

## Humak University of Applied Sciences' Equality and Non-discrimination Plan for Students

### 1. Introduction

Humak University of Applied Sciences (Humak) is a strongly profiled national university of applied sciences that started operating in 1998. Humak's specialty is its strong roots and ownership in liberal adult education and operations of non-governmental organisations.

Humak's vision is to focus on developing our strategic strengths in Finland and abroad. We are strong international experts in community education, cultural management and linguistic accessibility. In Humak's strategy extending to 2030, it is stated that:

"Humak University of Applied Sciences is working on building a better world. We are creating a more equal society by developing competence that brings people together."

Earlier, the same equality and non-discrimination plan has been made for both students and staff. Since 2020, separate surveys and plans have been made for both groups.

At the start of 2021, Humak had a student body of 1,686 students. In addition to the Finnish degree programmes, Humak has a Community Educator degree in English. The equality and non-discrimination survey was made for degree students in Finnish and in English. The students were divided according to their target degree as follows:

Target degree	Number of students
Community Educator (Bachelor's degree)	915
Community Educator (Master's degree)	130
Interpreter (Bachelor's degree)	146
Interpreter (Master's degree)	20
Cultural Manager (Bachelor's degree)	422
Cultural Manager (Master's degree)	53

## 2. Starting points of equality and non-discrimination planning

Non-discrimination is regulated by the Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014). Gender equality is regulated by the Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986).

According to the Non-discrimination Act, no one is to be discriminated against based on age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, denial of reasonable accommodation, as well as an instruction or order to discriminate constitute discrimination as referred to in the Non-discrimination Act.

The purpose of the Act on Equality between Women and Men is to prevent discrimination based on gender and to promote equality between women and men.

The education provider must ensure that the educational institution has a report on the present situation regarding equality and non-discrimination, a plan for the necessary measures for promotion of non-discrimination and equality and a review of the realisation and results of earlier measures. The measures for promotion must be effective, expedient and proportionate, taking into account the educational institution's operating environment, resources and other circumstances.

The education provider and the educational institution maintained by it must reserve an opportunity for students or their representatives to be heard regarding the measures for promotion.

Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment is interfered with according to the early support approach written down by Humak's student well-being group.



### **3. Objectives of equality and non-discrimination planning**

The goal of equality and non-discrimination planning is not sameness but the creation of equal and non-discriminatory opportunities for all students.

The objectives are as follows:

- Student selections are non-discriminatory, and students are treated equally the whole time they study at Humak since applying,
- the study environment is non-discriminatory, tolerant and equal,
- Humak is an attractive place of study for students of all kinds,
- and the study conditions and arrangements are suitable for all students whenever possible and with consideration for Humak's needs

Humak's management is committed to the objectives of equality and non-discrimination, but achieving these objectives is not only a challenge for the management. Every university of applied sciences is a community of students and staff and each student and staff member's attitude and behaviour plays a substantial role in achieving the objectives.

Students feel well in an equal and non-discriminatory community. In this kind of community, the students are highly motivated and better committed to studying. Students' well-being also improves Humak's results.

The achievement of the objectives in the equality and non-discrimination plan is evaluated by the equality and non-discrimination survey. Chapters 4 and 5 compile the results of the survey conducted in the autumn of 2020. Chapter 6 presents the measures for the promotion of equality and non-discrimination that were discussed together with student representatives in the spring of 2021.

### **4. Evaluation of the realisation of equality and non-discrimination**

The realisation of equality and non-discrimination at Humak has been evaluated based on the equality and non-discrimination survey. The questions in the survey are based on the previous survey. The questions have stayed similar in content so that it is possible to monitor developments in equality and non-discrimination.



The survey was delivered to all degree students via email in October 2020 and the students were given two weeks to fill in the survey. By the given period, 310 replies to the survey were submitted and the response rate was 18.

The following questions were asked in the survey:

- How is the general atmosphere of our educational institution?
- Does our educational institution organise shared events for students and staff?
- How are participants treated in the events of the educational institution?
- How is accessibility realised at our educational institution?
- How does non-discrimination show in the educational institution's actions?
- Have there been instances of name-calling, prejudices and opinions that uphold stereotypes, or unequal treatment at our educational institution? In which contexts these have shown up? Has someone interfered with it?
- In your opinion, how well is non-discrimination realised at our educational institution?
- Have you noticed or experienced discrimination at our educational institution in the last two years? What do you assume to be the cause? Who has discriminated against you or others? In which situations did discrimination occur, how long did it continue, who took part in it, did you report it, was the situation resolved, etc.?

- How are difficulties with learning and mobility taken into consideration at our educational institution?
- Has any member of our educational institution's community harassed you in any way? In which situation have you been harassed? Does the harassment still continue? Did you report the matter? Was the situation resolved? Are you familiar with the harassment contact persons?
- How important do you find the development of different areas of non-discrimination?
- Are the activities of the Student Union HUMAKO open and equal for everyone?



- Which concrete measures should be taken to promote equality and non-discrimination at our educational institution? What should especially be taken into account?

The respondents were also asked to give their opinion on the success of the measures for promotion that were agreed on based on the previous equality and non-discrimination survey.

### **Based on the replies to the survey, various positive observations can be made:**

The general atmosphere of the educational institution is seen to support diversity and respondents feel that they are welcome in the educational institution's events. The open and equal teaching environment was praised in the survey.

The students find the development of accessibility and non-discrimination important. They also place importance on the development of equality and non-discrimination education.

As a positive observation, it can be said that based on the replies, the students find the improvement of other people's rights important, even if they have not

personally noticed or experienced possible problems, discrimination or harassment.

In the previous survey, two thirds of the respondents had not noticed or experienced discrimination or harassment at our educational institution. In the present survey, that number was 81 per cent. Positive development can be said to be significant.

### **Based on the survey, there are also areas to develop:**

As in the previous survey, the respondents found the physical spaces of our educational institution inappropriate in some ways. Some improvements are needed in the accessibility of the spaces.

In the previous survey, only a third of the respondents felt that communication at the educational institution was open, effective and at the reach of every member of our educational institution's community. In the present survey, communication is still brought up as one of the biggest areas to develop.



In the statements regarding sexual harassment, almost 99 per cent of the students say they have not experienced harassment from a member of our educational institution, aside from sexually suggestive jokes or offensive material. 8 per cent of respondents say they have heard suggestive or otherwise offensive jokes and 3 per cent of respondents have seen pictures or other materials deemed offensive.

Only 70 per cent of the respondents know they can turn to harassment contact persons if they face harassment.

The respondents found the most important development areas to be accessibility, equality and non-discrimination education and ethnic equality. These areas were also found to be the most important ones to develop in the previous survey.

### **Concrete development measures requested in the survey**

- Equality and non-discrimination education for the staff and students
- Promotion of equality and non-discrimination in communications
- Unisex toilets to all campuses
- Improvement of the accessibility of physical spaces

## **5. Evaluation of the success of the previously agreed development measures**

Based on the previous survey, certain areas were agreed to be developed to promote equality and non-discrimination at Humak.

Two thirds of the respondents could not say how the previously agreed measures had been implemented in the three-year period. This can be explained not only by the changeability of the student body in three years, but also by the state of communication on equality and non-discrimination. The average grades given by respondents were 3,5-3,9 (on the scale of 1-5). The agreed areas of development were the following, with estimates of their success in parentheses:

- Together with the staff and student representatives, we will make a guide for action for uniform processing of discrimination and bullying cases in the whole educational community (3,8)



- Together with the representatives of occupational and student healthcare, we will discuss how the performance conditions of staff members and students with weaker health and disabilities could be improved (3,5)
- Together with the staff and student representatives, we will think how issues related to non-discrimination could be discussed more with students and in the orientation of staff and management training (3,5)
- In a staff event and student groups, we will go through issues

related to non-discrimination and emphasise that discrimination or bullying of any kind is not accepted at Humak (3,9)

Considering the present state of equality and non-discrimination and the estimates on the success of previous measures for promotion, it can be said that similar development areas continue to be relevant, and that the new measures should support earlier work.

## **6. Plan for measures for promotion of equality and non-discrimination**

Students were called to discuss the results of the equality and non-discrimination survey and the necessary measures to promote equality and non-discrimination at Humak. The following points regarding equality and non-discrimination will be promoted at Humak during the years 2021-2024:

1. An equality and non-discrimination education will be organised for the staff and students.
2. Equality and non-discrimination will be promoted in communications.
3. All campuses will strive to provide unisex toilets.
4. The accessibility of physical spaces will be evaluated and improved wherever possible.

The measures will be implemented during the next three years. The next survey will contain questions that evaluate the success of the measures.

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