



BECOMING MORE DIVERSE, OPEN AND INTERNATIONAL!

Equality and Diversity Plan
2025–2028



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Foreword by the chair

I am pleased that you have chosen to read the University of Helsinki's Equality and Diversity Plan. Thank you to all of you who have participated in the equality and diversity efforts of the University of Helsinki over the years. Together we have contributed positively to many things but there is still work to be done. That is why I invite all members of the University community to participate in the activities of the 2025–2028 period.

The University of Helsinki's work on equality and diversity is based on the University's shared values – truth, Bildung, freedom and inclusivity – in addition to the University's **“With the power of knowledge – for the world”** mission for the 2021–2030 strategy period. Of the strategic choices, the specific choice guiding this plan is “our University is the best place to study and work”. We promote sustainable wellbeing as well as equity and non-discrimination in all our operations.

The focus of our efforts for the 2025–2028 period is a more diverse, more open and more international University. We need all members of the University community to help us promote this goal. Here are some ways for you to join us, contribute and be active while promoting the realisation of equity and diversity:

- Participate in various University activities, such as wellbeing groups, and contribute to the creation of a more equal University while asking members of the University community to participate in equity and diversity efforts.
- Think about a solution and intervene if you see discriminative action – promote responsible and open interaction in the University community.
- Take equality and anti-racist perspectives into account when planning teaching and research.
- Promote the inclusion of an equity and diversity perspective as well as under-represented groups in the composition and activities of different projects and groups.
- Communicate on taking into account the linguistic diversity and inclusivity at the University.

Veikko Somerpuro



Even though we have an equality and diversity plan, its significance will be negligible if you do not participate in implementing its focus areas and measures. We believe that by setting an example through our own actions – both in Finland and internationally – we will be able to bring about change that is both sustainable and conducive to wellbeing, equity, and diversity.

In spring 2024, the University's Equality and Diversity Committee decided on three focus areas for 2025–2028:

Promoting a diverse, accessible, non-discriminatory and anti-racist study and work culture.

Creating open interaction and transparent practices.

Developing the integration of the University's international community and inclusive language practices.

The committee decided on these focus areas because the themes emerged when the University community was asked for feedback and ideas in different contexts for the upcoming period.

The plan is closely linked to the development measures of the University of Helsinki's implementation plan for 2025–2028, according to which the University wants to act as a beacon of hope and progress. Equity and diversity must cut across all of our core functions but are highlighted especially in the sustainable wellbeing focus area. Together we will develop diversity and sustainable wellbeing through structures and guidance. In addition, through our efforts we will consolidate sustainability, wellbeing and overall safety of the operating culture. Furthermore, we wish to continue developing our status as a responsible expert and partner.

We feel that we have made good progress in the following areas during previous periods:

Guidelines and processes for responsible interaction

Question modules for equality and diversity sections in the workplace wellbeing survey

The scope of equality and diversity training and events

The following are challenges we particularly wish to tackle with the chosen focus areas over the period 2025–2028:

Integration of international students and staff.

Use of diversity indicators.

Implementation of the guidelines for inclusive language practices.

You are welcome to contribute to our University becoming more diverse, open and international!

Hanna Snellman
Vice-Rector

Focus Areas 2025–2028

Promoting a diverse, accessible, non-discriminatory and anti-racist study and work culture.

Creating open interaction and transparent practices.

Developing the integration of the University's international community and inclusive language practices.

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Assessment of the implementation of measures in the Equality and Diversity Plan and their results, 2023–2024

The second part of the University of Helsinki's Equality and Diversity Plan 2023–2024 updated in 2023 featured three focus areas and in all 17 measures. In general, the Equality and Diversity Committee and other operators were able to effectively promote the implementation of measures based on the focus areas. Successful implementation was ensured by the presence of topical measures on the agenda of each of the committee's meetings.

The first focus area was the promotion of inclusion and a healthy study and work environment, which included eight measures. Designating each calendar year as a particular theme year was found to be a good practice. For example, in 2023, the theme was responsible interaction in the University community, and in 2024, the theme was cultural equity.



Inclusion training based on the themes was organised during the current period. Each theme year, six training sessions were organised: three each in the spring and autumn terms. Participant numbers varied from a few dozen to over one hundred. Popular training included the Implicit Biases in Working Life training sessions, organised in parallel in Finnish and English both for staff and students. However, we are aware that training opportunities did not reach all the members of the University community.

Multilingualism and linguistic diversity progressed when the University prepared recommendations for promoting the language practices of the University's administrative bodies (2022) and guidelines for language awareness at the University together with staff and students. The University of Helsinki Language Policy document was not updated during the current period. Job titles were revised to be gender neutral during 2024.

The second focus area was the promotion of equal leadership and management, which had five measures. With regard to recruitment processes, HR Services launched an employment programme for people with disabilities, which was enthusiastically received despite the small number of jobs assigned for the programme. The programme will continue. The revision of the guidelines for the **prevention of inappropriate behaviour and harassment**, which is the responsibility of the HR Development and Occupational Wellbeing unit of HR Services, was a particularly successful measure. The new title of the guidelines is 'Responsible interaction in the University community' and it has been well-received by the whole University community. Practical shortcomings were detected in the previous guidelines with regard to taking social relationships into account and regarding the transparency and implementation responsibilities of processes, prompting further revision to make its use more transparent. Checklists based on the guidelines have also been introduced in, for example, staff training sessions. Facilitation material was also prepared for use by units. In addition, it is the ambitious goal of the University to ensure that all supervisors complete supervisory training with a section dedicated to the guidelines. A further aim is to introduce the checklists to teaching. Since the beginning of 2022, Student Services and centralised training of peer tutors have included a training section that discusses the principles for safer spaces, anti-racism, anti-ableism and sensitivity to LGBTQIA+ issues.

The third focus area was the promotion of social leadership efforts, which contained four measures. Active participation in the Una Europa network continued, with the University of Helsinki continuing to chair the Diversity Council. The University organised a meeting of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy group of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) in the summer of 2024. The development of equality and diversity indicators was considered in various contexts, such as the LERU's EDI group, and these efforts will continue during the upcoming period. We also commented on the University's sustainability and responsibility plan in the meetings of the Equality and Diversity Committee.

The monitoring table for measures for the period 2023–2024 is available on Flamma.

Report on the current state of equality and diversity at the workplace and the educational institution

2.1 Salary survey, placement by gender, share of international staff

The University compiles annual statistics on its staff's gender distribution, the share of international staff and the age structure. The statistics are available on [Flamma](#). In 2023, the ratio of women to all staff was 59% while men's corresponding figure was 41%. The University's staff are divided into teaching and research staff, specialist and support staff and the staff of the teacher training schools. Moderate increase in the share of women has been the trend in all the groups. In 2023, the share of international staff was 19%. In all staff groups, the share of international staff has grown in moderation during the last few years. A more detailed description of the staff, distribution and age structure is presented in the [staff statistics](#).

The University publishes annually statistics on the salary survey on Flamma. The statistics describe how the staff are divided into different requirement levels with regard to a job-specific salary component and into performance categories with regard to a personal performance component. The statistics also describe average salaries by gender as well as the salary trend in percentages. Based on the 2023 survey, it can be generally stated that the differences in average salaries between men and women at different requirement levels are small (typically below 1%). Even though the differences are small it is worth noting that at most requirement levels the difference benefits men. The salary survey and the more detailed description of salaries by gender is available on [Flamma](#).



2.2 Results of the workplace wellbeing survey 2023

Workplace wellbeing is investigated through a survey conducted every other year. The goal of the University of Helsinki's workplace wellbeing survey is to shed light on the state and strengths of staff wellbeing in different faculties and departments as well as aspects of wellbeing in need of improvement. The survey makes it possible to select areas of workplace wellbeing in need of development at the University and its units. The survey for the University of Helsinki has a section on non-discrimination, equality, diversity and inclusion. The section has eight questions. More information on the survey results is available on [Flamma](#).

2.3 Student wellbeing indicators and wellbeing efforts

Student wellbeing is promoted by degree programmes as well as Teaching and Learning Services. The [student wellbeing group](#) monitors student wellbeing and makes recommendations to the University community. Information on student wellbeing is collected, for example, through the HowULearn survey, the Finnish Bachelor's Graduate Survey, the International Student Barometer and surveys conducted by degree programmes. The above results are used as the basis for [measure proposals by degree programmes](#) to promote student wellbeing in conjunction with the annual degree programme follow-up. During 2024, the University of Helsinki has been involved in the development of national ethical principles for student counselling, which, when implemented, will promote quality and equality in student counselling.

2.4 Survey for the University community on equality and diversity efforts in 2024

In spring 2024, a survey was organised for the entire University community on what the university of their dreams would be like. The survey aimed to involve everyone in drawing up the upcoming Equality and Diversity Plan 2025–2028 and to receive feedback on the work done thus far as well as new ideas for the upcoming plan.

Even though the answers reflected an interest in the development of equality and diversity, it is important to continue data collection in a variety of ways, since the survey was not necessarily comprehensive with regard to various themes. Responses highlighted perspectives on the overall wellbeing situation. Some of the responses related to a concrete deficiency, such as in facilities, salaries, the status of grant-funded researchers or information system nomenclature. Recruitment practices and decision-making at the University were also raised as issues. The University received positive feedback as one of the most equal communities.

2.5 Survey for units, the Student Union of the University of Helsinki, head union representatives and occupational safety delegates 2024

In September 2024, the Equality and Diversity Committee carried out a survey of the entire University community regarding the measures planned in the upcoming Equality and Diversity Plan 2025–2028. Many important issues were highlighted but measures specifically related to [digital and physical accessibility](#) as well as highlighting anti-racism were supported. Many concrete proposals were related to individual deficiencies, such as issues related to digital and physical accessibility at different campuses.

2.6 Recommendations of the International Advisory Board reports in 2023 and 2024

The report of the University of Helsinki's International Advisory Board (IAB) is available on [Flamma](#) (See "Session 7. Well-being and Inclusion"). IAB recommends that the University focus more deeply on specific themes. In particular, the report contains observations on the coping of students. In spring 2024, IAB recommended focusing more on specific themes and going deeper into them, i.e., focusing the activities. The efforts should be more based on data, for example, related to cultural equity, which would make the connection between wellbeing and inclusion more comprehensive. Particular attention must be paid to measures related to promoting students' mental health and tackling related challenges.

Focus areas and measures to promote equality and diversity as an employer and an educational institution and related monitoring, 2025–2028

3.1 Focus areas 2025–2028

Promoting a diverse, accessible, non-discriminatory and anti-racist study and work culture

Creating open interaction and transparent practices

Developing the integration of the University's international community and inclusive language practices

The following subsections describe the measures based on the selected focus areas.

3.2 Promoting a diverse, accessible, non-discriminatory and anti-racist study and work culture

The University of Helsinki actively seeks to improve the conditions for the participation of people with disabilities, to raise awareness of individualised arrangements, to develop knowledge management for diversity and equality, and to strengthen the use of anti-racism research and the promotion of anti-racist practices. In addition, the university is committed to safeguarding the specific needs of rainbow people and different genders in terms of freedom of research, work and study, academic freedom and freedom of expression. Together, we can succeed in these measures when the entire university community works and takes responsibility to ensure that everyone feels safe and valued. With measures in this chapter promoting diversity, we hope to promote particularly the University's strategic objective of truly being the best place to study and work for everyone.



Key measures	Timescale	Responsible parties	Monitoring
Improving the conditions for the inclusion of people with disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will improve the accessibility information of University premises and teaching and event facilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will increase the availability of information on presentation pages with information on facilities' induction loops as well as audio and lighting systems. • We will map the accessibility information on campuses and expand digital and physical accessibility maps. • We will continue to implement the employment programme. • We will promote the planning and possible piloting of a traineeship programme for people with disabilities. • We will start planning a peer support program for students with disabilities • We will celebrate the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December. 	2025–2028	Equality and Diversity committee University Services, Facilities and Properties HR Services Accessibility working group HY247	Number of facility and property renovations Number of jobs
Increasing awareness of individual arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will train and inform teaching and research staff as well supervisors on individual arrangements so that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the threshold of students and employees in need of them to apply for them is lowered. - the experience of requesting individual arrangements for different courses or jobs is a positive one. • We will support curriculum design to decrease the need for individual arrangements. • We will develop a feedback indicator: How has the satisfaction among students/employees in need of individual arrangements been realised. 	2025–2028 2025–2028 2025–2028	Expert panel on individual arrangements Student Services HR services	The reach of communications Piloting and deployment of the indicator

Key measures	Timescale	Responsible parties	Monitoring
Developing knowledge-based management of diversity and of equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will exploit the results of surveys on equality and diversity, such as information obtained from the workplace wellbeing survey and Finnish Bachelor's Graduate Survey. We will map the usefulness of existing indicators (e.g. HowULearn, Norppa, Una Europa and LERU) in our organisation. We will encourage students to complete master's theses on topics related to equity and diversity and offer them actively. We will assess the realisation of the measures of the Equality and Diversity Plan with an annual report. 	2025 2025–2028 2025–2028	Equality and Diversity Committee Equality advisor Equality Advisor Thematic groups HR Services Student Services	Annual review of statistics Accessibility of surveys and reports
Strengthening the utilisation of research on anti-racism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University of Helsinki is participating in THL's anti-racism project in 2025, which aims to strengthen competence in anti-racism and the anti-racist structures that exist in an organisation. We will consolidate research-based perspectives on racism and anti-racism within the University community in its entirety and in our equality and diversity efforts. We will develop processes related to the reporting, documenting and monitoring of racism as well as support for those affected by racism. We consolidate teaching on anti-racism, the provision of multidisciplinary courses on anti-racism, and mapping and developing cooperation between faculties for anti-racism education. We will employ an antiracist approach in various University community events, such as staff training and other events. We will develop ways to identify structural obstacles affecting the career paths of researchers and teachers with international backgrounds or identifying with racialised minorities. We will encourage the writing of theses from anti-racist perspectives on the University community as well as the identification and development of antiracist tools. 	2025 2025–2028	Equality and Diversity Committee Equality Advisor Thematic groups HR Services	Exploitation of existing surveys A list of concepts and their definitions on racism and anti-racism will be created on Flamma Integrate THL's anti-racism project approaches into university community events

Key measures	Timescale	Responsible parties	Monitoring
Taking into account the wellbeing of staff and students belonging to gender and sexual minorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will map out opportunities for collecting information on what measures and support systems the University could provide to safeguard the need of LGBTQIA+ people for a peaceful research, work and study environment, as well as to ensure academic freedom and freedom of speech as effectively as possible. We will cooperate with students' mental health association Nyyti's QueerMieli project. We will take part in the annual Pride event. 	2025–2028 2025 2025–2028	Equality and Diversity Committee Equality Advisor HR services Student Services	Number of participants in Nyyti training Reach of communications Review of existing survey results

3.3 Creation of open interaction and transparent practices

We promote a culture of open interaction and transparent practices, which are key to improving psychological safety in our university community. Through these measures, we aim to create an environment where everyone can feel safe and valued.

Key measures	Timescale	Responsible parties	Monitoring
Organisation of equality and diversity training and events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each year, the Equality and Diversity Committee will decide on a theme under which guidelines, operating models and important discussions will be highlighted. • We will organise research-based training and events that utilise the University's internal expertise and take into account the topical nature of the training content. • We will communicate more effectively about the University's online training modules. • We will utilise various kinds of facilitation material (e.g., e.g., responsible interaction in the University community, ethical guidelines and the University's values). • We will prepare discussion sessions for the entire University community and Q&A sessions creating safe opportunities to highlight equality and diversity issues. 	2025–2028	Equality and Diversity Committee Equality Advisor HR services	Reach of communications
Promotion of salary transparency and equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will publish data on average salaries broken down more precisely by gender. • We will draw up statistics of staff groups performing the same or equivalent duties. • We will develop policies for analysing and investigating the causes of any differences in salaries by gender identified in the statistics. • We will develop policies and adopt measures that can address salary differences lacking rational explanation. 	2025–2028	HR Services	Process definition Regular publication of salary statistics

3.4 Developing integration of the university's international community and inclusive language practices

We aim to promote the experience of international members as an integral part of our university community and its future, and to communicate and develop existing language practices to create a more inclusive and multilingual community.

Key measures	Timescale	Responsible parties	Monitoring
Deployment of the guidelines for language awareness at the University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through language awareness in activities we will take better into account the linguistic diversity of the community while keeping in mind that we are all responsible for establishing an open community that values the use of diverse languages. We will put the guidelines into practical use (with the help of training events, discussions with supervisors and information sessions for new students) and remove obstacles to participation while enabling the development of language skills. We will expand the use of language recommendations from administrative bodies to the University's other decision-making bodies, such as various steering groups. In expanding the language recommendations, we will take into account the University's administrative languages (Finnish and Swedish) and share best practices. 	2025–2028	HR Services Supervisors International University Community	The number of decision-making bodies, such as management groups, and the language of the material and memoranda
Incorporating international members of staff and students into the University community and Finland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will determine University-level language principles for recruitment. We will consolidate measures to promote the inclusion and sense of belonging of international staff and students in the University community and Finnish society. We will support learning of the national languages. We will support the integration of staff as well as their spouses and families. We will offer targeted services to international students, for example, through international student services. 	2025 2025–2028	Equality and Diversity Committee HR services Student Services Equality advisor International University Community	Deployment of language principles for recruitment Number of participants in training sessions or events for international staff and students Existence and number of services Sufficiency of language courses

4

Links to legislation

Equality Act: the purpose of the Act is to prevent gender discrimination and promote equality between women and men and, towards this end, to improve the status of women, particularly in working life. Another objective is to prevent discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression.

Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986)

Non-Discrimination Act: the aim of the Act is to promote equality and prevent discrimination as well as to enhance the protection provided by law to those who have been discriminated against.

Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014)



Veikko Somerpuro