



EQUALITY PLAN

STUDENT UNION OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF EASTERN FINLAND

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Introduction

This is the Equality Plan of the Student Union of the University of Eastern Finland (ISYY). Its purpose is to promote equality, non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and a physically and psychologically safe environment for students at ISYY and in the associations and clubs operating within it.

The Equality Plan is a guiding document, and compliance is required from ISYY's representatives and employees. The Equality Plan was approved by the Executive Board of the Student Union of the University of Eastern Finland in its meeting on 13 October 2022 and by the Representative Council of the Student Union in its meeting on 25 October 2022.

The Equality Plan will be in force from 2023 to 2026. This Equality Plan substitutes the previous Equality Plan that was approved by the Representative Council in 2018.

Section 8 of the Finnish Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014) states:

“No one may be discriminated against on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. Discrimination is prohibited, regardless of whether it is based on a fact or assumption concerning the person him/herself or another.”

The themes of this plan are accessibility, safer spaces, and inclusion. For each theme, we present our goals and the actions to accomplish these goals. At the end of the plan, we discuss equality in the contexts of ISYY's cooperation with associations, ISYY's communication, and ISYY's role as an employer.

This Equality Plan is accompanied by the Safer Space Policy of the Student Union of the University of Eastern Finland.

Accessibility

For ISYY, accessibility means identifying and breaking down physical, psychological, and social barriers to accessibility.

We also see accessible communication and services as a part of accessibility as a whole.

Goals

Accessibility is taken into account in ISYY's events, and we strive to create more opportunities for participation for students with reduced mobility or disabilities.

Events are as accessible as possible for everyone attending, regardless of their personal characteristics.

ISYY pays attention to using plain language in its communication and keeps in mind people who do not speak Finnish or English as their native language.

Actions

ISYY will collaborate with the University of Eastern Finland to ensure that accessibility is taken into account in campus development.

ISYY's event information will include accessibility information that takes into account physical inaccessibility, participants' language skills, and other potential barriers to accessibility.

The implementation of accessibility will be regularly monitored, and any issues will be appropriately addressed.

Safer spaces

In addition to this Equality Plan, ISYY has written its first Safer Space Policy. We want our study and work environments in the Student Union and at the University to be spaces where everyone shows respect and solidarity to other people through their behaviour even when faced with disagreements.

We acknowledge that a safer space is a physical, psychological, and social concept.

Goals

ISYY's personnel, elected representatives, and members are aware of the Safer Space Policy and take it into account in ISYY's activities.

We value difference and the diversity of our community.

We will create an environment where everyone can feel free to be themselves and where harassment is addressed.

Everyone makes an effort to maintain a community that is free of bullying, racism, ableism, discrimination, and sexual harassment.

Everyone has autonomy over their own bodies. If physical harassment is noticed, it will be addressed.

We respect people's freedom of speech and opinion.

Actions

ISYY publishes its Safer Space Policy and allows student associations to apply it to their own activities as such.

ISYY will organise training for its members, elected representatives, and staff on equality-related themes, such as safer spaces, sexual and gender minorities, antiracism, and accessibility.

ISYY will ensure that everyone participating in its activities can openly and respectfully state their opinions and views.

ISYY will appoint harassment contact persons and, for bigger events, equality observers, whom people can contact in the event of harassment.

Inclusion

We want the Student Union's communities to be inclusive for students. Sense of community will be created by ensuring that everyone can participate regardless of their personal characteristics. We will promote both everyday inclusion and systemic inclusion.

Goals

We identify structural inequalities and find solutions for tackling them.

No one is pressured, not even indirectly, into doing something they do not want to participate in.

Our members know how they can influence the Student Union's activities.

Members of the Student Union can feel like they are part of the student community.

We strive to reduce the level of effort needed to participate in our activities to promote low-threshold activities.

Actions

We will collect feedback on our organisational culture from our members and strive for a more equal culture based on the feedback.

ISYY will release information about the equality aspect of events, and events will be open to members regardless of their personal characteristics.

We will inform our members what matters ISYY has and does not have power over.

We will develop feedback channels to ensure that equality feedback reaches the people who can advocate the matter at the University or in the Student Union.

ISYY and associations

ISYY expects student and campus associations to adhere to equality and non-discrimination.

Associations receive equality training and advice regarding communication, event organisation, and the creation of an equal organisational culture.

ISYY can deny an operational grant if ISYY can verify that the association's activities fail to promote equality or if there are repeated incidents of discrimination, sexual harassment, other harassment, racism, ableism, or bullying within the association.

Associations are encouraged to pursue the goals set out in this Equality Plan in their activities.

ISYY may also reward associations for their good work for equality.

ISYY's communication

ISYY makes sure that it uses diverse, multi-channel communication. We mainly use two languages, Finnish and English, to communicate. Our communication must be clear, appropriate, and easy to understand. Abbreviations and slang words should be explained. Our communication should strive to remain gender-neutral and avoid stereotypes.

Important information is published on more than one communication channel. Social media is used alongside other communication channels. ISYY will strive for accessible communication for all. ISYY must make its digital content easy to understand and use.

ISYY respects freedom of speech and opinion in its communication. However, if there is any racism, sexism, ethnic agitation, personal insults, or anything comparable on ISYY's own communication channels, ISYY's staff or representatives will delete the offensive comments and, if necessary, block comments from users.

Unofficial communication must be in line with other communication. ISYY encourages its representatives to respect ISYY's values in their communication and social media behaviour outside their work or position of trust.

ISYY as an employer

According to ISYY's rules, the Executive Board makes decisions on the recruitment, salaries, and discharging of employees, with the exception of selecting and relieving the Secretary General. Decisions on establishing and abolishing posts are made by ISYY's Representative Council.

In addition to the Finnish Employment Contracts Act, ISYY follows the collective agreement negotiated between employer and employee organisations, if applicable. If there is no applicable collective agreement, any labour disagreements should primarily be resolved by negotiations between representatives of the employer and employees.

As a rule, ISYY should try to fill all new positions using an open recruitment process. Job advertisements should be written impartially, and jobs should not be designed for a specific person. Job advertisements should clearly state the job title, the nature of the job, what skills and qualifications are required, and what is considered an advantage. Job advertisements

should state at least the primary working campus and the date on which the contract can start and on which the new employee is expected to be available.

Information about the recruitment process may only be disclosed by the Secretary General, the chairperson of the Executive Board, or the person in charge of the recruitment. The employer must ensure that the job applications will be handled as confidential documents and not disclosed to third parties during the recruitment process. Once the recruitment decision has been made, the redundant application documents must be appropriately destroyed for security reasons. The application documents of the selected candidate must be safely stored.

Prohibited grounds of discrimination may not be used as a reason not to recruit someone.

The following do not constitute unfair treatment: employer's normal supervisory measures; normal work-related decision-making; differences of interpretation regarding duties; handling of workplace issues between members of the work community; referring an employee to occupational health services; and occasional differences of opinion.

The Secretary General is responsible for the onboarding of new employees. If the employment contract is terminated by the employer during the trial period, the employee must be given an account of the grounds for termination upon request.

ISYY's staff members appoint an occupational safety and health representative from among them. The occupational safety and health representative's duty is to address any workplace bullying, sexual harassment, other harassment, and violations of people's right to work in peace at ISYY. ISYY's occupational safety and health manager is the Secretary General.

Salaries

Salaries follow the latest salary table of the collective agreement for student unions. Length-of-service bonuses and education allowances are also determined by the latest collective agreement.

Definitions

Equality

Equality means that everyone is equal regardless of their personal characteristics.

Personal characteristic

Age, origin, nationality, language, religion, conviction, health, disability, gender, sexual orientation, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, or other similar personal characteristic, activity, or orientation.

Discrimination

Unequal treatment based on a personal characteristic.

Accessibility

Accessibility means acknowledging the diversity of people in the planning, building, and maintenance of spaces. Accessibility also means acknowledging the diversity of people not only in physical contexts but also in communication, services, attitudes and on websites. Having access to easy-to-understand information at the right time is also part of accessibility.

Safer space policy

The goal of a safer space policy is to create a space where everyone makes an effort to create an equal, respectful, and open atmosphere and dialogue.

Inclusion

Inclusion means striving for organisational policies and practices to make the organisation as open as possible to individuals and groups from different backgrounds.

Harassment

Violation of a person's privacy, personal space, bodily autonomy, or right to work in peace in a disturbing or offensive manner.

Forms of harassment include:

- racist language;

- offensive gestures and language;
- destroying or stealing another person's personal property;
- secret filming;
- false rumours and accusations; and
- sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment

Nonconsensual behaviour with sexual intentions that violates a person's personal space, safety, and sexual autonomy.

Forms of sexual harassment include:

- inappropriate actions, gestures, and insinuations;
- touching without clear consent;
- messages with sexual overtones;
- inappropriate remarks made jokingly;
- inappropriate remarks about someone's body or clothing;
- sexual objectification; and
- pressuring someone into getting naked or doing sexual acts.

Sexism

Belittling, subjugation, or discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression.

Sexism manifests itself as actions, gestures, language, images, and behaviour that are based on the idea that a person or group is inferior because of their sex or gender. Sexism is also a systemic phenomenon.

Racism

Racism is the oppression of an individual or group by someone in a position of power based on an ethnicised or racialised identity that is related to the history of scientific racism and colonialism.

Racism can be everyday racism, such as offensive language and behaviour, marginalisation, or ostracism. Racism can also be systemic, such as exclusion from social institutions or discrimination in the labour market or student admissions.

Antiracism

Antiracism means active and deliberate action against all forms of racism. Antiracist action is work to reduce ethnic discrimination, negative stereotypes, and the impact of discriminatory practices.

Antiracism requires the rethinking of power structures, norms, and practices and the willingness to critically assess one's own thinking and behaviour.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated and deliberate actions to hurt another person mentally, physically, or socially. Bullying also involves a power imbalance between people; the bully exerts power over their victim, and the victim of bullying is in an inferior position in some way.

Bullying can be classified into direct and indirect bullying. Direct bullying means direct negative actions, such as hitting, kicking, or name-calling. Indirect bullying is hidden and involves things like talking behind someone's back or ostracising them.

Bullying can also be classified into physical, psychological, and social bullying. Physical bullying involves different forms of physical violence: pushing, kicking, etc. Psychological bullying uses words, gestures, and facial expressions. In social bullying, the person is discriminated against or excluded from the group.

Today, online and social media bullying can be mentioned as its own form of bullying. This type of bullying can involve, among other things, sending mean messages and sharing offensive material on social media.

Bullying always stems from human interaction and relationships. Bullying can occur among people of all ages, including student communities. Bullying is based on what the community values and does not value. (Source: Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, *Selviydytään kiusaamisesta* project 2017–2022)