

EQUALITY AND NON- DISCRIMINATION PLAN 2022



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1. INTRODUCTION: EQUAL AND SYMPATHETIC VAMK

The vision of Vaasa University of Applied Sciences is to be 'Your main partner in expertise.' We want to provide a competitive edge to key working life operators by training the talent of the future and providing a trailblazing vision. In line with our values, we are a friendly, open and customer-oriented community that acts as a frontrunner and puts equality and non-discrimination at the centre of its everyday activities.

For us, equality and non-discrimination are everyday actions. Our community is already very international and will become even more so in the near future. Every member of our community needs to know the basics of equality and non-discrimination. This will allow us to ensure that our operations are of high quality in this respect throughout the organisation.

Equality and non-discrimination are regulated by European Community legislation and international treaties binding Finland. In Finnish national legislation, in turn, the key acts are the Constitution of Finland (731/1999), the Employment Contracts Act (55/2001), the Non-Discrimination Act (1347/2014), the Occupational Safety and Health Act (738/2002) and the Act on Equality between Women and Men (1329/2014).



Programmes funded by the European Commission must also aim to eliminate gender inequalities, improve work-life balance and promote equality between women and men in research and innovation. The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) includes four mandatory and four recommended areas, all of which have been taken into account in this Equality and Non-discrimination Plan.

In line with our quality system, we are committed to continuous improvement and development. Everyone is responsible for the quality of their own work, and this also translates into equality and non-discrimination in encounters and activities.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	SCHEDULE	MONITORING
Ensuring equality and non-discrimination in senior management decisions	Examination of decisions in relation to the Non-Discrimination Act and the Equality Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Group • Executive Assistant 	Ongoing	Management Group

2. LEADERSHIP AND OPERATING CULTURE TO PROMOTE EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In 2021, as a communal process, we created an Ethical Code of Conduct to which the whole community is committed. The Management Group has approved the Ethical Code of Conduct. At the heart of the Ethical Code of Conduct is the idea that responsibility means caring. We lead by proactively setting the direction of the vision through objectives. Our leadership is based on shared values.

We inspire and create the conditions for success and build mutual trust through fair, open and equitable leadership. We value and respect each other as human beings. We make decisions without delay, justify them and communicate them openly. Ensuring adequate training is essential. These all contribute to promoting equality and non-discrimination.

Our open and interactive management culture promotes equality and non-discrimination: everyone has equal opportunities to make their voice heard in unit meetings or the monthly rector's information and discussion sessions, for example. By their actions and attitudes, our management and supervisors set an example in taking equality and non-discrimination issues into account.

The work of immediate supervisors is based on our values and the Ethical Code of Conduct. We treat people equally and without discrimination in everyday situations, giving everyone the right to express their views. Every member of our community has the right to high-quality supervisor work. Each supervisor is responsible for the quality of their own work.

We are building an accessible university through our leadership and operating culture. Accessibility is about enabling the inclusion of members of the university community with different characteristics, backgrounds and life situations. At its heart are attitudes that reinforce equality and non-discrimination and practices that promote them, as well as the physical accessibility of working and learning environments. During 2022, we will frame our accessibility work into an accessibility plan in line with the Ministry of Education and Culture's guidelines.

The work community development plan will replace the staff and training plan. The idea of the plan is to serve as a tool for dialogue with staff. The work community development plan touches on equality and non-discrimination aspects, particularly with regard to the needs of people of different ages and those in different life situations.



FIGURE 1. Documents of Vaasa University of Applied Sciences related to the promotion of equality and non-discrimination. Those in black are public documents, while those in red are for internal use.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	SCHEDULE	MONITORING
Promoting the accessibility of the university community	The Accessibility Plan is ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Group Supervisors HR Services Quality Manager and Quality Team 	By the end of 2022	Annually
Equal opportunities for competence development	The work community development plan is ready and guides the competence management process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Group HR Services Supervisors 	By the end of 2022	Annually
An ethical operating culture is part of everyday activities	The Ethical Code of Conduct is in place and actively guides the day-to-day activities of the units and teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Group Supervisors Staff Cooperation Development Group 	Ongoing	Annual staff survey
Strengthening language equality	Key documents and communications will also be provided in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Group Every communicator 	Ongoing	Continuous monitoring by HR Services



3. A SAFE AND DIVERSE LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

We want to be a community in which everyone is comfortable. Every member of the VAMK community is committed to following our Rules and Regulations. According to them, everyone is responsible for their part in maintaining order and internal security, as well as a comfortable working and learning atmosphere that promotes equal treatment, both on the university campus and in work and study activities outside it. Student Union VAMOK trains tutors to create an atmosphere where everyone is welcome to be part of our community. Tutors also ensure that new students are treated equally, regardless of their background.

According to our safety policy, Vaasa University of Applied Sciences aims to be one of the safest working and learning environments in Finland. Our occupational safety and health policy guides us to ensure a safe physical, mental and social working and learning environment (Figure 1). In line with our developed safety culture, everyone in the VAMK community knows their role and responsibilities in ensuring safety. To promote safety, we have created action plans and guidelines and have saved them on the staff intranet and student portal (Figure 1). Furthermore, we regularly provide the VAMK community with information on safety issues via an electronic newsletter and organise training on risk detection and reporting and other activities in order to maintain safety.

Our aim is to make our physical and virtual working and learning environments as barrier-free and accessible as possible. We conduct accessibility surveys with external experts and develop our accessibility based on suggestions for improvement. To promote equality and non-discrimination, some of the toilet facilities on our campus are available to all users regardless of gender, i.e. unisex toilets. The theme is also made visible at the campus with rainbow flags during the annual Pride human rights event. In the future, we will develop the campus to better support the reconciliation of family life and studies, as this need was highlighted in the survey for the 2021 student equality and non-discrimination plan.

We do not tolerate discrimination on the basis of age, gender, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. Harassment, inappropriate treatment and bullying are also not allowed. At Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, we have also declared that our campus is religiously and politically neutral. In addition to this, we also promote equality through open communication. We regularly monitor the occurrence of discrimination, harassment and inappropriate treatment through anonymous surveys and develop our activities based on the information we receive.

We prevent discrimination and harassment through guidance and low-threshold intervention. For intervention, we have created guidelines for our staff on inappropriate treatment and harassment. The student well-being plan, the SORA guidelines and Student Union VAMOK's harassment contact person guidelines, in turn, guide our practices to ensure student safety. As a part of its advocacy work, VAMOK monitors the number and type of harassment and discrimination cases experienced by students and notifies the Vaasa University of Applied Sciences well-being working group and management as necessary.

The Feedy feedback channel is open to all users of our website and allows them to give feedback on our activities at any time. The channel is managed by the Quality Manager, deputised by the Security, Occupational Health and Safety and Property Manager and the HR Manager. During 2021, 18 pieces of feedback on equality and non-discrimination were provided through Feedy, almost a third of which dealt with the challenges of reconciling studies and family life. All of these have been discussed with the parties concerned and their supervisors.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	SCHEDULE	MONITORING
Raising awareness of digital accessibility issues among teaching staff	Creating a position for and recruiting a digital specialist to support the skills of teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Group • Teaching and Learning Services 	2022	2023



4. A STAFF POLICY PROMOTING EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Achieving the values and goals of Vaasa University of Applied Sciences requires the well-being of the work community and a good working atmosphere. We lay the foundations for this through our equal and non-discriminatory practices. An equal and non-discriminatory VAMK acts responsibly and ethically and treats people equally in its administrative and HR practices. Our key HR practices are described and maintained to ensure equal treatment. We are constantly updating our policies to ensure equal treatment for everyone, regardless of personal characteristics. Staff guidelines are available on the intranet, and key documents are in Finnish and English.

The cornerstone of our strategy is to be your main partner in expertise, which is why it is important that we have talented professionals whose vision and experience are valued. Every member of our community is part of a team and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. One of our values is sympathy, which, in concrete terms, means trusting and respecting everyone as a person and colleague, respecting everyone's work and working time, treating everyone equally and giving everyone equal opportunities. Every member of our community has a responsibility towards the work community and is accountable for their own behaviour.

We apply equal and non-discriminatory policies in all our work and activities. We pay attention to gender equality and non-discrimination in recruitment, induction, staff management and development, pay and conditions of employment, as well as family leave and family support measures. We aim to promote equality through recruitment. In all our recruitment and hiring, we focus on hiring the most suitable person, taking into account the skill and training requirements of the job. Our goal is open, transparent and equal recruitment. The recruitment process pays attention to equality and non-discrimination in general. We strive to design the content of our job advertisements in such a way that they encourage people to apply for a job at Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, regardless of their background. We also advertise vacancies internally so that everyone has equal opportunities to apply. Between equally qualified job applicants, gender may be a factor in the selection.

We enable our employees to develop and advance their careers regardless of gender. All employees are encouraged to develop professionally. We keep our employees' skills up to date through internal training and joint events. Everyone also has the opportunity to take part in external coaching and training to improve their professional skills. With each employee, the core competences required in their job and the development of their skills are discussed as part of the annual performance appraisals.

The management, supervisors and occupational health and safety representatives have a particular responsibility to provide information on equality and non-discrimination and intervene in cases of discrimination or harassment. Any inappropriate treatment and discrimination against another person at work is strictly prohibited and will be addressed immediately. Addressing inappropriate treatment and disruptive behaviour is supported by the inappropriate treatment and harassment guidelines of Vaasa University of Applied Sciences. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that their behaviour does not cause problems in the workplace and to actively address any inappropriate treatment they encounter.

Vaasa University of Applied Sciences has an almost equal number of men and women among its staff. Men and women work in a variety of jobs, regardless of gender. We try to avoid gender-specific language in our recruitment and promote the placement of our staff in different roles, regardless of gender. Pay is not dependent on gender. Our working conditions are suitable for everyone, and we try to prevent gender discrimination by means such as using the Ethical Code of Conduct in our daily activities. Vaasa University of Applied Sciences takes the above into account especially in recruitment, hiring and employment, but also in all day-to-day activities in accordance with the Ethical Code of Conduct.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	SCHEDULE	MONITORING
Activities in accordance with the process set out in the inappropriate treatment and harassment guidelines	Developing the skills of supervisors in relation to the theme	HR Services	2022–2023	Staff survey
Integrating the multinational and multilingual community into all community activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for management and supervisors • Key documents translated into English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Services 	2022–2023	Staff survey

5. TEACHING, GUIDANCE AND LEARNING IN AN EQUAL AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY COMMUNITY

Our strategy is implemented through five areas for development, one of which is student success and another is an international work and study environment. These contribute to creating the basis for an equal and non-discriminatory community where teaching, guidance and learning take place in an accessible, responsible and sustainable way.

One element of the Ethical Code of Conduct of Vaasa University of Applied Sciences are active and motivated students. We are committed to helping students become professionals in their field and support them in taking responsibility for their studies. We provide orientation and support for our students in their daily lives. We encourage our students to foster a culture of open discussion and interactive feedback.

Where possible, we work actively to ensure equality and non-discrimination in higher education by providing diverse educational opportunities for students from different backgrounds and in different life situations. The Student Equality and Non-discrimination Plan was drawn up in December 2021 and will be accompanied by our Accessibility Plan by the end of 2022. This Equality and Non-discrimination Plan takes a position on the implementation of equality and non-discrimination in teaching and learning, particularly from the staff's point of view.

We treat our students in an equal and non-discriminatory manner and strive to include the theme of equality and non-discrimination into the syllabus, tuition and teaching materials. At Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, all students have equal opportunities to receive high-quality tuition. Our tuition, learning materials and support services promote the equal treatment of and dialogue between different groups and respect the students' individuality and special cultural characteristics. Students also have equal and non-discriminatory opportunities to complete practical training included in the studies. Furthermore, we encourage our students to conduct diverse cooperation and networking already during their studies.

According to our Degree Regulations, our language of tuition and examination is Finnish. Degree programmes in Finnish can include study units implemented in English when it is relevant for the field in question and supports the student's internationalisation. Correspondingly, degree programmes in English can include study units in Finnish to support the student's integration into Finnish working life. The language of tuition is determined in the approved syllabus of each degree programme.

Our Degree Regulations guide the non-discrimination and equality of our student evaluations. Each study unit's evaluation criteria are public and treat students equally regardless of the student's personal characteristics or the person performing the evaluation. Students also have the opportunity to receive information about the evaluation of their study performance, which is always based on the study unit's learning objectives and evaluation criteria described in the syllabus. The evaluation criteria are specified in the study unit's implementation plan, and the teacher explains the criteria to the students at the beginning of each study unit. Evaluation can be rectified through a procedure defined in the Universities of Applied Sciences Act (932/2014) and Government Decree (1129/2014).

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	SCHEDULE	MONITORING
Improving skills related to equality and non-discrimination	Increasing knowledge about equality and non-discrimination	HR Services	2022	end of 2022

6. STUDENT SELECTION, WELL-BEING AND GUIDANCE

Education at VAMK is open to all applicants with regard to the selection criteria in the fields of study, and our admissions process does not discriminate against any applicants. We comply with the national selection criteria and degree-specific common VAMK procedures recorded in the SORA guidelines and our Degree Regulations. We encourage applicants to apply equally to different fields of study and support measures that promote the status of studies offered at VAMK. Our student selection and introduction comply with the principles of openness and equality. The selection criteria are open, transparent and non-discriminatory, and we offer an introduction to all new students in accordance with the common group tutors' guidelines.

VAMK students have equal and non-discriminatory opportunities to receive guidance in the advancement of their studies. Each student receives a personal study plan (HOPS) that is updated as the studies progress. During their studies, students are able to use the guidance and counselling services provided by a group tutor, guidance counsellor or special education teacher. Furthermore, the extensive health and counselling services of the Finnish Student Health Service FSHS are at their disposal. From autumn 2022 onwards, the part-time study psychologist will be replaced by a UAS welfare officer, who will be able to respond more diversely to students' needs for low-threshold guidance and support.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	SCHEDULE	MONITORING
Developing low-threshold guidance and support	Recruitment and introduction of a UAS welfare officer	Teaching and Learning Services	2022	2023

7. PARTICIPATION AND INFLUENCE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Our Ethical Code of Conduct is based on the idea that responsibility means caring. Appreciative interaction is one aspect of the Code of Conduct. It states that we form a community with a positive, mutually supportive and inspiring culture. We encourage each other and give each other constructive feedback. Based on this, everyone has the right to participate, give feedback and contribute to the development of our activities.

Staff members are key players in our joint development. The Cooperation Development Group, in particular, is an important forum for dialogue. A staff representative sits on our board. We offer joint events for the whole staff throughout the year and regularly collect information and feedback to improve our operations. The management and supervisors are at the disposal of our staff, and we will continue to develop our open culture of interaction.

At VAMK, students are seen as equal members of the community. They have the opportunity to influence decisions concerning their studies and study conditions in all decision-making working groups and bodies of VAMK, to which the Student Union VAMOK appoints student representatives. VAMOK, for its part, welcomes all students regardless of their background, characteristics or views. The VAMOK activities are also religiously and politically independent.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	SCHEDULE	MONITORING
Increasing the number of staff members in development activities	Ensuring opportunities for staff participation when setting up new working groups or development groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management Group• Supervisors• Cooperation Development Group• Staff	2022	January 2023

8. RESPONSIBILITIES, MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

The implementation of the Equality and Non-discrimination Plan is monitored by the Cooperation Development Group, which meets regularly. Between 2021 and 2022, we have been building the foundations for our equality and non-discrimination work. The first key measure was the establishment of the Ethical Code of Conduct by involving the whole community. The second major measure was the sustainable development and responsibility programme, which contributes to promoting equality and non-discrimination. Particular attention has been paid to improving linguistic accessibility. To improve and develop leadership and the work of immediate supervisors, a joint long-term coaching programme was carried out. The aim of this programme was to strengthen shared leadership at Vaasa University of Applied Sciences. A concrete measure visible to the outside world is the introduction of an open salary policy in recruitment advertisements.

Vaasa University of Applied Sciences' plan for promoting equality and non-discrimination for the period 2020–2022 included the following development measures:

- Drawing up the VAMK Ethical Code of Conduct by using participatory methods (April–August 2021)
- Strengthening the culture of discussion and participation, e.g. regular Zoom meetings for discussion (rector, unit directors)
- Development of supervisor work (developing the role of education managers, new immediate supervisors for administrative and support services 2020–2021, management/supervisor coaching September 2021)
- Introduction of the early support model (autumn 2020)
- Flexibly enabling remote working in the future as well
- Introduction of the HR system (during 2021)
- Clarification of the work of the Cooperation Development Group
- Pay equality work in progress
- Updating the guidelines on inappropriate treatment (November–December 2020)
- Genuine development of activities based on feedback and surveys, e.g. Työyhteisöviere

The above measures have been implemented, with the exception of the introduction of the HR system and the clarification of the work of the Cooperation Development Group. However, progress is being made on these, too, and the measures will be implemented during 2022.

We assess the situation of equality in our workplace through an annual Työyhteisöviere survey in cooperation with the pension company. The situation is also monitored by keeping statistics on the distribution of women and men in different roles and by carrying out a survey of salaries and pay gaps. An equality and non-discrimination survey was carried out for staff as part of the 2022 Työyhteisöviere survey. The survey included 10 questions to assess the realisation of equality and non-discrimination in the work community. The questions were implemented with open answer fields, and respondents were instructed to answer yes

or no to the questions. In addition to this, the last question asked respondents to describe in which context they may have encountered harassment, inappropriate treatment, sexual harassment or bullying. An average of only 15.2% of the respondents to the Työyhteisöviire survey answered the questions related to the implementation of equality and non-discrimination, which means that the sample cannot be considered to be representative.

The best indicator for the realisation of equality and non-discrimination in 2022 is provided by the Työyhteisöviire survey's own statement measuring the realisation of equality and non-discrimination, and its result has developed positively since 2020, when the survey was conducted for the first time for the staff of Vaasa University of Applied Sciences. The result of the Työyhteisöviire survey statement 'All employees are treated equally regardless of age, race, gender, physical characteristics, etc.' has developed positively. The statement's score was 3.4 (satisfactory) in the 2020 survey, 3.5 (good) in 2021 and slightly higher again in 2022 at 3.6 (good).

The implementation of this Equality and Non-discrimination Plan is monitored by the Management Group and is the responsibility of the HR Services. In the future, this plan will be updated annually, during which the implementation of the objectives set will also be assessed.

APPENDIX 1:

KEY INDICATORS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

GENDER DISTRIBUTION 2022 (AS OF MAY 2022)

Women	93
Men	85

MOST COMMON JOB TITLES, PERMANENT CONTRACTS (AS OF MAY 2022)

	WOMEN	MEN
Lecturer	33	36
Principal lecturer	4	11
Laboratory engineer	0	5
Specialist	5	0

MOST COMMON JOB TITLES, PERMANENT CONTRACTS (AS OF MAY 2022)

	WOMEN	MEN
Päätoiminen tuntiopettaja	0	6
Sivutoiminen tuntiopettaja	14	8

PROPORTION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN MANAGERIAL AND SUPERVISORY POSITIONS

	WOMEN	MEN
Management	5	1
Supervisors	8	3

AVERAGE TOTAL MONTHLY PAY IN 2021

	WOMEN	MEN	DIFFERENCE
Opetushenkilöstö	5 328	5 678	6 %
Hallinto- ja tukipalvelushenkilöstö	3 609	3 358	7 %

AVERAGE PAY FOR WOMEN / AVERAGE PAY FOR MEN, AND AVERAGE PAY FOR MEN / AVERAGE PAY FOR WOMEN 2021

Average pay for women / average pay for men	98.90 %
Average pay for men / average pay for women	101.10 %



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