at Research Service Days 2026 in Lahti, 19–21 August!

Anne-Maria Mäkelä
Senior Advisor, International RDI and Networks
Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences

Anne-Maria Mäkelä is a leading expert in international research collaboration within Universities of Applied Sciences, combining strong experience in external funding, project coordination, and strategic internationalisation. Her work emphasises building institutional support structures, fostering participation in European alliances and networks, and promoting collaboration based on shared values, regional impact, and industry engagement. Mäkelä's approach highlights how structured support, strategic alignment with funding instruments, active networking, and peer learning can enable UAS researchers to succeed in international collaboration.

Seliina Päällysaho
Research Manager
Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences

Seliina Päällysaho is a leading expert in open science, with an in-depth understanding of scientific research methodologies, ethics and data management practices. She also has extensive experience of working in interdisciplinary and international contexts.