



UNIPID VIRTUAL STUDIES STUDENT GUIDE

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UniPID Virtual Studies

Welcome to UniPID Virtual Studies.

UniPID Virtual Studies consist of online courses provided by UniPID member universities, which give the students access to specialised training and expertise from other Finnish universities. The study programme promotes teaching related to sustainable development and questions of global development and increases the amount of knowledge on these issues.

Courses are free of charge for students of UniPID member universities. Some courses can also admit other students, at the discretion of the course teacher.

Flexible distance learning

Online courses are a flexible way of participating in university studies. You can study regardless of your location, provided that you have access to a high-quality internet connection and the required software (browser, word processing, presentation, and spreadsheet programs). If the completion of a course requires other tools, they are mentioned in the course description.

Study methods vary from one UniPID course to the next. However, courses always include a significant amount of self-study of course material chosen by the teacher. The material can consist e.g. of video or audio lectures and supporting PowerPoint presentations, scientific and popular articles, videos or other visual material. Learning assignments can take many forms, such as mandatory weekly discussions, small writing assignments, essays and videos made by students, blogs entries and audio recordings. Courses can also include self and peer evaluation assignments, which improve the students' reflections skills and capability of evaluating own and others' performance.

The pace of the course can be quite free or relatively strictly scheduled. Thus, you should always check the schedule of the course and deadlines of required assignments from the course description when you are registering for a course, in order to allow the necessary amount of time and energy for the needs of the course. On online courses students are responsible not only for their own scheduling, but also their own learning and supporting others' learning through interaction that many courses include as a part of mandatory course assignments. Studying online makes interaction and studying over institutional, national and cultural borders possible.

The number of courses you can study simultaneously is not restricted, although it is recommended that you do not take more than a couple of UniPID courses at a time so that there is enough time for the needs of each one. Online courses can be challenging, and students are expected to arrange the necessary amount of time and energy for the needs of each course. Students are also expected to keep to the course schedule, and to return assignments on time.

Online courses are offered in both spring and fall semesters, occasionally also during the summer. About half of the courses are organized during the fall and about half during the spring. The number of courses on offer and their content varies from one year to the next. If you find an especially interesting course in the UniPID catalogue, we recommend taking the course as soon as possible as it is possible that the course will not be organized during the following years.

New courses are added to the selection annually, so it is worth keeping an eye on the UniPID Virtual Studies course catalogue at <https://www.unipid.fi>.

Online learning platforms

When a course begins, registered students receive instructions from the teacher on how to log in to the online learning environment. Most UniPID courses use the Moodle online learning environment.

Moodle can be accessed at <http://moodle.org/>. Students can access the learning environment using their username and password. In addition, admitted students receive a course key from the responsible teacher, with which they can access the course platform and further get to know course material and the contents of the course.

As a student, you should get to know the course platform independently before the course begins, as the teacher rarely has the time help students individually when it comes to using the learning environment.

Registration

Students must register to UniPID Virtual Studies courses through the UniPID course catalogue page: <http://www.unipid.fi/en/courses/>.

You are asked to fill in the following information when registering for a course:

- Full name
- Gender
- Social security number (for exchange students or other foreign students: date of birth)
- Address
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Place of residence
- Nationality
- Native language
- Preferred language for contact: Finnish / English
- Permission to forward personal information to the UniPID member universities
- Finnish home university
- Non-Finnish home university (if applicable)
- Student number
- Faculty/department
- Major/degree programme
- Enrolled as present at home university: yes / no
- Degree in which the courses are intended to be included
- Start date for degree studies
- Estimated completion date of degree studies
- Who at your university (in study administration) has approved UniPID courses as a part of your degree, and the date of this approval
- Whether you are completing the UniPID module (see pg. 5)

By filling out the registration form you give your consent for UniPID to forward the information you have given on the form to the institution organizing the course. Information given on the form is used both in administrative processes and to choose between students to be admitted. Please note that students enrolled in the UniPID module have privilege over other students if the number of registered students exceeds the amount of students that can be admitted. Submitting the registration form does not guarantee admittance to a course. Course teacher may require students to deliver e.g. a preliminary assignment or a motivation letter before the course begins to help choose which students to admit, if it is not possible to admit all registered students.

Online Courses Step by Step

Each UniPID Virtual Studies course is worth 5 ECTS. When you are planning to take a UniPID course, remember to include it in your personal study plan (HOPS). The inclusion of UniPID Virtual Studies in your degree has to be approved in advance at your institution. UniPID Virtual Studies Contacts at your institution can help you with this procedure. Their contact information is at the end of this guide (see pg. 6).

Before the course begins

- 1. Pick a course that interests you and read the course description with care.**
Some courses require previous studies or prior knowledge, which will be mentioned in the course description. Before registering, make sure that you fulfil any prerequisites and that the course can be included in your degree.
- 2. Register online at <http://www.unipid.fi/students/virtual-studies/>**
Please make sure that you complete all fields in the registration form. Incomplete registrations may not be accepted.
Note: if a course requires a separate registration (e.g. though the Open University), instructions for this are included in the course description.
- 3. The online registration form is sent to the responsible teacher for approval**
The teacher will contact you after the end of the registration period to let you know whether you have been admitted to the course. If you do not hear from the teacher within seven days of the end of the registration period, contact the course teacher directly. If necessary, you can also contact the UniPID Communications and Virtual Studies Coordinator (osku.haapasaari@jyu.fi).
- 4. Get to know the online learning environment.**
Once you have been admitted, you will receive instructions from the teacher describing how to access the online learning environment. The teacher sends you all the information you need in order to access the course material. Make sure that you have all the material (e.g. course books) you need, enough time, and that you have explored the learning environment before the course begins.

During the course

- 5. Read the course description and the schedule carefully.**
Even though UniPID courses are flexible and allow you to study from home, they demand a large amount of independent study, and there are always deadlines that should be kept.

When a course ends

6. **You are asked to fill in an electronic feedback form.**

Student feedback is essential for the development and success of the UniPID Virtual Studies. Your feedback helps the teacher recognize which components of the course work as planned, and which aspects have room for improvement.

7. **Assessment and feedback.**

During the course you may receive feedback for your assignments both from the teacher and from other students. Your performance is assessed on a scale of 0-5 (0=fail, 5=excellent).

8. **Credit registration**

After you have passed a course, your course credits and your grade are registered in the study attainment system of the institution organizing the course. For this purpose, so-called visiting student status is registered for you. The successful registration of visiting student status requires that you have filled in all the information on the registration form and notified course staff if any of that information has changed since.

***Note:** When a course has concluded and the course credits have been registered, you are in charge of transferring the credits to the study attainment system of your home university. You can do this by getting a transcript of records or a certificate of completion from the university that provided the course, and delivering this document to your home department's study administration. The course teacher and administration staff will assist you in this process, if necessary. In some cases (e.g. if the student comes from outside the UniPID network), UniPID Coordination Unit can provide separate course diplomas for students who have passed a course.*

UniPID Module in Development Studies: *Sustainability in Development*

The UniPID module in development studies programme consists of at least five courses worth 5 ECTS credits each for a total of 25 ECTS. Students can choose courses to be included in the module freely from among the courses offered by UniPID.

The completion of the module requires registration. Before registering for the module, you should make sure that the module can be included in your degree. When teachers are choosing who to admit to their UniPID course, they give priority to students completing the module.

Even if you have already completed one or more UniPID Virtual Studies courses, you can still register for the module. In this case, too, you need to discuss with study administration staff at your home institution about the inclusion of the module in your degree.

Students who have completed the ***Sustainability in Development*** module successfully receive a certificate from the UniPID Coordination Unit. UniPID's Communications and Virtual Studies Coordinator (osku.haapasaari@jyu.fi) will compile this certificate when sent a transcript of records with all of your completed UniPID courses on it.

Virtual Studies Guidelines

Since students from various disciplines and institutions take part in UniPID Virtual Studies, it is worth going through some general guidelines. These guidelines can be used on all courses, but there is variance between courses and disciplines. Thus, you should primarily follow the instructions given by the teacher, and second the instructions given in this document.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Please remember to acknowledge all ideas, phrases, quotations, etc. that are not your own. Several courses use anti-plagiarism software to ensure academic integrity. As a student you are responsible for using direct citations and references according to good academic practice. If you have any questions about plagiarism, use your learning environment's *Questions and Answers* board. This way, the question reaches both the teacher and other students, and the teacher does not have to answer to the same question multiple times. More information about plagiarism can be found at www.plagiarism.org.

On most courses students are free to choose the citation style, as long as it's used in a consistent fashion. Please note that sometimes the teacher can ask the students to use a single citation style, defined by the teacher (e.g. Harvard). Different citation styles are outlined here: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_citation_styles.html.

Academic Writing

Student performance in online courses is often assessed with written assignments. It is important for students to express themselves clearly and effectively in these assignments. Thus, you should pay close attention to writing style, grammar, structure and other elements of good academic writing. Often **your own faculty's website** can provide good guidelines and rules on academic writing. As students come from many different disciplinary and institutional backgrounds, a list of links is compiled below which gives general guidelines about academic writing.

- Guide to grammar: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/home.htm>
- Guide to correct punctuation: <http://www.correctpunctuation.co.uk/>
- Essay writing guide: <http://www.theory.org.uk/david/essay.htm>

Contact Information

The Virtual Studies contact persons can help students with administrative issues relating to online courses. Contact persons can help in registering for a course, transferring credits, and by answering questions that you might have about UniPID Virtual Studies in general. Course-specific questions should be addressed to the course teacher.

If you need help and your university does not have a nominated contact person, please contact the UniPID Communications and Virtual Studies Coordinator: osku.haapasaari@jyu.fi.

Virtual Studies contact persons by university

Aalto University: no contact person, contact Osku Haapasaari (osku.haapasaari@jyu.fi)

Tampere University: Anna Wansén-Kaseva (Anna.Wansen-Kaseva@uta.fi)

University of Eastern of Finland: Roseanna Avento (roseanna.avento@uef.fi)

University of Helsinki: Martta Haveri (martta.haveri@helsinki.fi)

University of Jyväskylä : Osku Haapasaari (osku.haapasaari@jyu.fi)

University of Lapland: Sanna Konola (sanna.konola@ulapland.fi)

University of Oulu: no contact person, contact Osku Haapasaari (osku.haapasaari@jyu.fi)

University of Turku: Rebecca Frilund (rebfri@utu.fi)

Åbo Akademi University: Ea Blomqvist (ea.blomqvist@abo.fi)

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