

Name of event:

Entrance examinations of the Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and the University of Helsinki

Name of organiser:

Messukeskus Helsinki and in co-operation with universities

Name of the venue:

Messukeskus Helsinki, Expo and Convention Centre

Dates of the event:

May 24 – June 4, 2021

Duration of the event:

2 weeks

Size of the event:

1000-3000 applicants per day. Total amount: 45,000.

Type of event: (expo, conference etc.)

Entrance examinations

What % of the attendees were international (exhibitors, visitors):

Laurea, Metropolia and Haaga-Helia are international universities of applied sciences with few thousand students. University of Helsinki is Finland's largest and oldest academic institution with 31,000 students.

1. What were the most important factors contributing to the re-opening events overall success?

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced organizations around the world to transform their work into the digital environment. In Finnish universities this has led to social distancing at campuses and learning through distance learning.

To organize the entrance examination, universities had to find large premises and the event organizer, who could ensure that adequate safety precautions could be implemented in the event, including safety distances and other protective measures.

Messukeskus Helsinki could offer extensive halls and suitable equipment for applicants, to applicants with special needs and to supervisory staff. What is more, Messukeskus had prepared for the corona safety since spring 2020, raised the hygiene level remarkably, published complete safety instructions already in summer 2020 and trained its entire staff in specified hygiene and safety practices. Efficient air-conditioning and in some places up to 14 meters high hall facilities improve safety at Messukeskus, too. In April 2021, Messukeskus Helsinki received a COVID-19 certificate in recognition of exemplary work for Covid-19 safety as the first Nordic event organizer.

2. What were the biggest challenges you faced, expected and unexpected, during the event?

The huge number of students. The exams were conducted in a Covid-19 safe manner by spreading out the large number of participants over a period of two weeks, using different entrances and halls and several shifts and by strictly following instructions by authorities.

3. What key advice would you give colleague event and venue managers to help them better prepare for a reopening?

- The basis for everything is planning. In our case the careful safety instructions and the professional hands-on staff of Messukeskus Helsinki, convincing the client that it was safe to bring thousands of people together.
- As this was a guest event and a new type of event for the venue, it was essential to carefully make detailed plans and to design set-up and safety policies in close co-operation with the client.
- Rely on the UFI guidelines for event organizers, and carefully consider the instructions of local health authorities.

The logo for Messukeskus, featuring a red diagonal slash followed by the word "MESSUKESKUS" in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

MESSUKESKUS