

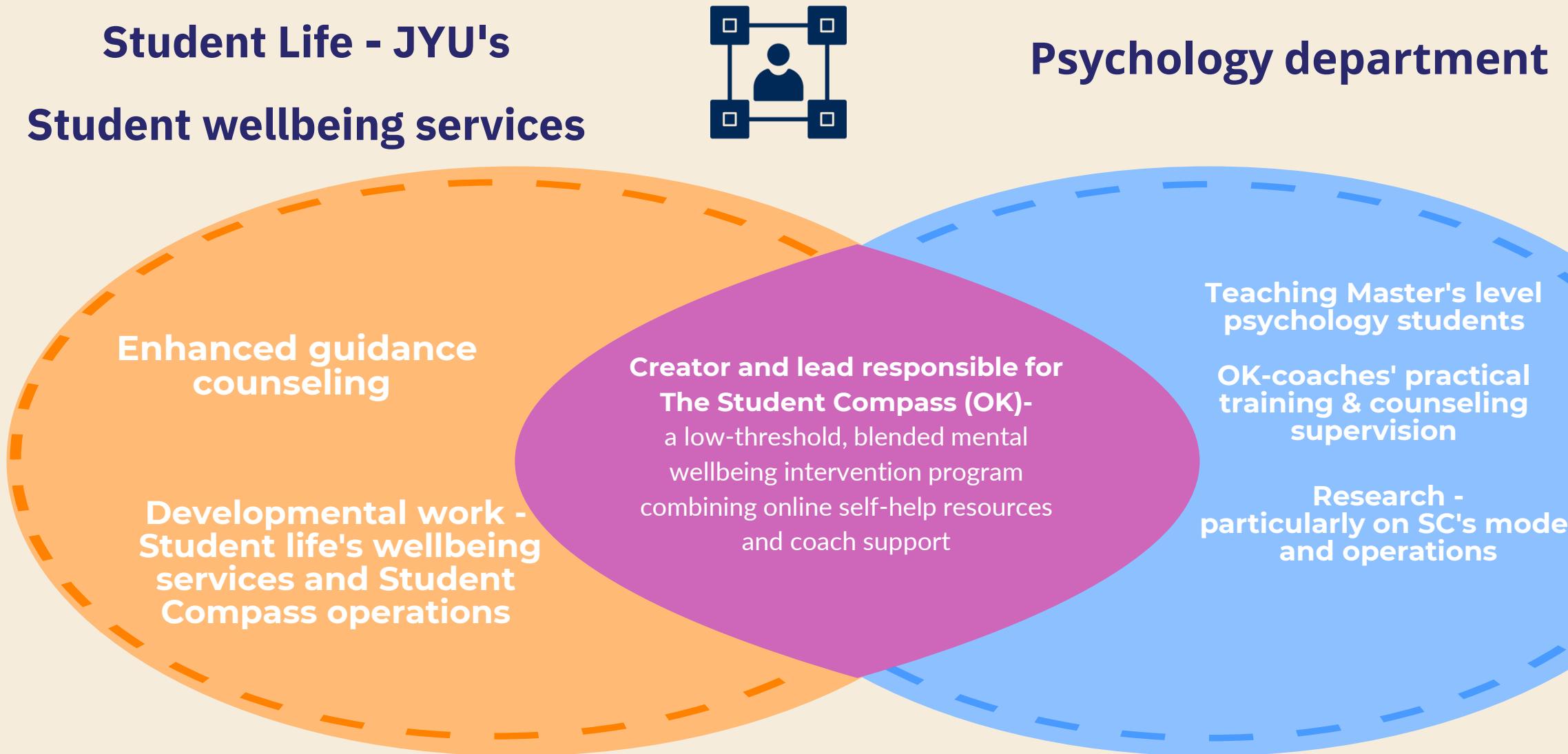
Student Life's Wellbeing Services for International Exchange Students

Panajiota Räsänen, university teacher
(student well-being, M. Psych., Doctoral researcher)
Student Life's student wellbeing team

7.1.2026



My role at JYU: university teacher



Today's themes

Student Life: Stepped care model of student wellbeing:

- **Basic support**
- **Supplementary support**
- **Action programs and models supporting student wellbeing**



When you think of wellbeing, what is the first thought that comes to mind?



Introduction

Wellbeing is a state where everyone is able to realise their potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community (WHO, 2019).

Why
wellbeing is
important?



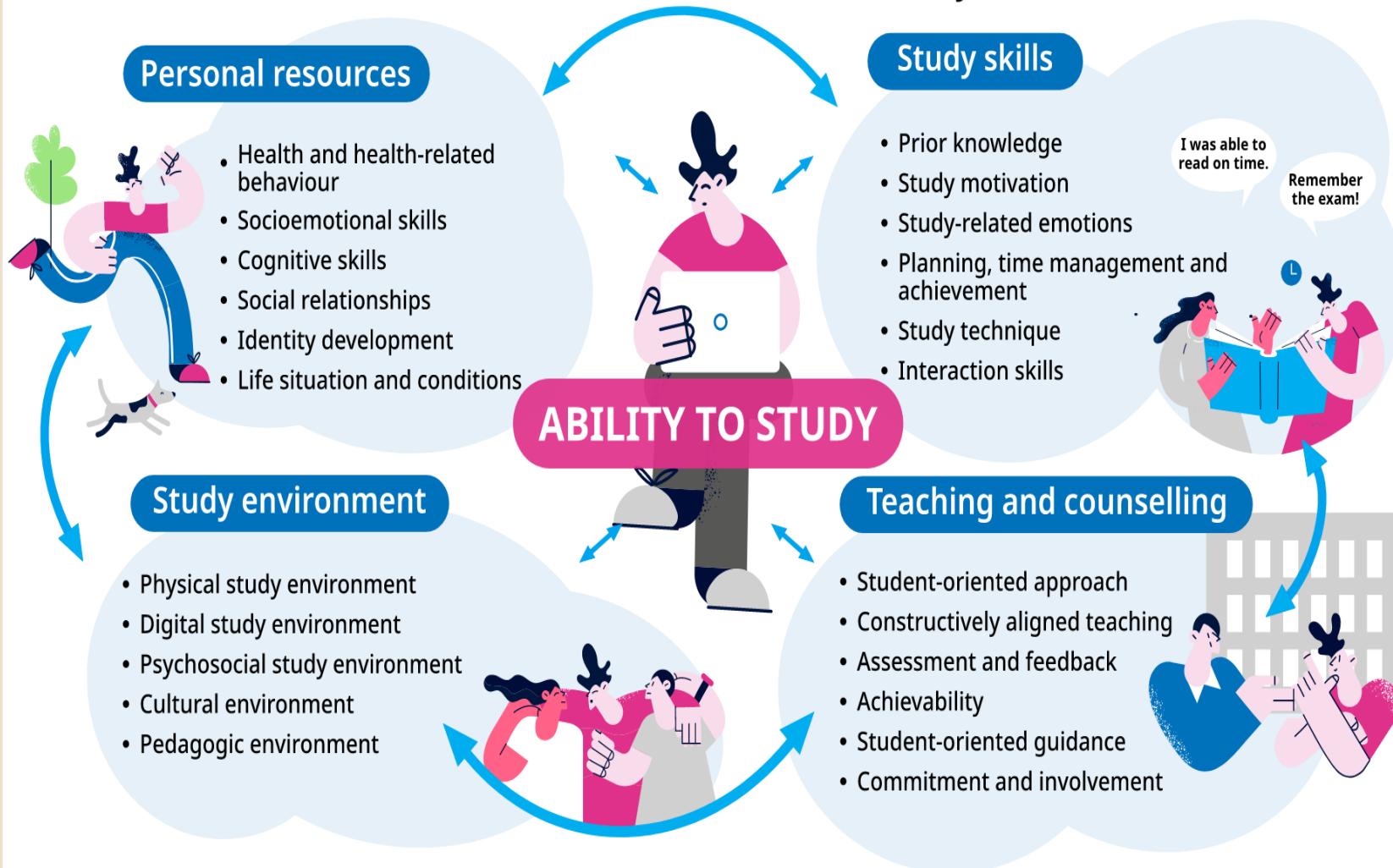
Why wellbeing is important for students?

- Shapes **quality of life**, growth, and relationships
- **Foundation for study ability** → focus, memory, motivation
- Affects **study progress, performance, and learning outcomes**
- Supports **resilience** against stress. Helps you cope with pressure and bounce back from setbacks
- **Strengthens belonging, friendships, and community**



Model for students' study ability

The ability to study forms and evolves in a dynamic interaction between the student and the study environment.



- Ability to study means a student's ability to work, and it's a combination of several interconnected factors.
- Study ability reflects the compatibility between a student and their learning environment.
- Study ability is realized in credits and grades.
- The student defines their own study ability and makes choices based on it.
- Study ability changes and varies throughout the course of studies.

[More info](#)

Stepped support for exchange students



Basic Support for all

Quality teaching and guidance is at the heart of it all.

e.g. Study counseling, Courses, Online Self-help programs, Activities & Events

01

02

Supplementary Support

A wide range of guidance and services is provided by wellbeing experts

e.g. Counseling & Coaching, Group Workshops

03

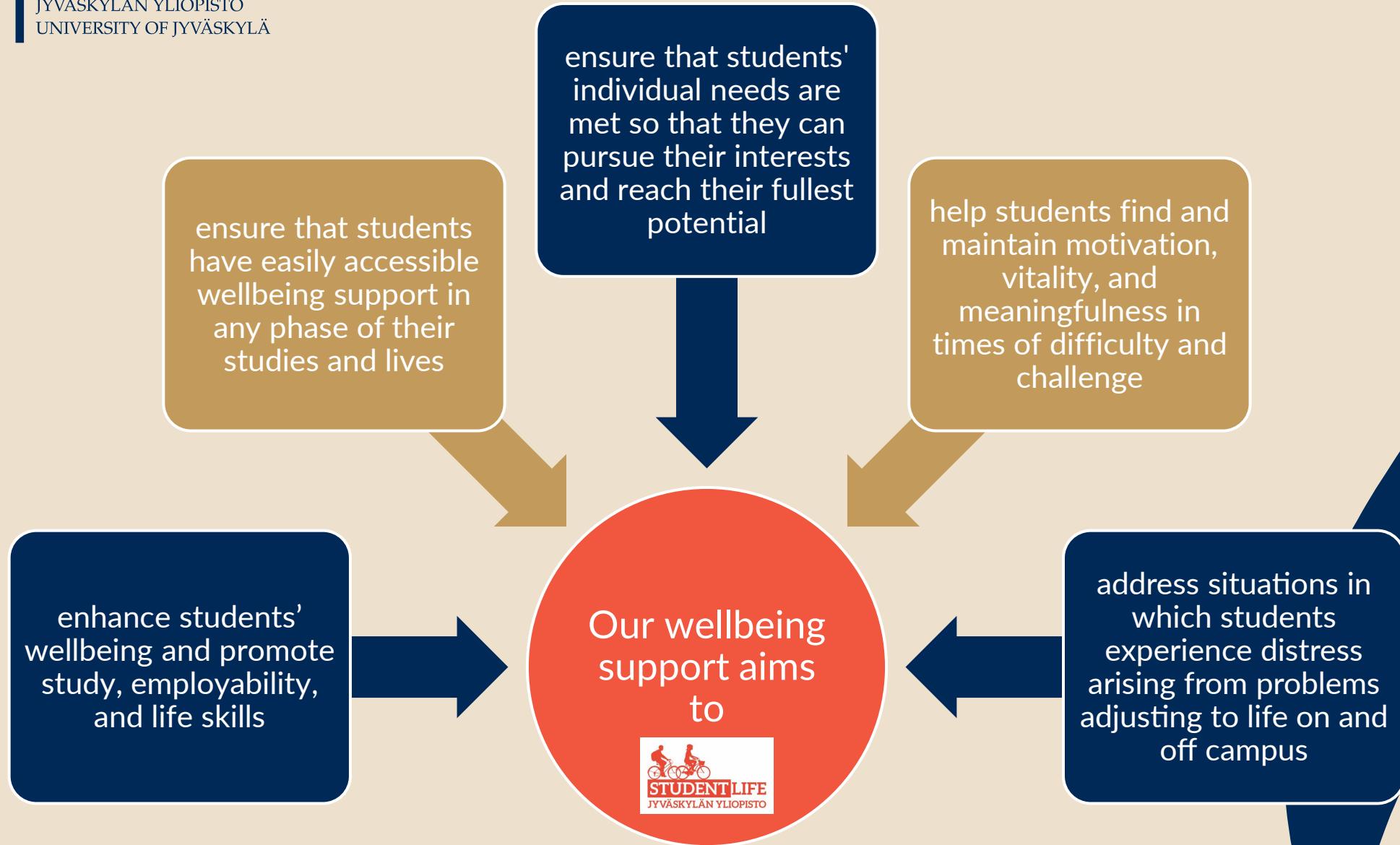
Prevention Programs, Action plans & Procedures



Student Life - stepped guidance pathway to support well-being and study ability skills



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ





Hanna Ahola

Specialist in Student Wellbeing (M.Sc.
Health Sciences, Study Counsellor)
Department of Psychology

Enhanced guidance and counseling
Individual study arrangements
Maintenance and development of
the "Hyvis" wellbeing model
(responsible person)
Substance abuse prevention
program (contact person and
SORA procedures)
Responsible instructor for the
course HYVY001
Staff training



Panajiota Räsänen

University Teacher, Student Wellbeing
(M.Sc. Psychology), Doctoral Researcher
Department of Psychology

Enhanced guidance and counseling
Individual study arrangements
Overall responsibility and
development of the Student
Compass -service
Teaching and Research duties
(Department of Psychology)



Riitta-Leena Metsäpelto

Specialist in Student Wellbeing (Ph.D.
Psychology)
Educational Services

Enhanced guidance and counseling
Individual study arrangements
Contact person for interventions in
bullying and harassment cases
Contact person for SORA
procedures
Instructor for the course HYVY001
University-wide development tasks
(OpiskeluPLUS program, University
Community Development Forum)



Heta Orrain

Specialist in Student Wellbeing (M.Ed.,
Special Education Teacher, Study
Counsellor)
Educational Services

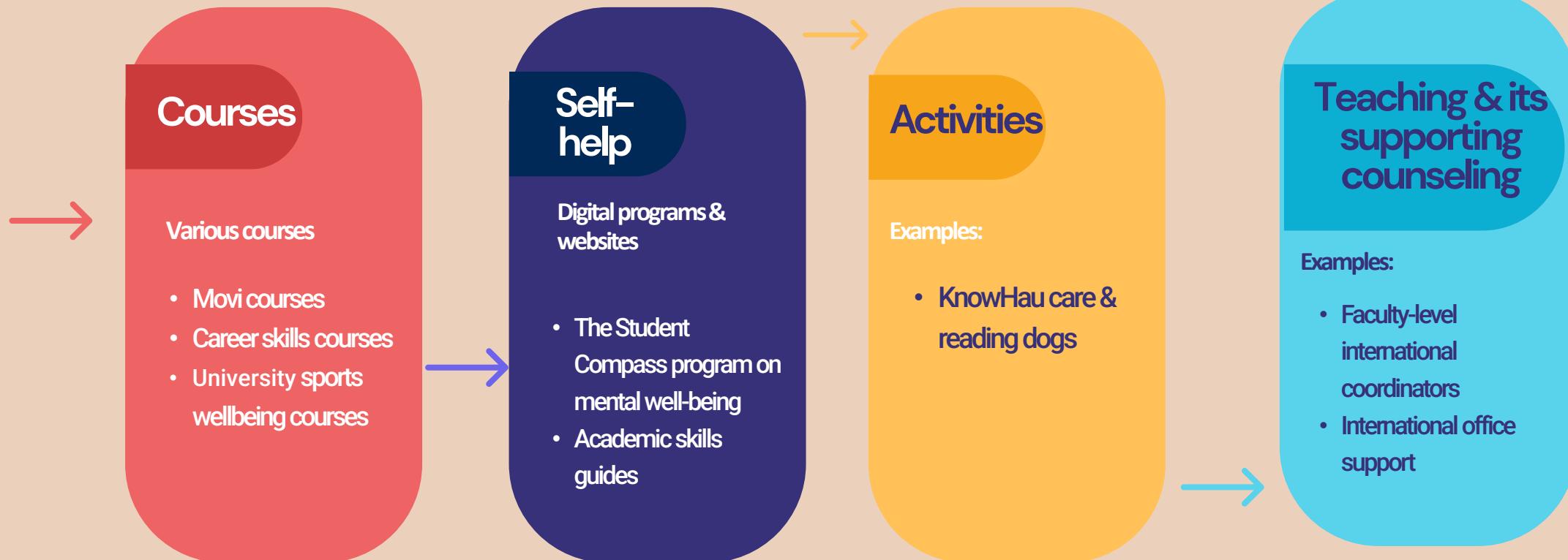
Enhanced guidance and counseling
Contact person for individual
study arrangements
Instructor for the course
HYVY001
University-wide development
tasks (Working group on social
sustainability and responsibility)
Contact person for the "Study
Skills Map" (Opiskelun Taitokartta)

OUR STUDENT LIFE'S WELLBEING TEAM'S TASKS



First Step: Basic support for all

Exchange Students can seek basic support independently



1. Student Life's basic support

Some examples of services provided specifically by our Student life's wellbeing support team





Academic study skills guides by Movi

The Academic study skills -website helps you in developing your study skills so that your studies at the university go as smoothly as possible.

Regardless of the field, you need, among other things, technology-mediated collaboration skills, the ability to read and produce academic text, feedback interaction skills and multilingual communication skills

[More info](#)



Knowhau - Care and Reading dogs on Campus

The Centre Multilingual Academic Communication of the University of Jyväskylä in cooperation with Student Life, the Student Union, and the Kennel Club, have brought Care and Reading Dogs on campus to enhance the well-being and learning ability of students, as well as to promote new pedagogical methods.

The dogs are part of certain courses at Movi and they can also be met outside the courses in the dog lounges, in Oppio (O103/104) or MaA104. You can [sign up](#) to study together with the dogs at the dog lounge

[More info](#)



Movi courses that aid studies

Examples

- [XENX029 Activate Your English \(3 ECTS\)](#)
- [XENX1000 Gaining confidence in English \(1 ECTS\)](#)
- [XENX1002 Speak up: Improving your English through Spoken Interaction \(2 ECTS\)](#)
- [XENX022 E-Learning Module: Academic Reading \(2 ECTS\)](#)
- [XENX023 E-Learning Module: Academic Vocabulary \(2 ECTS\)](#)
- [XENX024 E-Learning Module: Grammar for Writing \(2 ECTS\)](#)
- [XENX026 E-Learning Module: Pronunciation \(2 ECTS\)](#)
- [XENX037 E-Learning Module: Presentation Skills Toolkit \(2 ECTS\)](#)

More info





- Offer sport and wellbeing services to students such as yoga, meditation, relaxation and mobility exercises, as well as sessions related to stress management and personal growth with leading experts in their field.
- In addition to group fitness classes, they offer sport courses as well as Yogobe, a digital health platform which offers workouts online.
- More
info: <https://www.korkeakoululiiikunta.fi/en/university-sports/courses>



Student Compass



Student's Compass (OK) is a research-validated, web-based program designed at JYU to promote student mental wellbeing, study ability, and essential life skills. OK is readily accessible to JYU students and also available with low-threshold support.

01.

Skills-based program

OK is a values-, acceptance- and mindfulness-based program that promotes psychological, social and emotional wellbeing and skills. Students get to practise:

- Identifying their own values and setting goals
- Skills for working with thoughts and emotions
- Skills for self-awareness and personal development
- Recovery and relaxation skills
- Mindfulness skills

02.

Theoretical framework

The program is primarily based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). One of the main goals of ACT is to increase psychological flexibility, which means the ability to be mindfully present and accept one's own thoughts, feelings, and other internal experiences while guiding one's own actions toward a meaningful life. Psychological flexibility can be practiced.

03.

Research based

The programme has been proven effective in numerous studies. According to our research, the results show that the OK programme significantly increases students' wellbeing.



- ✓ mental wellbeing
- ✓ self-esteem and satisfaction with life
- ✓ psychological flexibility
- ✓ mindfulness skills
- ✓ skills to handle effectively stress, anxiety, and depression





The Student Compass

Visit our website for [more info](#)



Accessible to All

Open to all students (**degree & exchange**) at the University of Jyväskylä, The Student Compass offers a confidential and free resource, with no referral needed for anyone that wants to enhance their wellbeing. Studies show that it is particularly beneficial for those facing **stress, anxiety, low mood, or student life challenges**.



Flexible to use as self-help or with coach/professional support

The Student Compass is web-based, allowing you to **access it anytime, anywhere, at your own pace**. The program offers optional support from a wellbeing coach or psychologist, ensuring a personalized and supportive experience.



Boost your Mental Wellbeing Flexibility & Academic Life

The program fosters mental wellbeing, enhancing study ability and personal growth. It provides tools to improve self-awareness, and cultivate essential skills for learning, work life, and relationships.

Supplementary



1

University
chaplain

2

Goodie
advisers

3

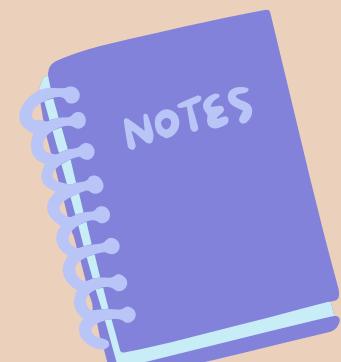
Student
Union's Health
&wellbeing
Sector

4

Student
Compass's
psychology
coaches



Support





JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ



2. Student Life's supplementary support

Some examples of supplementary services available to international exchange students



University chaplain



The University Chaplain of JYU is Miika Mäkinen. You can discuss with him about any matter that is on your mind—it doesn't need to be spiritual in nature. You can talk with him about anything that is troubling or distressing you. All conversations are confidential and free of charge.

Email: miika.makinen@evl.fi
• Phone number: 044 431 4438
• You can book an appointment with Miika [here](#)

[More info](#)

Goodies – student wellbeing advisers

University staff members, who have been selected and trained to support the wellbeing and study ability of students. **Available primarily to degree students. In case of emergency: One consultation session for further referral to exchange students.**



What and for whom?

- The Hyvis/Goodie wellbeing advisers are there for you when you need someone to talk to! Students can come with any issue or problem that is troubling them and has a negative effect on their studies. Goodies offer one-to-one support to help students gain understanding of their situation and most importantly to be heard.
- Provide options - They can assist students in finding information on how to promote their wellbeing, and get them in touch with available peer support groups and share ideas on how to build their own support network
- They give referrals to other experts or programs (e.g. enhanced guidance counseling)

Available mo-fri
during office hours
(9-16 Finnish time)

Find more info &
your department's
Goodie [here](#)



Responsible for Goodie
services:
Hanna Ahola

Reasons for contacting Goodies?

The most common and frequent reasons:

- Study planning
- Time management
- Study habits
- Study motivation

The second most common are:

- Depression
- Social anxiety
- Other mental health problems

The third most common are:

- Burnout
- Stress and fatigue

Student Compass' coaching support (OK)

Free, low-threshold support. Guidance on developing mental wellbeing skills and enhancing academic ability. Wellbeing coaches are trained Master's students in psychology. **Service available primarily to degree students. If there is capacity, available also to exchange students.**

Responsible for SC services:
Panajiota Räsänen

One-to-one coaching

Students can discuss any concerns they have about their mental well-being, such as study stress, low mood, anxiety, and academic difficulties such as performance anxiety, time-management and planning, and study routines.

The support lasts for 7-8 weeks and includes:

- Three sessions with a wellbeing coach
- The five-module online program with weekly exercises tailored to the needs of the student
- Three written online feedback sessions via the OK platform
- Individual assessment of mental wellbeing
- Final progress report and further recommendations



AVAILABLE BOTH FALL 25 & SPRING 26

SPRING 2026: We offer wellbeing one-to-one coaching during weeks 8-15. Check out the [detailed schedule](#).

Registration online: 12.1.2026-2.2.2026

You can register easily online by filling in our form (check our website).

3. Prevention Programs, Action plans & Procedures



**Accessibility
and individual
services**



**Anti-bullying,
harrassment
prevention &
intervention
model**



**Substance
abuse
prevention
program**



Action programs and Models Supporting Student Wellbeing

- Accessible studying at the University of Jyväskylä
- Anti-bullying and harassment prevention and intervention model
- Substance abuse prevention program



Accessible Studies at the University of Jyväskylä



- Accessibility refers to implementation of a physical, psychological, social and digital environment **where each individual can, regardless of personal qualities, operate on an equal basis**. Accessibility is especially important to the University community members with a disability or learning difficulty, as well as to ageing persons and the members of cultural or linguistic minorities.
- The Accessibility Action Plan aims to develop courses at the department and degree-program levels so that they are as accessible as possible and **support the participation, completion, learning, and life-study balance of as many students as possible**.
- Accessibility work is grounded, among other things, in the Non-Discrimination Act. At the University of Jyväskylä (JYU), the Equality, Gender Equality, and Accessibility Plan has been updated for 2025–2026.



Individual study arrangements

What are individual study arrangements?

Individual study arrangements are adjustments to teaching, guidance, or exams that help support studies, for example, due to a disability, illness, learning difficulty, or mental health reasons. The recommended arrangements do not alter or override curriculum assessment criteria.

Which students are eligible?

Students with medical certificate or expert opinion. Examples include: long-term illness, neurodivergent conditions, learning difficulties, or recent mental health issues.

The service is available to both degree and exchange students.

More info [visit our website](#)



Process for Individual Study Arrangements

Three Ways to Obtain a Recommendation



- Smoother processes

- Stronger student focus

- Note: The role of education planners / accessibility liaison officers is consultative only

1. DROP-IN Sessions

Student Life premises, Lähde, B214

Orrain & Metsäpelto

→ Early-stage support

→ Referral to enhanced guidance if needed

International Students drop-in session:

- Mon 12th January 2026, 12.15 PM - 15.30 PM

2. Enhanced Guidance Counseling

Ahola, Metsäpelto, Orrain, Räsänen

Streamlined support

3. Remote via TEAMS

Orrain

For KYC and multimodal students

Also available in other well-founded cases

⚠Important

To receive any recommendations, you must present a current, valid medical certificate, an expert opinion or individual arrangement document from your own university (exchange students). You need a translation of your diagnosis documents, if they are a language other than your degree's language (English or Finnish).



Contact: opintojarjestelyt@jyu.fi

Heta Orrain

More info: [visit our website](#)



Anti-Bullying and Harassment Prevention & Response Model

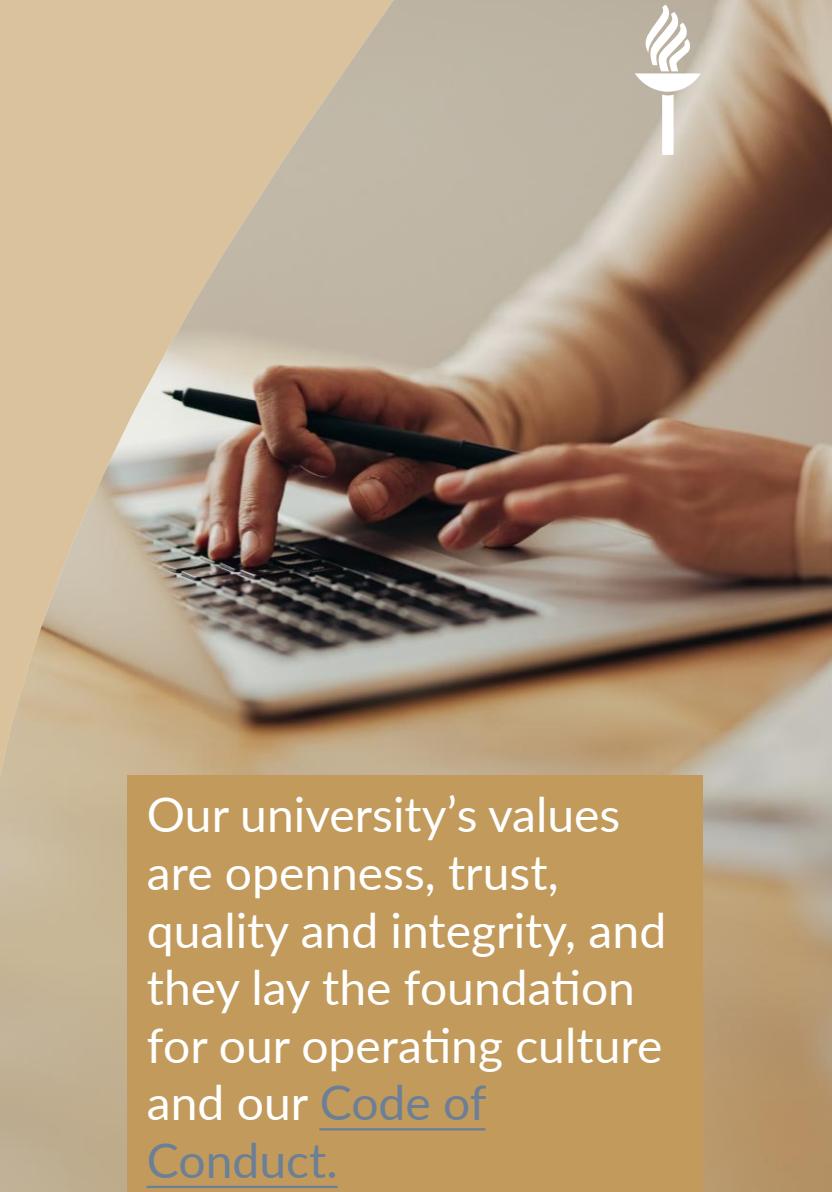
The university intervenes in any student misconduct in accordance with the Universities Act. Misconduct includes (but is not limited to) disrupting teaching, violent, threatening or fraudulent behaviour, bullying, or harassment.

Aims of the model

- Safeguard every student's right to learn in a safe environment.
- Prevent bullying, harassment and other inappropriate behaviour before it occurs.
- Make it easier to address incidents of bullying, harassment and misconduct by students.
- Standardise the way such cases are handled.
- Support students' ability to study and their overall well-being.

Possible measures

- Hearing the parties involved, joint meetings, mediation, and/or disciplinary actions
- [**More info**](#)
- **Contact person:** Riitta-Leena Metsäpelto
- [JYY's contact persons](#)



Our university's values are openness, trust, quality and integrity, and they lay the foundation for our operating culture and our [Code of Conduct](#).

Student Substance-Abuse Program

Objectives

The programme aims to

- promote students' ability to study and work;
- support students' health and well-being;
- prevent substance-related harm;
- make it easier to intervene when a student has a substance-use problem; and
- improve referral to treatment.

Possible measures

In certain fields of study, continued drug or other substance use may lead to the loss of the right to study if intervention and treatment do not succeed in eliminating Excessively problematic use.

At the University of Jyväskylä these fields are:

- Teacher Education
- Guidance and Counselling
- Psychology
- Psychotherapy Training
- Social Work

[More info](#)

Contact person: Hanna Ahola



Wellbeing services outside the university

- Wellbeing Services County of Central Finland
- Health and Psychosocial Services
- Psychosocial Counseling & Peer Support

[MORE INFO](#)



Contact us



Visit our Student Life's wellbeing support [website](#)

For inquiries:

- Panajiota Räsänen (presenter), university teacher, Student life's wellbeing expert | Psychology department
 - email: panajiota.rasanen@jyu.fi
- Hanna Ahola, student wellbeing specialist | Psychology department
 - email: hanna.r.ahola@jyu.fi
- Riitta-Leena Metsäpelto, student wellbeing specialist | Student and Academic Services
 - email: riitta-leena.metsapelto@jyu.fi
- Heta Orrain, student wellbeing specialist | Student and Academic Services
 - email: heta.orrain@jyu.fi

Thank you!
Have a great semester!

