In this Master’s Thesis I study guidance practises, which facilitate first year students’ integration into the university. Besides formal guidance, for example tutoring and peer tutoring, general student advising and introduction courses, I address my research to informal everyday guidance practices. I aim to highlight existing supportive practices, which are meaningful from the university students’ perspective. My aim is to study what kind of guidance practises exists in university and how these practises support first year student.

The aim of the guidance practises is to facilitate new university student to integrate into the academic community. I study the implementation of this aim as a development of an academic identity, which requires that students have an opportunity for guided participation in academic practises.

The research is based on phenomenological-hermeneutic research tradition, and my aim is to produce information of students’ everyday experiences and meanings. My informants were students of agriculture and forestry at University of Helsinki. I gathered research material utilizing the critical incident technique in 11 theme interviews, which I carried out with individuals, pairs or small groups. During interviews I asked the students to describe and evaluate their first year guidance experiences, especially those that were extreme positive or negative.

Based on my research I specified four meaningful guidance practices: care of students, transparency of the practises of the learning community, presence of guidance in everyday activities of a student and communal reflection to studies. I represent the character and components of the guidance practises, and I also describe the meaning of those practises to university students.