



TURUN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULUN  
OPISELIJAKUNTA – TUO

Turun ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijakunta – TUO

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**Political agenda of  
the Student Union of  
Turku University of Applied Sciences  
(Student Union TUO) 2019–2023**



## The future of Finland and Southwest Finland through the eyes of students

In the future, the need for higher education will continue to grow and at a faster pace than ever before. Finnish higher education should be the best in the world. In the future, the number of jobs which require higher education will increase and working life will change faster than ever before. It is vital that we develop continuous learning; learning does not end with a degree certificate from a higher education institution. Technologies, methods and things are constantly changing, and new inventions are made every day.

This is why we must constantly develop higher education and the quality of teaching. More resources should be allocated for the development of teaching already in the near future. At the moment, we have dropped below the average of the OECD countries in the number of those with a higher education degree and we must improve our competence level. According to the Vision for higher education and research in 2030 by the Ministry of Education and Culture, we must increase our competence level to at least 50% of the age group. The competence level can and should increase even further, but it must happen in a working life oriented way and without compromising the quality of education.

Education must be even more tempting and possible for everyone. Everyone shall have a real opportunity for higher education, regardless of socioeconomic background, gender, age, religion or disability. Education shall be equal and equitable for all students. In the higher education communities, all students shall feel safe and welcome. Higher education should take underrepresented groups into account and enable their participation in higher education better than nowadays. Finnish higher education should be more international than before, and internationality should be a part of all teaching at higher education institutions.

Cities should do active and productive cooperation with both higher education institutions and students, so that Finnish higher education institutions will remain attractive also in the future. Cities should invest in additional services for students, such as public transport and bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The student-positivity of cities should be constantly developed, and cities should respond to the changing needs of students.

Climate change is the biggest challenge of our time. In the upcoming parliamentary term, ambitious climate politics is needed. All of us must work for that also the future generations have a globe where they can live. We must make better choices for the environment and take sustainable development into account in all our decisions. Eating vegetables and locally produced food should be increased both at home and at school. Public transport should be invested in and it should be developed to a more environmentally friendly direction. Society should invest in combining technology and nature and the innovations and opportunities created by it. Now is the last moment to improve our actions so that we can guarantee a habitable planet for the future generations.



## Social policy

In the upcoming social security reform, students are taken into account as an equal group in comparison with other beneficiary groups. In the social security reform it must be taken into account that in the future, support is better directed at those who need it. The social security reform must clarify the forms of support and combine them as much as possible. The new social security must support continuous learning and facilitate the combination of work and studies. Before the social security reform is complete, a remedy package is needed for students' livelihood which consists of a single raise in the study grant and linking the financial aid to the index.

Students who are doing well are an advantage to the higher education community, society and working life. By supporting the well-being of students at TUAS we assist the progress of studies on schedule, the coping of students and their networking opportunities with other students and working life. Students who are doing well create themselves networks for the future, ensure their competence and after graduation, they are healthy and capable employees. Education takes equality and parity into account, so that all students feel safe at TUAS. TUAS takes all genders and groups of people into account. TUAS should invest in that its premises are accessible to all. Student health care services are at the level of recommendations until students at universities of applied sciences have moved to the services of the Finnish Student Health Service, FSHS. At the transition stage, student health care works alongside the FSHS services, which ensures the quality of the services.

In the next parliamentary term, a programme of educational equality should be created for Finland. The programme aims at increasing the representation of underrepresented groups at higher education institutions and improve the accessibility of education.

According to research, students and youths are lonelier than before, and the number of excluded youths is larger than ever before. This is a problem we must solve during the next parliamentary term. The Student Union does active work together with different organizations, institutions and other possible actors to prevent exclusion and mental health problems. The Student Union is considered an actor who can be asked for help in case of problems. The actors of the Student Union are trained to guide people to the correct place to get help, if the Student Union does not have any competence of its own to help with the matter at hand.

- In the next parliamentary term, a single raise of EUR 100 is made to the study grant and the study grant is linked to the index.
- The pop up office of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA) works extensively enough on the campus.
- The level of student health care is ensured to meet the recommendations until it is moved to FSHS.
- The student health care works beside the FSHS services at least a calendar year to secure the services and treatment.



- The transfer of university of applied sciences' students to FSHS is promoted.
- All of TUAS' premises are accessible for everyone.
- In the next parliamentary term, a programme of educational equality is created.
- The teaching facilities of higher education institutions shall enable different working methods.
- Campuses offer professional low-threshold mental health services.
- In cooperation, TUAS and Student Union TUO organize regular well-being days for students. The Student Union supports the sense of community within TUAS through student culture and different events.
- Turku University of Applied Sciences shall organize substance-free and versatile events for students.
- In the future, the social security number shall be gender-neutral.

## Educational policy

Also in the future, Finland shall have working life oriented universities of applied sciences and science-oriented universities. The cooperation within the field of higher education is tightened and opportunities to complete courses in other higher education institutions is clearly increased. This is how a genuine opportunity to complete studies also outside the home university is created.

In Finland, high competence and different competence entities are increasingly needed. A framework is created for the basic part of the degree, and with the help of the framework, a basis for competence is created. On top of this, different competence entities are built together with the study counsellor, based on the career plan of each student. The higher education institutions offer multidisciplinary study modules in all fields. This requires investments in contact teaching as different distance education models are being developed. We cannot replace contact teaching entirely with distance education, because we have lots of different learners. In addition, contact teaching is a critical issue in some of the degrees and in the grouping of students in all fields. Contact teaching should be developed to a more versatile direction by creating new, innovative teaching methods. The administration and management system should be scaled down, as under the constant pressure to save, saving from education should be the last target.

Language education is invested in at Turku University of Applied Sciences. TUAS will, again, begin to offer alternative language studies, also taking new and rare languages into account.

- The higher education system includes working life based universities of applied sciences and science-oriented universities. The higher education institutions work closely together.
- In the future, the quota for first-time applicants is renounced. However, the transfer from secondary education to higher education should be supported thus that it does not inevitably put the applicants in an unequal position.



- Students' opportunities to transfer from a field of education to another should be strengthened by developing and lightening the transfers inside a university of applied sciences.
- The management systems of TUAS are more transparent and the communication systems are more high-quality.
- All working groups of TUAS and the faculties within it, which deal with the issues of students, should always have student representatives.
- The accumulated ECTS credits, which can be obtained from student representation, should be consistent in all fields of education, and they should be based on the degree of difficulty and extent of the tasks.
- The products of education export should be high-quality and equal, and they should be evaluated on a regular basis.
- Tuition is free of charge for the citizens of Finland and the EU/EEA countries.
- In made-to-order education, the student must not pay for the education.
- The adequate number of teaching staff in relation to students and the staff's field-specific, working life oriented and pedagogic competence guarantee the high quality of the education.
- In the summer term, the course provision on different field-specific competences should be extensive. Participating in the summer semester should be voluntary for students. Every degree programme should offer courses for the summer semester.
- In the funding model of universities of applied sciences, emphasis must be placed on the quality of teaching, completion, student feedback and internationalization. The criteria should be important enough to have genuine regulatory impact.
- The student selection reform should aim at accepting motivated students in the degree programmes.
- Every course should have clear assessment criteria. Students should be familiar with the assessment criteria at the latest at the beginning of a course.
- Exams should be implemented and evaluated anonymously with student id codes.
- The awareness of teaching staff on the recognition of prior learning should be increased thus that it is possible to identify and recognize the previously acquired competence of students regardless of where it has been acquired. The process is a natural part of student guidance.
- TUAS shall ensure high-quality, equal and adequate guidance for students. All students shall have the opportunity for individual guidance by the study counsellor, tutor teacher, study counselling psychologist and peer tutors.
- Entrance examinations must be physically and mentally accessible. The entrance examinations shall measure the aptitude for the field in terms of its current requirements.
- Open UAS should offer field-specific studies from every field of study.
- The premises and devices used by TUAS enable the studies' multiplicity, flexibility and accessibility and encourage for encounters and innovations.
- Exam aquariums are introduced in all degree programmes.
- All courses which include a written exam should also offer the e-Exam as an alternative.



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- The use of group exams is renounced and they are replaced with individual exams or group-specific final projects and project work.
- All lectures which can be recorded are recorded and students can participate in them remotely.



## Exercise policy

Exercise has a profound impact on the well-being and coping of students, both during the studies and when moving to working life. Adequate sports services should be available and they should be accessible to all. In terms of the sport services and their development, cities, higher education institutions, student unions and service providers should cooperate. The sport services should be reasonably priced for students and employees of the higher education institutions, making them more easily accessible for all.

CampusSport should constantly develop its supply of services and be actively involved in developing daily exercise opportunities at the premises of TUAS. CampusSport should ensure that its services are low-threshold and they have an extensive supply of services. Student Union TUO, TUAS, CampusSport and the cities communicate to students about themes and services related to a sporty lifestyle and well-being.

- CampusSport should be visibly active in the new campus in the form of a gym and office exercise points.
- The CampusSport services should be expanded also to the Salo campus and areas where lots of students live.
- Organizing sports services should be recorded in TUAS' strategy. TUAS should earmark resources for completing the recommendations of higher education sports.
- Turku University of Applied Sciences should offer all students and staff easily accessible, reasonably priced and appropriate group workout and gym facilities.
- CampusSport receives adequate funding.
- The cities of Turku and Salo should offer a student discount of sports services and tickets to theatres, events and other cultural destinations.

## City policy

The city policy should be aimed at the future and based on facts. We are not afraid to state our opinion in difficult situations. The Student Union is considered an expert in student-related issues, and it is asked for opinions and statements on student-related issues. We are actively involved in monitoring the local politics of both Turku and Salo. We are active in making statements on and highlighting student-related issues. We try to influence politicians with personal meetings. The Student Union's actors in positions of trust are considered experts in policy, and people also want to meet them on various issues.

We believe that the City of Turku should be developed towards a student city even more, through housing, services and schools. A sustainable public transport solution which takes the campuses into



account will be created for Turku from 2025 onwards. The urban environment shall answer to the changed everyday life. In the future, tram rails will go through Turku, and they guarantee fluent mobility at least between the campuses, Kupittaa railway station, student apartments, the city centre and the main railway station. Using a car in student city Turku is rarely necessary. The public transport connections are built thus that moving from one place to another within Turku and to the surrounding commuter belt is effortless and faster than travelling by one's own car. The fees of the Turku region traffic are renounced in stages thus that at first, the basic fee is decreased to the level of the discount groups and the public transport fees for students are completely discontinued. With free public transport we encourage people to use it more actively than before, hence improving the image and air quality of the entire city. This measure is one of many which will help us achieve a carbon-neutral City of Turku by 2029.

- The Student Union actors are invited as experts in student-related matters.
- The Student Union is asked for statements on student-related matters.
- The public transport fees for all students are completely discontinued by 2023. Before that, all students are entitled to the discounts of the regional public transport regardless of their municipality of residence.
- A safe, clearly marked and extensive cycling network shall be built in the city.
- An opportunity to use the city bikes should be created also for the value and Tupla combination cards.

## **Campus policy**

The city planning directs the higher education institutions in the same area. Student-priced housing is planned near the Kupittaa campus area and in Itäharju to respond to the increasing number of students. Along with the new building of Turku University of Applied Sciences, the Kupittaa area grows into a clear cluster of student life in Turku. The area hosts the service points of Kela and Föli, FSHS, Posti and other services important for the students and other people working in the area.

In the regional and town planning of the area, design which attracts companies is invested in thus that in the future, a 24/7 grocery store, several coffee shops and licensed restaurants are found in the area besides the student restaurants. In the future, Kupittaa never sleeps, but the area's characteristics include the merging of studies, work and leisure which continue around the clock. In the global world, work is being done when somewhere in the world people are at the office. The Kupittaa area is its residents' shared living room. Climate change is combated with the use of renewable energy sources, roof gardens and house plants which clean the air. In Kupittaa, nature and technology meet and the starting point of the planning of the area is the principles of sustainable development.

In the brand work of the City of Turku, the Kupittaa area has its own emphasis. A strong image of a cluster of research, development and future working life is being built for the area. An own application for the residents, visitors and service providers in the area is developed, containing e.g. restaurant



menus and opening hours, a notice board for residents and a notice board for jobs and the available workforce.

- The area between Kupittaa Ball Game Hall and Tykistökatu will be turned into a city boulevard.
- The public transport network of Turku should be developed thus that it serves students as extensively as possible.
- To ensure safe incidental exercise, bicycle and pedestrian traffic routes should be developed between the clusters of student apartments and the campus.
- Enough reasonably priced and appropriate apartments should be available for students near the campuses.
- The education of Turku University of Applied Sciences is organized on campuses which are multidisciplinary and in terms of the support services, large enough.
- Students must be able to receive support services on all campuses.
- The operations of the Turku-based campuses of Turku University of Applied Sciences shall be gathered on a single campus.
- The campuses should have group work rooms where students can work undisturbed. The premises shall be adequately equipped and they shall be accessible 24/7.
- The services used by students shall be available on campus, and the attractiveness of the area in terms of consumer businesses should be invested in.
- Rooms which increase the sense of community of students are placed on campus.

## **Internationality policy**

Internationalization and internationality are nowadays more important than ever before. In the studies and working life of today, it is increasingly important to have adequate language skills and the ability to work in a multicultural study and work community. For example, the main goal of the international activities of TUAS is to increase the abilities of students and staff to work in international and multicultural higher education and working life communities. As a consequence, the internationally high level of teaching and RDI activities is guaranteed now and in the future. Internationality shall be a part of every degree and it is invested in at TUAS.

Turku University of Applied Sciences is a genuinely international higher education institution, from where students want to go on exchange around the world and which attracts international students. The opportunities to go on exchange are equal in every field. Internationality is developed especially in the fields where the numbers of students going on exchange are low. At Turku University of Applied Sciences, internationality does not only refer to international courses, but it is present from the beginning of studies until graduation. Also the graduating students who do not go on exchange during their studies, get strong abilities to act in international working life and as a part of multinational work communities. Internationalization at home is a fixed part of all studies.



Student Union TUO is genuinely international. All content is produced both in English and Finnish and at events, all students are taken into account regardless of their background. Separate tutoring of international students, trained by TUAS, is renounced. In the future, the Student Union trains all tutors and they get the same basic competence for tutoring. International tutors still get the same competence as before, and in addition, all tutors are trained to help also the international students.

- TUAS offers more courses in English without cutting resources from the basic course supply.
- International degree programmes are required to support internationalization at home and the internationality of the higher education community stronger than before.
- The Student Village Foundation of Turku must not discontinue the apartment quota for exchange students. However, the apartment quotas have to be opened for other than exchange students in times when the apartments are empty. In subleasing of the apartments, the rules of the Foundation must be complied with.
- The communications and materials of the Student Union are implemented in Finnish and English. This promotes the activity of international students in the TUO community.
- In organizing events, international students are taken into account as a clear participant segment. The opportunities of international students to participate in events organized by TUO are ensured.
- International tutoring becomes the responsibility of TUO, which means that all tutors get the same basic training.
- The content of international tutor training is trained for tutors also in the future. All tutors are trained with the ability to act in an international environment.
- An adequate amount of Finnish language lessons must be offered to international students. The studies shall be free of charge for the citizens of Finland and the EU/EEA countries.
- Turku University of Applied Sciences offers an internationalization course worth 15 ECTS credits to facilitate internationalization at home and international activities. The course is offered as an elective course.

## **Employment policy**

The starting point of the existence of universities of applied sciences is the needs of working life. Turku University of Applied Sciences is active in cooperating with the business life in the region and offers students opportunities to deepen their professional competence in working life. The studies emphasize working life skills, such as work community communications, managing one's own work and everyday life and solving conflict situations. Teachers' working life exchanges are increased and the teaching staff's genuine understanding of the constantly changing working life is invested in.

The share of practical training of the studies is increased and completing the practical training alongside the semesters is facilitated. Practical training periods and projects completed in cooperation with working life are paid. The practice, in which the UAS pays employers for practical training places in



the social and health care field, should be renounced. Every student has the right to get paid for the practical training. The specialty of TUAS has always been its working life oriented education and it should be developed, because true learning takes place in working life. If the student's first contact to working life takes place only during the third year of studies, the change between the UAS and workplace is too big.

- It is possible to substitute professional studies with work and this is encouraged.
- There should be more practical training and they should take place earlier. Completing practical training periods alongside the semesters is facilitated.
- The students of Turku University of Applied Sciences are encouraged to establish strong connections with working life and plenty of opportunities for this are offered.
- Higher education practical training should be financially compensated at least for the amount of the employment requirement. Completing the practical training should not cause extra costs for the student or large costs for TUAS.
- The practical training tasks should correspond the education. The practical training supervision should be adequate and high-quality.
- All projects within the research, development and innovation activities (RDI) should be connected to TUAS' curricula and they should be a natural part of the job description of the entire staff. RDI projects should be integrated into studies and student assistants should be paid.
- Teachers should utilize their contacts to working life consistently in their teaching.

*This political programme was approved by the Representative Body of the Student Union of Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUO) in its meeting on 5 February 2019.*

*The political programme is valid until the end of 2023. Drafting the new programme will begin in the beginning of 2023.*