



Students for a brighter future

The National Union of University Students in Finland's Policy Paper



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1 Introduction

2 The National Union of University Students in Finland (SYL) works politically for a brighter future for students,
3 Finland, and the world. This policy paper defines the direction for SYL's operations. SYL's values guide the
4 direction. Our goal is to defend education, show the way, and build an international and equal world. This
5 policy paper binds the work of the elected board and the staff of SYL.
6

7 We have grouped our most important advocacy questions in three themes: *the university*, *society*, and *the*
8 *university student*. Each section begins with a description of what we want to achieve through our advocacy
9 work. In addition to the description of the ideal state we want to achieve, we also define concrete objectives
10 for our advocacy work. Achieving these objectives will bring us closer to the ideal.
11

12 The policy paper is valid until further notice. The board or member unions may propose changes to the policy
13 paper. Our depiction of the ideal state is intended to be a sustainable and long-term ideal state. The objectives
14 for our advocacy work change with time and are updated when the political climate demands it.
15

16 The policy paper strategically guides the advocacy work carried out by the university student movement –
17 which consists of the university student unions and SYL – but it is also a definition of who we are. We students
18 must strengthen our role as builders of the Finland of tomorrow. The university student movement must
19 continuously be prepared to improve in order to develop the world around us. The objective for the student
20 unions and SYL is to be closer to the students and to work for them, so that students can build a brighter future
21 both during their studies and after they graduate.

22 Our values

23 The most important values for SYL are education, leading the way, internationality, and equality. These values
24 form a solid base for our operations. They are what both everyday work and decision-making, as well as our
25 long-term advocacy work, are based on.

26

27 SYL

28 • is a passionate defender of **culture**.

29 Culture entails having an open mind and the skills to listen, create, learn, and understand.
30 Education and student activism form an integral part of the constantly evolving ideal of
31 civilization.

32 • is a courageous **leader**.

33 ○ Leading the way entails challenging old and creating new. Students open-mindedly build a
34 better tomorrow.

35 • widely promotes **internationalisation**.

36 ○ The academic community is a place for border-defying encounters. Genuine
37 internationalisation calls for diversity in society and a non-discriminatory meeting of cultures.

38 • a defender of equality.

39 ○ Equality forms the basis for a strong and healthy society. Everyone must have equal rights
40 and opportunities to fulfil themselves, regardless of background. SYL is a feminist
41 organisation.

42 Society

43 The Finnish welfare state

44 The basis for the Finnish welfare state is a universal social insurance for all citizens, and publicly financed
45 welfare services, which protect and support citizens when their situation in life changes, for example as a
46 consequence of unemployment, having children, falling ill, or any other sudden change. No one's wellbeing
47 or livelihood should be reliant on charity. Taxation and universal insurance contributions are the main ways
48 of financing the services of the welfare state and income transfers.

49
50 The taxation system should be socially just and comprehensive, and it should level out income differences.
51 Those who benefit most from higher education financially will participate in financing the welfare state
52 through progressive taxation. The taxation, as well as funding for businesses and energy production must guide
53 towards socially, financially, and environmentally sustainable production and consumption. There must be
54 adequate resources to fight the grey economy and tax evasion. Aggressive tax planning must be limited by
55 legislative means. Finland has to be on the front line of promoting global responsibility and development
56 cooperation. Finland's funding for development cooperation must be increased to 0.7% of the gross domestic
57 product. And other expenses which will artificially increase the budget for development cooperation. Funds
58 should be allocated so that also non-governmental organisations can use them. Education should be a central
59 theme in the development policy programs. Finland must reach the UN's sustainable development goals, which
60 are outlined in Agenda 2030.

61
62 Society must be free from all discrimination and it must promote equality. There is no place for racism or
63 inequality in our society and we must actively take measures against such when we see it. By acknowledging
64 the norms and the structures that affect how people act, we can build an equal society. People must have equal
65 opportunities to fulfil themselves regardless of ethnic, socioeconomic, or personal background, beliefs,
66 physical or mental ability, gender, or sexual orientation.

67
68 Internationality and diversity are cherished as central elements of the Finnish welfare state. Finland cannot
69 afford not to welcome international professionals, but must instead make it easier for them to settle in Finland.

70
71 Finland has to be active in the European Union. European values, such as free mobility and the principle of a
72 constitutional state, are central to our identity. The European Union must assume its responsibility as the
73 number of asylum seekers increases, and invest in the development of an effective system of reception and
74 integration across the European Union. The European Union has to be a pioneer in international climate policy.
75 Finland actively influences the social and education policy of the European Union. The jurisdictions for these
76 themes should primarily lie with the member states in accordance with the subsidiarity principle. The EU
77 institutions play an important role in furthering education as a fundamental right and as a public good. SYL's
78 EU advocacy work is carried out both independently as well as in collaboration with the European Students'
79 Union (ESU) and other stakeholders.

80 **The safety nets of the welfare state**

81 Intergenerational equity must be at the centre of societal policy: the justification for our welfare state is that
82 every generation can trust that the insurances of the welfare state will protect them from risks. The level or
83 extent of insurance must not be tied to short-term economical situations. Insuring one generation must not
84 worsen the situation for other generations.

85
86 The activity of citizens must be examined from a wider perspective than simply based on whether or not they
87 are carrying out paid work. All activities subservient to society must be valued. The foundation for the social
88 security system should be an individual, gratuitous, simple basic income that enables a life of human dignity.
89 A basic income would make it possible to smoothly combine self-development, studies, work,
90 entrepreneurship, and family life.

91
92 In the working life of tomorrow, people must be able to move smoothly between paid work, studies,
93 entrepreneurship, and unemployment. In addition to the need for a basic income, there is an increased need
94 for unemployment insurance. All citizens should have the right to earnings-related unemployment benefits if
95 they fulfil the criteria for time in employment. There should be no link between increases in the earnings-
96 related unemployment benefits and the basic security benefits.

97
98 The pension system must ensure a sufficient living. The pensionable age should be tied to the changes in life
99 expectation, but we need measures aimed at the entire work career in order for the effective retirement age to
100 rise and to ensure longer work careers. Retirement ages are reviewed field-specifically, taking into
101 consideration the physical and mental burden of the work. At the same time, we must ensure that the pension
102 system remains simple and equal. It must also encourage longer working careers in all fields. It must be
103 possible to study with the benefits received during illness without restrictions on study credits. The pension
104 scheme must treat different generations equally and fairly. Pension contributions must not be increased. The
105 demographic changes cause pressure on the pension system. These must be met in a way that is fair for
106 different generations. A sustainable pension scheme must not be built at the expense of the younger
107 generations.

108
109 Parental leave should be divided equally among the parents. It is fair to distribute the cost of parenthood
110 equally between all employers. Encourage parents to return to working life sooner than presently by
111 improving possibilities to work part time, by decreasing the sizes of groups in day care, and by increasing the
112 number of employees.

113

114 **Advocacy goals:**

- 115 • Social security builds on a basic income, which enables a smooth combination of studies, self-
116 development, paid work and entrepreneurship.
- 117 • The age for when one starts to earn one's pension has been abolished, and the accumulation of old-
118 age pension begins from one's first job.
- 119 • The current subsidy for caring for children at home is equally distributed between parents.
- 120 • The cost of parenthood for working life is equally distributed between all employers.

121

122 **A modern working life**

123 Working life calls for continuous learning. A good job is inspiring, meaningful and flexible. In working life,
124 it is important to, on the one hand, continuously develop one's expertise and, on the other hand, to grow as a

125 colleague and an active citizen. A higher education degree should offer provision for both. A higher education
126 degree should be valued on the labour market.

127
128 Pay equality between the sexes is a central gender equality issue in working life. Equal pay is a prerequisite
129 for a fair, high-quality, and productive working life. To reach equality in working life, employers must take
130 all grounds of discrimination into account in all employment and at all stages of employment, as well as during
131 internships, for instance. Unpaid internships do not promote justice in working life.

132
133 The work career must be considered to begin from one's first employment, not only after graduation.
134 Combining studies and working should be easy. The protection against dismissal must be equally strong for
135 all employees, regardless of their age. Legislative measures should strengthen the position of especially
136 students and others in weak negotiation positions. Also such employment for which there is no set minimum
137 amount of hours should make one eligible for unemployment benefits and the possibility to accept other work
138 if needed. All students and professions should be treated equally and consistently regarding studying while on
139 unemployment benefits.

140
141 There is an undeniable link between work culture and the quality and length of work careers. Work culture
142 should promote wellbeing at work, work community skills and creativity, and should encourage good
143 leadership. Work must be organised in such a way that both the requirements of employees as well as
144 employers are considered. Both employers and employees must feel they have responsibilities and duties, and
145 they must care for their part for the implementation of working life legislation as well as occupational health
146 and safety. The increasing amount of irregular work must be considered in social and working life legislation.
147 The rigidity of social security must not hinder the opportunity to educate oneself, create something new, and
148 entrepreneurship all through life. The collective agreements must in their turn take into account the needs of
149 those who have atypical work.

150
151 The universities must actively support diverse student entrepreneurship, from growth enterprises to social
152 enterprises. Those who wish it must be offered practical tuition in entrepreneurship, and studies must include
153 sufficient time for networking, experimenting, and civil activities.

154
155 Everyday life for international students studying in Finland should be made as smooth as possible and obstacles
156 for their employment removed. It is in Finland's interest that as many as possible of those international students
157 who have completed a degree in Finland find work here after graduation. The residence permits for persons
158 who have completed a higher education degree in Finland are extended and it is easier for them to get Finnish
159 citizenship. There must be enough opportunities to develop important language skills. Employers should not
160 require more advanced language skills in Finnish or Swedish than the job on a general level requires. Adequate
161 and paid internships are an important way for international students to integrate into Finnish working life.

162
163 The work contribution of persons who are fit for part-time work should be appreciated as beneficial for
164 working life and society in the same way as that of people who work full-time. Persons who can only work
165 part-time must be offered work fitting their capacity. The norm of full-time work as the only form of

166 employment must be broadened. Making part-time work possible also support the goal of extending work
167 careers mid-way.

168

169 **Advocacy goals:**

- 170 • Work during studies is taken into account when net study time is calculated.
- 171 • Universities offer high-quality career services to all university students.
- 172 • Universities promote students' preparedness for starting businesses through by offering a sufficient
173 number of courses.
- 174 • Internship objectives are clear to students. Students are paid for, given feedback on and receive
175 guidance all through their internships to support their learning.
- 176 • International students who have completed a higher education degree in Finland are automatically
177 offered a permanent residence permit.
- 178 • International students are offered enough courses in Finnish or Swedish instruction so that graduates
179 have not only basic language skills but also sufficient skills for working life.
- 180 • There is an increased use of anonymous recruitment in order to ensure equal treatment, especially for
181 international students, immigrants, and people of all genders.
- 182 • Work for student organizations or student unions is recognized at all universities as activities that
183 develop learning. Students receive study credits for their work in student organisations.

184 **A living municipality for students**

185 City and community planning invest in a lively, common and free townscape, maintaining and developing
186 diverse natural and environmental destinations, reducing inequality between city areas as well as investing in
187 comfort. Cities have ambitious goals for coal neutrality, less waste, and globally sustainable consumption.
188 Municipalities invest in culture and education. Students are included in city decision-making and seen as an
189 important population group. Municipalities work closely together with higher education institutions and
190 business life in order to promote the employment of young people.

191

192 Public transport, walking and biking are the primary ways of getting around in densely populated areas. Public
193 transport is affordable in all situations of life. It is possible for students to travel by public transport both in the
194 city they study as well as between their place of study and home. Public transport services are available for
195 students everywhere in and the price is affordable. Densely populated municipalities have programmes to
196 promote biking. The programmes further a culture of safe biking e.g. through biking lanes, bike pockets, and
197 city bikes.

198

199 The student unions must develop as county lobbyists. The county reform should take into account both the
200 particular needs of students with regards to public transport, TE-services, social and health services, as well as
201 The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela). The reform should invest in nationwide, uniform, easy to
202 use e-services. The services should be open and accessible for all in easy to use for country affairs and
203 advocacy.

204

205 **Advocacy goals:**

- 206 • Students with children should have access to flexible, part-time day care service, so that they are able
207 to study.
- 208 • The student unions are able to participate in the preparation work for decision-making in cities and
209 regions.
- 210 • There are programmes to increase biking in university cities.
- 211 • Adequate and appropriate language skills meeting the needs of the clients must be ensured in
212 municipal services.
- 213 • Public office services are readily available also for international students and immigrants and they
214 know which authority offers which services.
- 215 • The municipalities offer sufficient instruction in the Latin alphabet and in Finnish or Swedish to enable
216 refugees and immigrants to apply to education.
- 217 • Everyone has the right to high-quality and modern library services, regardless of where they live.
- 218 • Students are entitled to a 50% discount on local public transport in all university cities.
219

220 **The university**

221 **The Finnish cultural university**

222 Universities are autonomous societal institution with the mission of promoting free research as well as
223 providing academic and artistic education. They offer teaching based on research and foster students to be
224 active members of humankind. Universities are integrated parts of society. Research and teaching is free from
225 ideological, political, religious, or financial power. The objective of the universities, science, the arts, and
226 independent research is to develop humankind. It is important that the universities and the academic
227 community engage in an active and critical discussion with the surrounding society. The scientific and arts
228 community in Finland is by nature international and promotes cross-disciplinary societal debate. The
229 university community must carry its global responsibility and promote a sustainable and just world.

230
231 A free and civilized state like Finland must ensure the autonomy of our universities and scientific and artistic
232 liberty. The state remains the main funder of universities. Higher degree education in Finland is tuition-free
233 for students, regardless of the nationality of the student. The state remains the main funder of universities.
234 Higher degree education in Finland is tuition-free for students, regardless of the nationality of the student. A
235 national funding system steers the funding of the universities. The system is predictable, transparent, and it
236 rewards universities for, among other things, quality education and employment, effective research,
237 collaboration with other higher education institutions, and internationalisation. Universities carry out their
238 legislated missions based on their own strategies and profiles. The funding system includes both quantitative
239 and qualitative indicators.

240
241 Finnish science and innovation policy understands that diverse science is needed for quality basic research,
242 and thereby also for applied research and innovations. Higher education and science policy is persevering.

243
244 Students regardless of background are part of the academic community and represented at all levels of
245 university administration as well as in all phases of decision making. University administration is transparent,
246 engaging, and consistent. The principle of transparency applies also to the different bodies of the university.
247 All members of the academic community are encouraged to take part in developing the university. All groups
248 are treated equally.

249
250 University students are member of autonomous student unions. The student unions have an important role at
251 the university and in surrounding society. Being globally responsible is part of the mission of the student union
252 and the student union prepares students for an active, cognizant and critical citizenship.

253

254 **Advocacy goals:**

- 255 • Students are represented in the university boards at every university as well as in lower levels of the
256 administration.

- 257
- International members of the academic community are able to participate in university administration.
- 258 International members of the student unions are able to participate in all decision making bodies of
- 259 the student union.
- 260
- “The learning outcomes for higher education degrees include understanding global responsibility and
- 261 sustainable development.”
- 262
- The documents of publicly funded research, teaching material, and administrative documents are
- 263 public.
- 264
- Research data is made more accessible by promoting open data at the universities, extensive access
- 265 rights to databases and by opening library services.
- 266
- University leaders are elected adhering to the transparency principle.

267 **The education path and educational equity**

268 The Finnish education system should be seen as a whole from early childhood education to further education
269 during the work career. This entails recognising lifelong learning as an important part of today’s welfare
270 society. Society must ensure that each individual, throughout their life, has such knowledge and skills as are
271 needed for participating in the labour market and for active citizenship. Also post-degree education must be
272 attainable for people from different background and in varying life circumstances and with individual
273 characteristics taken into account. The possibilities of lifelong learning must be attainable to all, regardless
274 of background and socioeconomic status.

275

276 Education should increasingly advance social mobility. The effect of socioeconomic background, wealth,
277 educational background of parents and other relatives, where one lives, and the environment on whether one
278 applied to education must decrease. In Finland, children must have a subjective right to free, quality, and
279 flexible early childhood education. The number of places available in child care must be increased without
280 increasing group sizes. From the perspective of social mobility, it is important that all children participate in
281 early childhood education before going to school. Part-time day care should be a realistic option. This
282 requires more flexible day care services.

283

284 Basic education and upper secondary education must provide sufficient readiness and equal opportunities for
285 applying to higher education. Each learner is seen as a potential higher education student. It is important that
286 everyone in Finland completes at least an upper secondary education degree. The integration of refugees and
287 immigrants should be supported by offering them sufficient educational opportunities and promoting the
288 identification of previously attained knowledge and education. Appropriations for affirmative action are
289 made for early childhood education as well as primary and secondary education so that learners in need of
290 especially strong support can be supported throughout their education path. Solutions for higher education
291 accessibility are developed. The solutions consider the needs of such students who are in danger of being
292 disadvantaged.

293

294 It is important for young people to receive adequate guidance counselling throughout their education path for
295 them to be able to make conscious and informed decisions. Particular attention needs to be paid to including
296 underrepresented groups in education. Normative gender roles are must not restrict applying to education or

297 choosing a profession. Educational institutions may not collect information about such personal
298 characteristics of their students and applicants as are irrelevant for student admission and studying. Students
299 always have the right to refuse to provide such information.

300
301 University admissions should be mainly through free entrance exams, selection courses, or other methods
302 independent of one's success in upper secondary education. The results of upper secondary studies may,
303 however, be used as a selection factor in such fields as they are particularly suiting. Even in such cases,
304 universities must allocate a significant part of the beginner places for students applying through channels
305 independent of upper secondary studies results, as well as stress suitability and motivation in university
306 admission. The evaluation must be professional, transparent and equal, with consideration for the special
307 characteristics of the different disciplines. Entrance exams in the same field, when possible, should be
308 realised as nationwide joint application. The system must eliminate the need for preparatory courses, and
309 applying through the open university must not require unreasonable amounts of money and time. The open
310 university offers possibilities for supplementing one's knowledge and skills, and applying to higher
311 education at different stages of life, also without general higher education eligibility. The role of the open
312 university is not to function as a paid-for way to circumvent the application system, and open universities
313 should not award degrees. Quotas for first-time applicants are not a good way to speed up access to higher
314 education.

315
316 Higher education institutions and upper secondary education institutions should cooperate closely so that
317 students can have a taste of higher education studies already during their upper secondary level studies.
318 Cooperation between educational institutions physically far from each other can be supported through online
319 tools. From the perspective of upper secondary level education, the collaboration must be as equitable as
320 possible from a regional perspective. Students at all upper secondary schools must be able to complete
321 higher education classes without cost to the student.

322 **Advocacy goals:**

- 323 • All children have a subjective right to free of charge early childhood education.
- 324 • Tasks requiring pedagogical skills in early childhood and pre-school education are the responsibility
325 of university-educated, and possibly also kindergarten teachers who have taken a degree in Steiner
326 education at a Steiner kindergarten, kindergarten teachers.
- 327 • Finland has a national accessibility programme for higher education, which defines quantitative
328 indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the programme.
- 329 • The number of refugees and immigrants who complete a second and tertiary level degree increases.
330 Previous degrees are recognised when applicable.
- 331 • A survey of the competencies and skills of refugees and asylum seekers is made as soon as possible
332 after they have entered the country.
- 333 • Municipalities offer adequate preparatory education and support in transitional periods so that
334 everyone who so wishes would have better opportunities for applying to higher education.
- 335 • International students have access to reliable, accessible, and equal basic services.
- 336 • Students in upper secondary education are offered options of completing university courses
337 beforehand through, for instance, the use of digital online learning platforms.
- 338 • There are clear, transparent and unambiguous learning outcomes defined for all higher education, from
339 individual courses to degrees.
- 340 • There are increased the possibilities for re-education during work careers.

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- 350
- The learner must not alone be responsible for the costs of lifelong learning, but the responsibility should be divided equally between the individual, employer and society. Updating one's competencies is possible for everyone, regardless of the wealth or employment status of the individual.
 - Lifelong learning should be developed so that its costs will not decrease the resources for degree education.
 - Upper secondary and higher education studies are offered openly when applicable.
 - Universities offer graduates the possibility of supplementing one's knowledge and skills.
 - Also in the future, there are ways of accessing university education regardless of upper secondary study success.
 - Quotas for first-time applicants are lifted.

351 **Student-centred learning and study ability**

352 The principles of student-centred learning include the student's freedom of choice and their responsibility for
353 their own learning, participation, and planning their study track. Instead of reaching for good grades and study
354 credits, students' motivation stems from collaboration, responsibility, and high-quality and topical
355 teaching. Guiding the student in their learning and supporting them in making choices are emphasised in the
356 role of academic staff.

357

358 Student-centeredness should be observed in degree structure, learning environments, evaluations, learning
359 outcomes, and curricula. Learning environments must be accessible. Teaching should observe the diverse basic
360 knowledge students have, their needs, interests, as well as different ways of learning. Teaching should use
361 different teaching technologies in various ways, but without using them just for the sake of it.

362

363 Learning outcomes for university education must be defined on the levels of courses, modules, and degrees
364 respectively. Recognition of a student's prior learning in both higher education as well as outside of higher
365 education should be carried out in adherence with the learning objectives for the degree.

366

367 Higher education institutions should invest in developing teaching by offering teaching staff the resources they
368 need, pedagogical instruction, as well as support for introducing and developing student-centred teaching. The
369 institutions must also support staff in the introduction of versatile, digital teaching tools as well as planning
370 foreign language teaching aimed at multicultural groups. The internal reward schemes of higher education
371 institutions should reward high-quality teaching.

372

373 Everyone who completes a degree from a higher education institution should have got practice in working in
374 an international, multicultural operating environment, as well as in understanding global development issues
375 from the perspective of their own field. A mobility period is not a prerequisite for internationalisation: the
376 principal of internationalisation at home brings teaching methods supporting global phenomena and
377 multiculturalism into all degrees. The universities must invest in the teaching of foreign languages, and they
378 must offer a wide range of foreign language courses. Studies completed during exchange studies must be
379 included in the degree.

380

381 The quality assurance of higher education institutions must consider the quality of teaching, student-
382 centeredness, student wellbeing, learning results, and employment. The feedback systems of higher education

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383 institutions must be nationally comparable and higher education institutions must in the long term develop
384 their operations based on the feedback. Students should be able to take part in all phases of developing
385 teaching. Students should regularly both give and receive feedback on their studies. The feedback is to be dealt
386 with matter-of-factly.

387

388 Study ability is the student's work ability. It affects study progress, results, and the wellbeing of both the
389 student and the community. Higher education institutions should promote study ability in all its forms: teaching
390 and guidance, study skills, study environment as well as student health and resources.

391

392 Developing student support is advantageous also for the university. Students must have access to abundant
393 support and guidance for planning their studies, career and life on all levels of education. Higher education
394 institutions should invest in integrating all new students into the higher education community. Students are
395 informed about the support services offered by the higher education institution. Support services must be
396 widely available all through the studies. The universities should offer support in all official languages of the
397 university and in English.

398

399 Students should receive support from the university for them to find the learning styles and methods that suit
400 them the best. Especially at the beginning of studies, students must also be encouraged to critical thinking and
401 developing problem-solving skills. Through the support provided for them, students are able to define and
402 verbalise their competencies as well as flexibly learn new things. Guidance and counselling support the
403 development of prerequisites for lifelong learning.

404

405 **Advocacy goals:**

- 406 • Higher education institutions plan diverse learning environments for different use at their facilities.
- 407 • Quality teaching is rewarded in the internal reward schemes of the universities.
- 408 • Pedagogical competence is one of the criteria when recruiting researchers and teaching staff.
- 409 • Exchange studies are financially supported and the recognition of study achievements during
410 exchanges is smooth.
- 411 • Students get an appointment with the study counselling psychologist within a month of contacting
412 them.
- 413 • Study counselling psychologist must collaborate more closely with the FSHS.
- 414 • All new students participate in a course in preparation for university studies. Teachers are trained on
415 considering individual learning styles.
- 416 • Higher education institutions build a national web-based wellbeing and life skills programme to
417 support students in their studies and everyday life.
- 418 • Every student is allotted a teacher tutor, who supervises the study progress at least once a year and
419 when needed together with the student revise the objectives. Guidance counselling is available also in
420 English.
- 421 • The learning outcomes for degrees mention internationalisation skills and internationalisation at home
422 is one of the guiding principles of degree planning.

- 423 • Studies in university pedagogy and staff education support the academic staff in developing their
424 counselling skills.

425 **The higher education system and degrees**

426 The Finnish higher education system is to be developed as an entity. Universities need to closely cooperate
427 both with other universities as well as together with the universities of applied sciences. Students must be
428 able to move between higher education institutions without difficulties. Universities and universities of
429 applied sciences (UAS) together form the Finnish higher education system. Universities and UASs differ in
430 both their respective missions defined in legislation as well as through their strategies and profiles. The
431 higher education institutions are to be publicly governed by the University Act and University of Applied
432 Sciences Act respectively. They may form different consortiums.

433
434 The quality of Finnish higher education must be high in every aspect and the teaching must be based on
435 current research. Every higher education unit must offer an adequate and diverse number of courses. Higher
436 education institutions must have genuine collaboration across boundaries and offer international study
437 modules. The structural reform of the higher education network must be carried out in dialogue with the
438 Ministry of Education and Culture, universities, students, and required stakeholders. The focus in developing
439 the higher education network is on quality and accessibility of education and research. The regional
440 distribution of higher education institutions takes the different profiles of universities into account as well as
441 the competence needs of the regions.

442
443 The Finnish higher education institutions succeed through internationalisation. From the point of
444 internationalisation, it is important that the higher education institutions have students from all over the
445 world. International students should be granted residence permit for the whole degree study time at once.
446 Higher education institutions must offer degrees that correspond to the European Qualifications Framework
447 (EQF) to ease mobility. Students must be able to transfer between higher education institutions in all of
448 Finland and all of Europe. The European Union promotes the value of cultural and academic freedom as well
449 as functioning mobility and cross-border student cooperation. The development of education in Europe
450 should be student-centred, and education must be available for underrepresented groups in all countries of
451 Europe. On a European level, structures are developed that encourage students to move also outside the
452 European higher education area.

453
454 Mobility within the Finnish higher education system must be encouraged. It must be possible to change
455 discipline at the transition phase between degree levels within universities but also between universities, still
456 acknowledging the special characteristics of different fields. Every student who has been accepted for
457 university studies must nonetheless have the right to complete a second-cycle degree (master's). Higher
458 education institutions are encouraged to develop the first-cycle (bachelor's) degrees to be broad degrees,
459 with consideration of the special characteristics of different fields. Broad first-cycle degrees must be based
460 on appropriate combinations of disciplines. The transition from first to second cycle studies must not become
461 an obstacle for smooth advancement. Higher education must consider rapidly changing competence needs
462 and offer ways for lifelong learning.

463

464 Higher education is developed by dismantling the dividers between higher education institutions and
465 disciplines. Students must be able to flexibly choose courses from a common platform for the higher
466 education institutions if the courses fit into the student's personal study plan. Students should be able to
467 freely choose between studies offered by their own and other universities, acknowledging disciplinary
468 characteristics. It should be easy to change subject and it should be accomplished through internal transfers
469 with the higher education institutions so that transferring students do not affect the number of places
470 available for new students. Higher education institutions have established practices for admitting transferring
471 students into different degree programmes. Transfer students should receive equal treatment and appropriate
472 academic advice.

473
474 The number of degrees awarded must be nationally defined by the higher education institutions and the state
475 in dialogue and considering the needs of society and so that high-quality teaching is ensured. Degrees should
476 have clearly defined learning outcomes, which are reflected both on degree and course level. When learning
477 outcomes are defined, working life representatives as well as other relevant stakeholders must be heard.
478 There is a sufficient supply of education available in Finnish, Swedish, and English.

479
480 Education should be free of charge for everyone. The consequences of tuition fees for students from outside
481 the EU/EEA area for the internationality of universities, on the economy, as well as for equality should be
482 actively monitored. All students are equal with regard to teaching and services regardless of some of them
483 paying tuition fees. There are no quotas for courses or student housing.

484
485 The stipend system must consider the socioeconomic background of students and should be comprehensive,
486 predictable and transparent. Neither development cooperation funding nor university basic funding may be
487 used for the financing of the stipend system. Students have information on the criteria for awarding stipends
488 as well as the size of the tuition fees already when they are applying. Neither criteria nor tuition fees may be
489 changed during the studies.

490
491 As specialisation and further education subject to charge become more common, it is ensured that a free-of-
492 charge degree is still enough for working life and that the individual must not buy competence in order to find
493 employment. Education export must not decrease the resources for free degree education, but should increase
494 them. Education export is carried out responsibly and ethically and national principles for implementing it are
495 drawn up.

496

497 **Advocacy goals:**

- 498 • When assessing the number of degrees, there is consideration for the legitimate need for them, and for
499 sufficient and proportionate field specific allocation of resources. There are clear indicators for the
500 follow-up for the vision of the roadmap for higher education and research, and a monitoring group is
501 set up for the purpose.
- 502 • Finland have reached the Bologna Process objectives. Degrees and study modules are recognised in
503 all of Europe without lowering the quality of education.
- 504 • University students can freely choose their minor subjects from any higher education institution they
505 wish. This can be accomplished through developing the JOO system, for instance.

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- The cooperation between universities is strengthened through the development on national field-specific study modules.
 - A national platform for degree students and other continuous learners is developed in Finland. The common platform for higher education institutions also enables studies independent of time and location as well as encourages higher education institutions to collaborate. The platform model is implemented as a collaboration between higher education institutions using API and data sharing.
 - The first-cycle degree offers broad readiness for transferring to complete a second-cycle degree in another field. The special characteristics of different fields is considered.
 - Refugees and asylum seekers can continue their studies in Finland. Asylum seekers' opportunities for participating in higher education are supported for instance by offering preparatory transition studies or courses that prepare the student for the application process.
 - If tuition fees are introduced, their impact is critically evaluated at least every other year. Tuition fees are abandoned as soon as possible.
 - International students are granted a residence permit for their whole degree period. Degree programmes are planned in a way that enables international students to complete the number of credits required for a renewal of the residence permit, and the cooperation between authorities and educational institutions should run smoothly in all of Finland.

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University students

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A reasonable student income

525

Finland should see investing in students as a societal investment in the future. The support that society offers gives everyone equal opportunities to study, regardless of socioeconomic background or place of residence.

526

527

Finland introduces a basic income. Before introducing a system of basic income, financial aid for students during full-time studies is ensured to be sufficient to secure their necessary livelihood. The student financial aid includes a study grant which is sufficient, is equally distributed throughout the studies, and treats students in different fields equally.

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The student financial aid is the student's social security. The administration of student financial aid belongs under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The student financial aid system is clear, consistent and predictable. The system makes reasonable amount of paid work possible and thus improves students' livelihood and their post-graduation employment. The student financial aid system also supports international mobility. The parts of student financial aid mirror the general increase in living costs and the focus for developing student financial aid is on enabling full-time studying.

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Student financial aid is adapted to other benefits and it flexibly considers diverse circumstances without endangering or weakening students' livelihood. The study grant for students with children includes a provider supplement. Students recovering from illness must be able to study part time while having a secured livelihood. Financial aid for higher education studies for students studying in Finland is only granted to students who are enrolled at higher education institutions (HEI) specified in Paragraph 1 in the Universities Act or who have been granted concession in accordance with the Polytechnics Act. The government guarantee for the student loan is granted for studies at the National Defence University.

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The most important aspect of the support for students' living costs is that it corresponds to real living costs. Student housing is supported in the form of an all-year, individual housing benefit scheme, which seamlessly combines with other benefits for students and which on a sufficient level and has sufficient income limits. The form of the housing benefit should allow for a moderate income and react flexibly to varying income. The level of housing allowance should not be dependent on the size of the apartment or the form of housing and it should meet the diverse housing needs of students.

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The student loan is well known among student as an optional form of supplementing their livelihood. The emphasis in developing the student loan system is on improving the risk defences in such a way that they sufficiently protect the borrower. Students have access to extensive and diverse information about the student loan system. The student loan is not considered income when the need for welfare benefits is evaluated.

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559 **Advocacy goals:**

- 560 • Student financial aid is moved from the Ministry for Education and Culture to the Ministry of Social
561 Affairs and Health.
- 562 • The level of the student financial aid is tied to an index.
- 563 • The provider supplement to the study grant should be increased to a sufficient level.
- 564 • The general housing benefit is granted on an individual basis.
- 565 • The student loan is not considered income when the need for welfare benefits is evaluated.
- 566 • The conditions of the student loan compensation only consider months when the student has received
567 student financial aid, for the compensation awarded while the person is still studying.
- 568 • There is a maximum for the rent level of the student loan.

569 **Student meals and the meal subsidy**

570 Student meals must be available to all students. It is important that the student meals are of high quality,
571 healthy, affordable, varied, as well as produced in a sustainable fashion, with consideration of dietary needs.
572 Student meals are an important support for promoting public health and sustainable development. Student
573 meals should encourage a vegetarian diet and guide towards less consumption of meat and less food waste.

574

575 Student meals are supported through subsidised meals. The universities must be aware of their responsibility
576 for organising meals for students and staff. They must also carry their responsibility by continuing to pay for
577 the costs for investments and appliances for the student restaurants as well as for rent for facilities. For student
578 restaurants operating in facilities that are not within the higher education institution, support may still be
579 granted in the form of an extra grant per meal. This is compensation for the cost of facilities and permanent
580 appliances. The maximum price of a student meal may only be increased if also the meal subsidy is increased.

581

582 **Advocacy goals:**

- 583 • Increases in the maximum cost of the student meal are linked to an increased meal subsidy. The level
584 of the meal subsidy is increased.
- 585 • Student restaurants offer quality and nutritious vegetarian and vegan food.
- 586 • Students know where the food is from and can easily access the nutritional information about the food,
587 as well as its carbon footprint. Student restaurants emphasise ecologically produced ingredients.
- 588 • The meal subsidy limit to one meal per day per student must be abolished.

589 **High-quality and affordable student housing**

590 Students must have the right to affordable housing. Building affordable housing for all requires society to
591 offer sufficient support for production.

592

593 A sufficient supply of student housing decreases the housing shortage in growth centres and eases the
594 housing situation for others of limited means. The state should grant sufficient support for building new
595 student apartments as well as for renovations so that the apartments are affordable and of high quality.

596 Municipalities must ensure that there is a sufficient number of lots available for supported student housing
597 production by assigning lots to the organisations who build student apartments and by planning lots for
598 student housing. The state should promote lot availability by turning over its own protection free land to an
599 advantageous price to student housing communities. The regulations for changing the purpose of use are
600 alleviated so that empty premises can be used for permanent or temporary student housing.

601
602 When building student apartments, attention must be paid to quality, accessibility, the environment, comfort,
603 and supporting community. Building and maintenance should pay particular attention to health issues, such
604 as the quality of the indoor air. Student apartments must be close to good public transport, as well as good
605 possibilities for walking and biking between the apartments, the campuses, and the centre. Higher education
606 institutions, student apartment organisations, and cities have a shared responsibility for the housing provided
607 for international students. The higher education institutions must take responsibility for the cost of housing
608 for international students. Also the higher education institutions must carry responsibility for temporary
609 emergency accommodation. The integration of international students and staff in the community must be
610 promoted by increasing housing for internationals in the same houses and areas as where Finns live.

611
612 The rent level for student apartments must stay below market prices. Contributing to this are the state
613 production support, more flexible planning and parking regulations, as well as the elimination of a minimum
614 size for the apartments. The taxation of renting or owning one's flat must be similar so that these remain
615 equally attractive alternatives, and people can choose how they live according to their own preferences.

616 **Advocacy goals:**

- 617 • The Ministry of the Environment anticipates the need for production of new student apartments
618 through a regular student housing survey.
- 619 • To achieve the objectives for student housing production, a programme on youth and student housing
620 is initiated.
- 621 • The state ensures a sufficient lot supply by including a separate quota in the agreements on land use,
622 housing, and transportation in growth centres. The quota for the yearly production of student
623 apartments is a long-term loan with an interest subsidy.
- 624 • The excess interest of the 40-year loan with interest subsidy is decreased to 1% for student apartments.
- 625 • Student housing remains included in the special groups entitled to investment subsidies, and the
626 investment subsidy percentage increases to 20%.
- 627 • The production subsidies for building new student apartments is primarily targeted at areas where the
628 housing situation for students is worst.
- 629 • Student apartment are entitled to the same grants depending on the financial situation as others are.
- 630 • Student housing is taken into account already in the planning stage. Student apartments are simply
631 planned and released from the demands on facade material and street-level businesses.
- 632 • Students apartments are exempt from the regulations on parking spaces.
- 633 • The obligation to build shelter is eliminated for student housing.
- 634 • Creative housing solutions are promoted by eliminating the regulation regarding minimum size for
635 apartments in the scheme
- 636 • Higher education institutions are responsible for the empty student apartments that are empty due to
637 irregular numbers of exchange students during the academic terms.
- 638 • Regulations on the purpose of use of buildings as well as cooperation between different actors in the
639 field of constructions are developed so that empty premises can flexibly be changed from, for instance,
640 commercial use to student accommodation.

- 641 • Whether a student is paying tuition fees does not affect the selection of student housing residents. All
642 students are treated equally.

643 **Student health care and FSHS**

644 The health care system and sufficient funding for health care services support wellbeing and uphold work and
645 study ability. The health care system evens out differences in health and wellbeing between different
646 population groups. The system is also closely connected to the social services. Resources for health care must
647 be aimed at prevention of problems and at low threshold services. The importance of physical activity for
648 improving health must be considered. Everyone must have access to sports. Digitalisation must be utilised in
649 health care, as must the options offered by self-care.

650
651 The health care system is to be based on a life course perspective. Services must be planned and realised mainly
652 per age group. This way much information about the typical health problem for that group is accumulated. The
653 life cycle perspective promotes a holistic approach to the need for service, both individual and population
654 groups. An important part of the life cycle perspective are the services offered by the student health care.

655
656 The role of the student health care is to promote health and wellbeing for students and for the whole study
657 community. Student health care must be more than just health care for students. It is about community health
658 and preventive work, an entity in its operations and by law, in which is included offering basic health care
659 services to students. Particularly important entities for the student health care are the well-functioning mental,
660 sexual and reproductive health as well as dental care. Health guidance and physical examinations must be
661 organised also for those young people who are not a part of the student health care. All students studying for
662 a basic degree must be entitled to student health care services. The higher education institutions should
663 organise occupational health services that correspond to their health needs and have enough resources. The
664 service chains between student health care, social services and the public health care are smooth and clear. The
665 transfer of client information between different parties is smooth.

666
667 The student health care for all basic degree students and all international exchange students at all higher
668 education institutions and who are members of the student union must be organised through the Finnish Student
669 Health Service (FSHS). The FSHS is a part of the publicly funded health care system. Students participate in
670 both the decision-making in the FSHS board and in the financing of the FSHS. The latter is a legislated
671 healthcare fee, which is mandatory and collected by the student unions. The funding of the FSHS must be
672 predictable and based on long-term contracts. Students must be offered functioning health care services at the
673 same level, regardless of where they live and study.

674
675 Those organisations implementing FSHS and other publicly funded health care must offer their services and
676 information about them in Finnish, Swedish, and English. The staff of the FSHS must be trained regularly and
677 they should be familiar also with equality issues. The FSHS should offer low threshold services, for instance,
678 on campus. FSHS must lead the way in digitalisation and invest in community health and cooperation with the
679 education institutions. The FSHS offers higher education students a high quality service entity, which includes
680 general health, oral health, and mental health.

681 **Advocacy goals:**

- 682 • The student health care for all basic degree students and all international exchange students who are
683 student union members, at all higher education institutions, must be organised through the Finnish
684 Student Health Service (FSHS).
- 685 • The FSHS is a part of the publicly funded health care system. The future funding of FSHS is secured.
- 686 • The FSHS is a leader in digital health care services, self-care in both official languages as well as
687 English, and in new low threshold campus practices.
- 688 • Students have a quick access to low threshold mental health services offered by the student health
689 care. The student health care offers diverse mental health services that best suit each individual, such
690 as individual and group therapy and digital services.
- 691 • All youth under 29 years of age and all higher education students are offered the possibility of free
692 rehabilitative psychotherapy.
- 693 • To ensure that there are enough psychotherapists, psychotherapy education must become publicly
694 financed and free for psychotherapy students.
- 695 • Student health care and publicly funded health care offer all under 29 years of age and all students
696 covered by FSHS services free birth control.
- 697 • The higher education institutions organise occupational health care for and corresponding to the needs
698 of all postgraduate students. The occupational health care is sufficiently funded.
- 699 • The health care for secondary education students is transferred to the school health care, both
700 legislatively and operation-wise. Treating mental disorders is added to the tasks for school health care
701 defined in legislation.
- 702 • Health guidance and physical examinations are organised also for young people who are not a part of
703 the student health care.
- 704 • The social and health care services in student cities and belonging to the publicly funded health care
705 system offer basic services in Finnish, Swedish, and English.