

Supplement to the University of Oulu Equality and Diversity Plan 2022–2023: 3.7 Appendix 7

The university's board of directors has approved the original plan at its [meeting in December 2022](#). The original plan is written in Finnish, and this is a translation of the plan. This translation has been reviewed by the authors of the document. If there is a conflict between the documents, the Finnish-language plan takes precedence.

# University of Oulu

## Accessibility Plan 2023–2024

29 November 2022

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# University of Oulu Accessibility Plan 2023–2024

The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to describe how accessibility will be developed systematically at the University of Oulu. The plan describes the university's

- state of accessibility
- development objectives
- measures for improving accessibility
- roles (responsibilities)
- metrics for measuring the state of accessibility.

Accessibility is a broad concept that includes, for example:

- the accessibility of the physical environment
- the accessibility of services (including users of assistive technology)
- the clarity of communication.

Among other things, accessibility means removing structural barriers and preventing and eliminating all harassment and discrimination from the university community.

**The promotion of accessibility promotes equality in the work environment, research activities, researcher training, studies, and teaching.**

The University of Oulu supports diversity and is committed to promoting equality and non-discrimination. The aim of our equality and diversity efforts is to further the equal and fair treatment of personnel and students, prevent discrimination, and have people address problems.

## 1. Accessibility in the work community

Our goal is to have an inclusive and accessible work community where everyone feels a sense of belonging and where there is a culture of appreciation and trust. An accessible work culture and work community embody equal rights, non-discrimination, and inclusion.

The measures of the [Equality and Diversity Plan 2022–2023](#) also steer our efforts to promote equality and non-discrimination at work. In effect since early 2022, the plan already describes how equal and non-discriminatory culture is promoted at the University of Oulu (page 12 onwards): Because this Accessibility Plan is a supplement to the Equality and Diversity Plan, the following sections are excluded as already covered:

- Leadership in promoting equality and non-discrimination
- Recruitment and career development
- Working conditions and remuneration
- Accessibility at the university
- Prevention of harassment and bullying in the work and study environment (including occupational health and safety)

A work community's diversity has many aspects: gender, age, education, language, culture, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, and sexual orientation. An accessible and inclusive work community allows every employee to work as an equal with their colleagues regardless of their characteristics, respects every individual as themselves, and includes everyone in its activities.

Diversity has a strong connection to inclusivity, which refers to the active inclusion of employees who come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse characteristics. Inclusivity allows us to promote equality and fairness in the work community.

## Promoting accessibility and inclusion in personnel policies and work culture

Equality and accessibility will be considered in all activities concerning personnel, such as management, line manager duties, decision making, and work community practices. The aim is for the personnel policy to account for accessibility and equality principles by default, thereby promoting inclusion and non-discrimination.

Community building is an important part of promoting accessibility and inclusion at the workplace. Discriminatory actions and words violate our sense of safety. We encourage everyone to participate in building a healthy, functional, and psychologically safe work community.

The university has a zero-tolerance policy on bullying and inappropriate behaviour, and a shared operating model is used to prevent and investigate incidents. The university's guidelines for prevention of bullying and harassment apply to its community as a whole, including situations involving students.

Our participation in the anti-racism week (21–27 March 2022) is part of our work to promote a non-discriminatory community free of racism. Members of the university community have been encouraged to read the [Red Cross Anti-racism Guidelines for Everyone](#) and think what they can do to further justice and inclusion individually and together as a community, and how they can best show that they reject racist behaviour and hate speech.

## Language awareness and accessibility

Accessibility and respectful interaction are the goals of a language-aware operating culture. Every member of the university community must be able to interact with the community. The purpose of language awareness and language-aware working practices is to remove obstacles for comprehension and ensure that language will not prevent an employee's inclusion in our multi-lingual work community.

The [University of Oulu language policy programme](#) clarifies how different languages are used at the university. The language policy programme promotes the inclusion of all members of the university community and the accessibility of information.

## Measures for 2023–2024

- 1. HR Services review all personnel processes from the perspective of accessibility, equality, non-discrimination, inclusivity, and diversity to make any corrections required.**
- 2. The University of Oulu organises up-to-date accessibility training for its personnel, suitable for the employees' duties.**
  - We incorporate accessibility, equality, diversity, and inclusivity topics in our personnel training and development programmes.
  - We prepare basic training on accessibility, equality, and non-discrimination as part of our general induction training and to develop the competence of our current personnel. This ensures improved knowledge and skills in accessibility, equality, and non-discrimination and contributes to better awareness and understanding of these topics across the university community.
  - **Among other things, we have already offered the following training for our personnel:**
    - Workshop series: A More Inclusive Workplace
      - Session 1: A More Inclusive Workplace - an introduction to how to support more inclusive university culture.
      - Session 2: I think all people, regardless of ethnicity feel welcome here..." – an introduction on whiteness in the workplace.
      - Session 3: "I think people of all genders and sexualities feel welcome at our university..." – an introduction on heteronormativity at the workplace.

- This series of three workshops was organised by six universities (Aalto University, and the universities of Eastern Finland, Oulu, Tampere, Turku, and Vaasa) in cooperation on the theme of “a more inclusive workplace”. The workshops started in spring 2022 in English under the title A More Inclusive Workplace and were held in Finnish in the autumn.
  - In spring 2023, we will organise a series of leadership webinars, and one of the themes is leading diversity.
  - Leading Diversity at Work will be organised on 13 February from 14.30 to 16.00 hours.
- 3. We will promote language awareness and language-aware working methods in our work community in accordance with the language policy programme.**
- We will clarify the principles of multilingual working.
  - We will ensure that our personnel understand that the policies exist to secure the inclusion of all employees and promote a sense of community.
- 4. We will draw up rules for inclusive everyday work culture, including safe space principles.**
- Every member of the university community is encouraged to create a safer space and an inclusive community for all.

## 2. Accessibility work organisation at the University of Oulu

Every employee of the University of Oulu is responsible for accessibility in their work. For example, we all produce online content one way or another, and this should be made accessible. We are still in the early stages of development, and our employees are generally unaware of accessibility and its requirements for their work. Changing our organisational culture and working methods to be accessible requires determined communication, training, and commitment.

Our accessibility work must be centrally coordinated and requires the assignment of responsibilities. The long-established University of Oulu equality and diversity committee has the primary responsibility for non-discrimination work and hence the development and monitoring of accessibility work. The university has also established a steering group for accessibility and an accessibility working group for practical efforts. We must specify the roles and tasks of these three groups and further develop their cooperation.

### Accessibility steering group

The accessibility steering group is tasked with directing the development of accessibility at the University of Oulu and monitoring its progress. The vice rector of education is the chair of the accessibility steering group, and they report on the general situation of accessibility to the rest of senior management.

The ultimate purpose of the accessibility steering group is to ensure that the diversity of people is accounted for at the University of Oulu. At the start, the accessibility steering group is focused on improving the accessibility of digital services, as their accessibility has become increasingly vital due to the digitalisation – accessibility is therefore also at the heart of the university’s strategy.

### Accessibility working group

The working group includes experts from different fields who provide the perspective of their position and sphere of activity. The working group promotes accessibility knowledge, skills, and vision in their spheres of activity. The expert members are available for the accessibility steering group’s meetings as presenters or in other specialist roles. All members of the working group participate in the group in addition to their own work. The working group coordinates the university’s accessibility planning efforts.

## Measures

- The equality and diversity committee, accessibility steering group, and accessibility working group will discuss and specify their roles, tasks, and responsibilities together in spring 2023. A description of the result will be posted on the Patio intranet.

### 3. Accessibility of student admission

Multiple methods are used to select students: admission can be based on school certificates, entrance exams, open studies, or success in competitions. Applicants can apply directly to the master's studies of every programme – this helps applicants with a bachelor's degree get on track quickly.

New options for qualifying open studies have been added to many programmes in recent years, and a generally medium-sized intake has been specified for them. The credit requirement for open studies applicants is also moderate and can be completed before the spring joint application period. Open studies can be completed in any Finnish higher education institution, not just the University of Oulu.

We have a quota for first-time applicants, but applicants with previously completed university degrees can also qualify for admission.

Our aim is to ensure that education is attainable from a variety of backgrounds.

The measure is to review the selection methods as a whole and potentially add missing methods such as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). During development, it needs to be assessed how intake is distributed between the different selection methods. The selection methods are reviewed separately and as a whole on the national level in the admission development project, for example, but also locally at the University of Oulu as part of our own development work.

The university admission development project was started in the spring 2022 on the initiative of Universities Finland's (UNIFI) vice rectors of education. All Finnish universities are participating in the project, and it is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The project is set to continue until the end of 2025. The purpose of the project is to develop selection by school certificate and entrance exam based on scientific fact and in cooperation with different fields of study and stakeholders. The University of Oulu is committed to the project's objectives and actively participates in national cooperation. The chosen metric is the volume of intake for each selection method.

#### Diversity in admission channels

Multiple admission channels are used for student selection to enable different avenues for different groups of applicants. The number of admission channels is kept comprehensible and moderate, but, in addition to joint applications, admission by transfer is offered for students who wish to change their field, for example. Previously, transfers were only available in the spring, but they are now available in the autumn as well.

#### Communication of admissions

The Opintopolku.fi (studyinfo.fi) website is used to provide applicants with information well in advance regarding courses, programmes, application processes, how to apply, selection criteria, entrance exams, and admissions. Information and instructions for applicants and students about courses and programmes, and potential jobs after graduation are available on the University of Oulu website. The university's website also includes information about the university in general and its faculties and facilities.

The available courses and programmes use competence goals to outline the education's content and concrete examples to illustrate the potential job opportunities for graduates.

The website's text content has been made accessible and the applicant instructions have been clarified. More applicant service channels have been added (a chat bot, for example) to provide answers anywhere, anytime.

The field-specific restrictions for university admissions are collected on the Yliopistovalinnat.fi website, which is a major upgrade, especially in combination with the field-specific restrictions having been made clearer and more specific.

### International studies' language requirements in student selection

The University of Oulu follows the language proficiency requirements agreed upon by Finland's universities: multiple language tests and testing methods are accepted. The university also has alternative methods for testing language proficiency. Multiple online tests have also been added to the language proficiency testing methods, so applicants need not travel to another country for just at test, for example.

### Quota for Sami speakers

Some courses and programmes have a quota reserved for Sami speakers. The aim of the quota is to safeguard this linguistic minority's opportunities for education. In practice, very few applicants meet the quota's criteria, and they are hence often not fully utilised.

### Joint admission and entrance exams

Many fields engage in cross-university collaboration for admissions. Some of the courses and programmes included in the joint application system share the same criteria. The aim is to allow the same entrance exam to qualify applicants for multiple universities.

An application form is used for both the digital and paper entrance exam: the applicant chooses the desired location of the exam from the options on the form. The aim is to allow the applicant to take the entrance exam at their nearest university instead of having to travel further. This also means that the applicant will know the time and place of the entrance exam well in advance.

The fields participating in the joint application system have a dedicated website with information about the universities, courses, programmes, applications, entrance exams, studies, and working life. Applicants are provided with detailed information about the education and field that they are interested in pursuing.

Applicants can apply for individual entrance exam arrangements. Applicants are provided with information about individual arrangements, how to apply for them, and how they work in the entrance exam well in advance. For example, individuals may be provided with extra time, a calm space, or the option to use assistive devices for the entrance exam. Applicants are informed of the approved individual arrangements before the entrance exam.

### Objectives and measures for 2023–2024

1. Streamline transfers between fields and reduce applicants seeking a new right to study from the joint application process. This is done in order to offer more opportunities for students seeking their first university admission, as well as provide information to those who have accepted a place in a programme in the same field earlier, who could have applied in the transfer application process.
  - Measure: Review the actual intake of the reformed transfer admission process and potentially improve the visibility of the autumn transfer admissions.
  - Metric: Applicant statistics. How many accepted their admission by transfer and how many applicants were admitted for the same education from both the transfer and the joint application process, for example.



2. Ensure that instructions are easy to read to reduce the need for enquiries. Offer a clear service package.
  - Measure: Participate actively in national work to describe the education on offer and the field-specific restrictions.
  - Measure: Improve the information provided to applicants on the university's website and the Studyinfo service system.
  - Metric: Website visitor counts and volume of contacts.
3. Provide a clear selection of language proficiency testing methods to allow applicants to select their preferred method.
  - Measure: Active monitoring of language proficiency testing methods and participating in national development.
  - Metric: Monitoring of applicant behaviour and statistics regarding the use of different language proficiency testing methods.
4. Increase awareness of the quota for Sami speakers.
  - Measure: Increase communication about the quota for Sami speakers to applicants.
  - Metric: Number of quota applicants and admitted students.

## 4. Accessibility of studies

Diversity in teaching and assessment methods and an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance for different learners enable inclusion and non-discrimination for students.

University students face many learning challenges, including dyslexia and specific mathematical learning difficulties. Special arrangements must be provided for students who have a certified disorder or learning difficulties. The conveyance of information, sufficient extra time for reading and writing, learning the use of studying strategies and digital tools are essential for students. Accessibility is improved by Celia audiobooks, records, advance notes, peer support, book clubs, and pair and group examinations. Special study arrangements require trust in the interaction between the teacher and the student as well as a shared decision of individual support. The support must be planned carefully according to the student's special needs.

### Diverse assessment methods improve accessibility.

Much has been done in recent years at the University of Oulu to diversify assessment methods. Assessment data benefits both students and teachers. Students can demonstrate their knowledge with timed learning assignments, home exams, and solo, pair, and group assignments, for example. Teachers use diverse assessment methods, including the opportunities of digital tools and the course platform.

The diversity of teaching and assessment methods ensures that every student can find their own preferred method for their situation to prove their knowledge in accordance with the faculty's or university's guidelines. Teachers have been instructed to use assessment methods and criteria that acknowledge individual needs and allow students to demonstrate their knowledge.

### Counselling services: Study psychologists and student and career counselling

All counselling services are available to all enrolled students of both the University of Oulu and the Oulu University of Applied Sciences.

These services are only unavailable to open university students. Counselling is primarily offered in Finnish and English, and it can take the form of face-to-face counselling on campus or remote counselling in Microsoft Teams or by phone. The Career Centre provides career counselling services in Finnish and English.

### Study psychologists provide individual counselling

Students can book an individual appointment with a study psychologist using the [appointment booking form](#) on the [study counselling services page](#). The individual counselling provided by the psychologists is aimed at analysing the student's situation, developing their studying skills, enhancing their agency, finding new ways of thinking and acting, and improving their ability to study. Students are entitled to 1–5 counselling sessions per academic year, and one session is about 45 minutes. The number of sessions is negotiated with the student.

The individual counselling process starts with an initial analysis and the setting of an objective for the counselling with the student. The counselling is redirected, if necessary. The starting point for counselling is that the student knows their situation the best. The counselling methods include discussion, psychological education, exercises, and homework. For example, individual counselling may include discussions of how to schedule studies and what studying techniques to use in light of the student's difficulties, as well as demonstrations of different digital studying tools.

If the student faces multiple difficulties and suffers from a diminished ability to function, the psychologist may, with the student's permission, organise a meeting, online or on campus with someone from the support network for higher education students. The network includes the University of Oulu, OAMK, YTHS, Kela, social services, and Byströmin Ohjaamo. Collaboration is also possible with the university's career counsellors and faculty representatives or the OAMK student counsellors.

### Individual study and career counselling is tailored to the student's needs

Booking an appointment works the same way as with study counselling – students use the [appointment booking form](#) and describe their needs. The counsellor organises the appointment with the student. The service is available to undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University of Oulu. OMAK students may also request career counselling by emailing [opiskeluntuki@oulu.fi](mailto:opiskeluntuki@oulu.fi).

Career counselling is based on the individual's needs, questions, and own understanding of their strengths, skills, values, interests, objectives, and wishes regarding employment, for example – without forgetting other factors that affect the student's life. Insights are gained in interaction with the counsellor and through different assignments. The [Career Centre](#) also provides drop-in counselling and job interview and elevator speech coaching. In addition, the university arranges recruitment events in cooperation with companies to support job seeking and employment.

Study counselling is tailored to the student's needs. Typically, the student's working methods and studying, time management, and planning skills are discussed. Counselling uses questions and observations to find better studying solutions for the student. Another aim is to improve the student's self-esteem as a student. Both study and career counselling also include immutable factors (family situation, health and welfare, etc.) that cannot be ignored when planning the student's studies and future. The counselling includes discussion of what is possible and on what conditions in certain situations, including special learning difficulties.

### Individual study arrangement recommendations

University of Oulu students may apply for a recommendation on individual study arrangements for health reasons. Valid grounds include sensory disabilities (hearing, vision, etc.), dyslexia, depression, panic disorder, and ADHD, for example. The individual study arrangements recommendations are issued by study psychologists. The student and psychologist review what arrangements the student may need. The student

must prove their need for individual study arrangements with a doctor's statement or other specialist certificate. For more information on individual study arrangements, see the [Accessibility in Studies](#) page.

We collect statistics of individualised study arrangements:

- academic year 2017–2018: 61
- academic year 2018–2019: 66
- academic year 2019–2020: 72
- academic year 2020–2021: 78
- academic year 2021–2022: 123

The study psychologist issues the recommendation on individual study arrangements but is not responsible for its execution. The University of Oulu has no separate budget for covering accessibility costs for studies. There are also no instructions on how to allocate the costs.

Disabled students who are residents of Oulu are eligible to receive for personal assistance from the city: [Services for Disabled People | City of Oulu \(ouka.fi\)](#)

Finnish citizens are eligible to receive assistive devices and interpreting services from Kela: [Assistive devices | Kela](#)

### Student groups, workshops, and Moodle courses organised by Counselling Services

Both study psychologists and student and career counsellors organise groups and workshops for students. Students sign up for the groups by email or using a link. The groups and workshops are provided in Finnish and English both remotely and on campus. Examples of groups and workshops: *Opiskelutaitoryhmä ADHD-diagnoosin saaneille opiskelijoille*, *Monialainen opinnäytetyöryhmä*, the Study Together group, and the *Aloittamisen vaikeus* and *Fokusta opiskeluun* workshops. The *Tulevaisuutta rakentamassa* group for future planning and *Unelma* workshop were also organised by study psychologists and career counsellors. All groups are suitable for special needs students and those at risk of dropping out.

In Moodle, study psychologists have created the *Opiskelutaidot* course for improving studying skills and the *Hyväksyntää arkeen* course for improving psychological flexibility and stress management skills. The same courses are available in English as Study Skills and Everyday Acceptance, respectively. Students can sign up for the courses and complete the assignments at their own pace. The students are given personal feedback by a study psychologist for every assignment they complete. The illustrations of the *Hyväksyntää arkeen/Everyday Acceptance* course deliberately emphasise diversity and non-discrimination.

For more information about groups, workshops, and Moodle courses, see the Counselling Services' [groups and workshops page](#).

Career counselling and support for the transition to employment have sometimes been integrated into thesis group work. A common obstruction for thesis work is the lack of vision for life after studies. The aim is to give the students hope and support their job seeking. The group's students are tasked with identifying the skills they build when writing their thesis and in their studies in general that can be useful for employment.

A series of three workshops, [Work ready \(Erotu työnhaussa\)](#), is organised for all students in Finnish and English. These workshops teach the students how to put their knowledge and skills into words and build their personal brand. The students are advised on how to make a CV, job application, and a LinkedIn page.

The Pathways to Business project includes groups for students to build their working life skills and explore the stages of entrepreneurship and its possibilities as a career option.

Doctoral candidates can sign up for the Employability and working life skills course. The course is taught in English. The ExpertZones project aims to improve the psychological health, knowledge, skills, and employment prospects of the university's doctoral candidates. The project also helps doctoral candidates' network with the local businesses and other organisations.

### Training of personnel on individual study arrangements and accessible studies

Counselling Services have provided training for the university's personnel on individual study arrangements and accessibility:

- Training, *individual study arrangements and accessibility in studies*. The training was recorded. (Audio available in Finnish only, subtitles available also in English).
- Training, *Different ways to learn* (part of university pedagogy studies, available in Finnish and English).
- *Individual study arrangements*, part of the **Basics for Tutor Teacher** course in Moodle.
- Event, *Erilaiset opiskelijat, yksilölliset opintojärjestelyt*. For tutor teachers.
- Faculty visits. Part of the Hyvis project, include the topics of individual study arrangements and accessibility.
- Patio intranet bulletin, *Individual study arrangements are the student's right and the university's obligation*.

The purpose of the training is to inform the personnel of individual study arrangements and offer the opportunity to discuss them. The training also includes the broader view of accessibility in teaching: using alternative studying methods to make teaching more accessible by default, thereby reducing the need for individual study arrangements. Other accessibility training is also available and planned for personnel, including attitude training (see section Accessibility in the Work Community).

### Measures for 2023–2024

#### 1. New Moodle courses

- Counselling Services will create a career planning course for students. The course is designed to be integrated into a degree programme in the form of optional studies or orientation studies, for example.
- Counselling Services will modify the tutor teacher forum in Moodle into an open data bank for personnel. Based on data collected from faculty visits and a previous survey of tutor teachers and study planners, the content is tailored according to user needs. For example, information has been requested on learning difficulties, individual study arrangements, and how to refer students with mental health issues to appropriate care.

#### 2. Measures aimed at personnel

- Counselling Services aims to provide university personnel with information, training, and opportunities for discussing individual study arrangements and accessibility in studies.
- The purpose is to continue the existing good practices: study psychologists will continue to train tutor teachers and teachers completing their university pedagogy studies on accessibility in studies and individual study arrangements.
- The recording of the *Yksilölliset opintojärjestelyt ja saavutettavuus opinnoissa* training is made freely available to personnel. The recording has Finnish subtitles and will be subtitled in English as well.
- Counselling Services maintains the *Yksilölliset opintojärjestelyt* (individual study arrangements) page on the personnel's Patio intranet in both Finnish and English
- Counselling Services participate in faculty events aimed at personnel. One topic will be individual study arrangements and accessibility in studies.
- Counselling Services will pilot counselling training for all personnel twice a year. The dates will be decided well in advance to allow maximum attendance.

- Tutor teacher training provides examples, tips, and methods for supporting students with issues related to working life. For example, the topics include employment, traineeships, choice of additional subjects, career planning in general, and job seeking. In addition, the tutor teachers' guidance on how to identify skills and put them to words is reinforced throughout the study path.

### 3. DigiLukiseula (available only in Finnish)

- The University of Oulu will adopt the Niilo Mäki Institute's DigiLukiseula assessment method in the autumn term of 2022. DigiLukiseula is available three times a year, and it is available only in Finnish. The implementation of DigiLukiseula is organised by a specially trained planner from Counselling Services. DigiLukiseula is available to students who suspect they may have dyslexia or who have never been tested for it. Students who are assessed to require further testing will be directed to the FSHS. These arrangements have been coordinated with the FSHS.

### 4. Issuing individual study arrangement recommendations

- In the autumn term of 2022, study psychologists have organised drop-in reception hours for students to meet a psychologist for an individual study arrangement recommendation without an appointment. The aim is to sufficiently establish and develop this operating model to make it the primary channel for issuing the recommendations.
- In addition to the study psychologists, the planner in charge of DigiLukiseula will issue individual study arrangement recommendations from 2023 onwards for students with dyslexia.

### 5. Statistics development

- The Counselling Services will move from OhjausApp to compiling internal statistics in Microsoft Excel. The practices of Excel statistics will be improved and harmonised. The following will be recorded for every counselling session:
  - Month
  - Type of counselling (study psychologist, career counselling or uncancelled appointment)
  - Institution (University of Oulu or OAMK)
  - Unit/faculty
  - Study programme
  - Training programme or degree programme/main subject (major)
  - Starting year
  - Credits
  - Counselling appointment number
  - Reason for counselling (up to three topics)
- Statistics of the groups and workshops organised by Counselling Services will be recorded in Excel files. The following will be recorded for groups: date, group name, implementation (remote or on campus), number of meetings, number of registered members, and the number of participants from the University of Oulu and OMAK present at each meeting.
- The number of participants in tutor teacher Moodle courses is recorded in Excel files.
- The number of students taking the DigiLukiseula assessment and directed to FSHS for further examination is recorded in Excel files. The year students' starting year is also recorded.

## 5. Accessibility of international mobility

The University of Oulu aims to support the participation of all students in international mobility programmes. The university informs its students of the opportunities presented by the mobility programmes. The university provides grants for its students: there are UniOulu grant opportunities and grants in accordance with the

Erasmus+ programme and other programmes (Link: [Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2021 \(Version 3\) | Erasmus+ \(europa.eu\)](#)).

The services offered to exchange students coming to Finland are always decided on an individual basis by the university. Support is available for administrative matters. Support personnel for disabled students is unfortunately not available. The university works with Pohjois-Suomen Opiskelija-asuntosäätiö (PSOAS) to provide affordable and accessible housing for as many exchange students as possible.

When it applied for the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2020, the University of Oulu committed fully to respecting the programme's principles of non-discrimination, transparency, and inclusion and in all the mobilities, ensuring equal opportunities for current and future students with special consideration given to the inclusion of disadvantaged students. Students' disadvantages may arise from physical or psychological illnesses, children, employment, professional athletic careers, or the underrepresentation of their group. Our internal selection processes take non-discrimination, inclusion, merits, and motivation into account.

The number of disabled exchange students is not monitored separately. Students may announce their special needs to the university, but it is not required. The satisfaction of international students is measured annually with the International Student Barometer (ISB) survey. The survey includes feedback about the university's services, studies, and leisure activities.

Its purpose is to discover services required by exchange students, actively communicate opportunities, and ensure the continuous development of operations based on feedback.

## 6. Accessibility of shared services

### Library

The university library aims to make its services and online content easily approachable and accessible, as well as remove obstacles from the library facilities to make them accessible to all customers.

#### Physical accessibility of facilities

The accessibility of the library's locations varies due to the age of the buildings, among other factors. The accessibility of different service points is described on the [accessible services](#) page. The library's customer service helps customers with disabilities use the library's collections and facilities. The library offers study spaces for everyone: quiet workspaces, modifiable group spaces, and workstations. The workspaces are described on the [facilities and equipment](#) page.

#### Acquisition and description of information resources

The library primarily acquires electronic materials because they offer better accessibility than printed materials. For example, electronic text can typically be zoomed or converted to speech with screen reader software. Both printed and electronic versions of coursebooks are acquired whenever possible. The customer's wishes are considered when choosing the format.

The library aims to acquire its electronic materials in accessible formats. The accessibility of e-books may be limited by their publishing format or copy protection. After Directive (EU) 2019/882 on the accessibility requirements for products and services enters into force, the supply of accessible electronic materials will improve in Europe. The Directive is due to be implemented in 2025.

The method for accessing the content of acquired materials is described in the database according to national recommendations, making the data available to users. It must be noted that the information retrieval systems do not yet fully support the use of accessibility data in searches.

## Customer communication, guidance, and teaching

The library communicates in multiple channels in two languages, which offers good coverage of the different needs of different customer groups. The study materials and instructions produced by the library for information searches and publishing, for example, are designed to be clear visually and linguistically and accessible on different terminals and using different assistive devices. The instructional videos include both spoken narration and subtitles.

Consideration is afforded to different students and reading methods during guidance. How to listen to accessible electronic materials and adjust the reading view to individual needs are covered in the library introduction sessions for new students. The accessibility features of databases and e-book services will be communicated by presenting the information on the [e-books page](#).

## Borrowing services for people with print disabilities

The library uses all its communication channels to advertise the Celia e-book service for print-disabled readers. Celia provides audio versions of coursebooks for print-disabled university students studying in Finland. Students can register for the Celia online service at all library service points. Registering requires an introductory interview, which can also be carried out remotely.

Celia primarily offers audio versions of books written in Finnish. Books written in English are available from the international Bookshare service. The Bookshare service is free to use for Celia's registered university customers. The library has prepared a [guide for using Celia and Bookshare](#).

## Publishing

For now, the back-end system of the University of Oulu publication repository Jultika does not support EPUB publishing, but this will be remedied in future when the system is modernised. The library promotes the accessibility of the university's publications by including accessibility in the instructions for authors. [The Laturi guide](#) for thesis authors includes information about creating accessible files. In future, the library's instructions, model templates, and contract templates for publication series will account for accessibility.

## Improving the accessibility knowledge and skills of library personnel

Many duties require the library personnel to apply accessibility know-how. Both general accessibility training and training customised for library personnel on different topics will be required for the personnel to be able to promote accessibility and non-discrimination in the course of their work.

## Library accessibility measures for 2023–2024

1. The library will promote the Celia audiobook service using effective communication and monitor its progress using the library customer survey and Celia's statistics.
2. The library will ensure that its instructions and online content are accessible and comprehensible.
  - An accessible Microsoft Word template, contract template, and updated instructions will be prepared in 2023 for authors publishing in the Oulu study materials series. The same measures will be taken with the Acta dissertation series but over a longer period.
  - The clarity of text content on the library's website will be reviewed.
  - The accessibility of the library's study materials will be reviewed.
3. The library will list the accessibility features of primary information resources in a guide.
4. The library's personnel will improve their knowledge of accessibility by participating in accessibility training.

## UniMove sports and exercise services

The services of UniMove are priced to be affordable so that money is not obstacle for using the service. UniMove provides its services in downtown Oulu and in Linnanmaa to keep travel times moderate. Instructed

classes and team sports shifts are primarily held in the afternoon and evening between 16.00 and 21.00. Partner services are available according to their respective business hours. The UniMove exercise and sports calendar is planned to provide a variety of activities at different times and on different days of the week.

UniMove has no facilities of its own – activities are organised in facilities owned and operated by other parties. Most locations used by UniMove are accessible, but not all. For example, Teacher training schools' entrances have no wheelchair ramps. The UniMove calendar includes a description for every class and team sports shift that covers its content and the required equipment. The majority of classes allow the adjustment of activities according to the individual's level of skill and fitness. The instructors are trained professionals and can separate the class, if required. UniMove does not provide its own adapted physical activity (APA) services. The city of Oulu organises APA groups for its residents and provides suitable sports equipment. Due to a lack of resources, UniMove cannot offer individual exercise counselling to support the welfare of its customers. Service information is available on the UniMove website in both Finnish and English, and customer service and instruction are provided in both languages. UniMove's social media channels are provided in Finnish. UniMove's website was overhauled in the autumn of 2022. The new website was commissioned to be accessible, and although its digital accessibility is much improved over the old version, we have discovered some problems.

### Objectives and measures

1. Improve the accessibility of the website.
  - Measure: The system vendor will assess the accessibility of the website to update the accessibility statement and prepare a plan for corrections. The parties responsible are WiseNetwork Oy and the exercise planners.
2. The objective is to make UniMove sports and exercise services users aware of which of its locations are fully accessible.
  - Measure: Add notes regarding accessibility on the UniMove website in the service location descriptions. The party responsible is the exercise planners.
3. The objective is to make UniMove sports and exercise services customers aware of what to do if they experience bullying or harassment when using said services.
  - Measure: Add instructions to the website. The party responsible is the exercise planners.
4. The objective is to promote equal participation in sports and exercise services.
  - Measure: Acquire the necessary sports equipment such as badminton rackets and shuttlecocks, floorball sticks and balls, heart rate monitors, and winter sports gear. Investigate possible cooperation in terms of borrowing with the library, for example. Investigate additional resources for starting exercise counselling. The purpose of exercise counselling would be to encourage passive, unhealthy students to exercise and increase their exercise ability and knowledge. The party responsible is the exercise planners.

### Accessibility of physical premises at the University of Oulu campuses

On an accessible campus, there are no such obstacles, which prevent a person in a wheelchair from accessing an area that they otherwise have the right to use, for example. This means providing lifts, ramps, and electric doors, for example, to allow access without outside help. Furthermore, accessibility on campuses means consideration for diversity, such as providing suitable toilet and changing room options for all. The accessibility of premises also includes equipping lecture rooms and halls with wireless sound equipment for people who use hearing aids.



## Current accessibility of campuses

The University of Oulu campuses and their buildings were built before modern regulations, and therefore their accessibility is lacking. Repairs and upgrades have been made to the buildings over time. The accessibility of buildings is improved whenever they are renovated. Wheelchair access is not possible in some teaching spaces, and not all entrances allow independent movement for wheelchair users. There are not enough wheelchair ramps. The overall picture of buildings' accessibility is still inadequate.

Accessible entrances, toilets and parking are marked on campus maps. The same markings can be found in the campus map mobile app.

## Campus maps

- [Linnanmaa campus map \(PDF\)](#)
- [Kontinkangas campus map \(PDF\)](#)

**Objective:** When renovated, the campus toilets will be made unisex.

About one third (36 toilets) have already been made unisex so that no one has to gender themselves when they need to use the toilet. As larger renovations are started, more toilets will be made gender-neutral. (Page 33 of the University of Oulu Equality and Diversity Plan 2022–2023.)

**Metric:** proportion of unisex toilets

**Objective:** Expand support for hearing aids

The operation of all existing hearing loops was tested in 2022. All large lecture halls in the Linnanmaa and Kontinkangas campuses now have functioning and tested hearing loops. Smaller lecture rooms have no hearing loops, but portable audio guide systems can be borrowed from the Oamk reception at the Linnanmaa campus for use anywhere on the campuses. A total of 20 audio guide systems are available. In spring 2023, the AV personnel of ICT Services will test a new system connected to the ceiling microphone to deliver sound to users' headphones through their phone. Once the ICT Services have found a working system, they will install one in all spaces without hearing loops but equipped with a ceiling microphone by the end of 2024.

**Metric:** The proportion of spaces with hearing loops or similar systems and the number of borrowable portable audio guide systems in proportion to the teaching spaces with non-accessible listening environments.

**Other development objectives to set in 2023 based on the results of the physical premises accessibility survey**

For the development objectives of spaces to be defined and prioritised, their problems must first be known. A survey of physical premises accessibility is therefore required.

Campus Services are currently (autumn 2022) organising competitive tendering for a physical accessibility survey of the campuses. The survey will be carried out in spring 2023. The physical accessibility improvement plan will be updated to be part of this Accessibility Plan once the survey results become available. The current survey will be limited to those campus spaces that are available to students: public spaces and teaching spaces. Responsibility: Campus Services

**Objective:** Accessibility is considered in planning and implementation of repairs and renovations  
The accessibility perspective is taken into account in all repair and renovation tasks in the University's facilities.  
Responsibility: The equality and diversity committee, campus services.

(Page 18 of the University of Oulu Equality and Diversity Plan 2022–2023.)

**Metric:** The portion of accessible spaces of all spaces (quantity).

## Quiet workspaces

The university's campuses include diverse spaces for working, including "quiet workspaces". Some quiet workspaces include adjustable desks. The 2023 physical premises accessibility survey will provide a better picture of the situation.

## Digital accessibility of online services

The University of Oulu provides multiple digital services. Some are public, some are available to students and personnel, and some are only for personnel. Digital accessibility is mandated by the Act on the Provision of Digital Services, among other laws.

As stated earlier, the university provides multiple online services, a small number of which are maintained by the university and a growing number of which have been acquired as cloud services where the university mainly maintains the content. Regardless of who is responsible for technical maintenance and user interfaces, the university is responsible for the accessibility of the services it provides for its students and personnel.

The importance of digital service accessibility has increased due to the surge in teleworking and distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Accessibility work is part of every University of Oulu employee's duties and requires commitment and an understanding of accessibility.

## Ensuring accessibility in the procurement of digital services

At the University of Oulu, the ensuring of accessibility has been described as part of the system procurement process controlled by ICT Services. The Project Management Office (PMO) provides a tool for information system and licence purchasing that guides the purchaser in ensuring digital accessibility, among other things. This is part of quality assurance for the university's digital service procurement (websites, mobile apps, cloud service licences, digital client terminals, etc.). The tool's impact assessment includes a dedicated section for digital accessibility. It reminds the user to prepare the accessibility statement and requires them to investigate if the service's default tools meet the accessibility criteria.

The current tool mainly reminds the user to ensure accessibility at the procurement stage. One identified development objective is to collect the information of all procured systems and services in one place to make the following information available for all services:

1. Accessibility assessment
  - Latest assessment: Date and assessment author: [internal/hired expert]
  - Link to the accessibility report
2. Accessibility statement
  - Latest assessment: Date and party responsible at the university
  - Link to the accessibility statement
3. Accessibility correction plan
  - Link to the correction plan

The reporting should at least provide easy access to assessments, statements, and repair plans and allow the monitoring of accessibility statement age, as every statement should always be less than a year old. This development objective requires a separate budget and cannot be realised during this budget period, but the need is apparent, and the development proposal has been made. At this point in time, the accessibility statements are monitored manually.

## Accessibility feedback processing and responses to feedback

Accessibility statements must include a feedback channel, and a response must be issued to feedback within 14 days. The University of Oulu currently uses the service management system to send feedback to the team responsible for each service. The current service management system has no reporting capability for easily

monitoring the volume of feedback regarding accessibility and whether the teams responsible have responded to feedback within 14 days.

The university is in the process of procuring a new service management system. Its commissioning project is set to have multiple stages and start in autumn 2023. Each service unit will start using the system in turn. We aim to build an accessibility feedback process into the service management system in 2024 so that it can provide reports of accessibility feedback volume by system or service. The reports can also be used to monitor that the feedback has received a response within 14 days.

Improvements are still required for digital services at the University of Oulu

The accessibility steering group has listed the services that are most important to the university and most critical for the users:

- Peppi – student information system (study guide and student’s and teacher’s virtual desktops)
- Moodle – e-learning environment
- Exam – exam system
- Oulu.fi – the university’s public website
- JOY, the university of continuous learning, (*Jatkuvan oppimisen yliopisto*) – course search
- Patio – intranet

*Peppi – student information system (study guide and student and teacher dashboards)*

The Peppi Consortium is responsible for the accessibility of the Peppi user interface. The service’s accessibility has been evaluated by an expert. The Peppi Consortium is currently extensively remedying the accessibility issues found in the student’s virtual desktop. The University of Oulu is responsible for

- Maintaining its accessibility statements related to the Peppi system
- Receiving feedback regarding accessibility and responding to said feedback.
  - If the feedback concerns a problem with accessibility that is not included in the accessibility statement, the university must inform the Peppi Consortium.
- The accessibility of content uploaded to the service. Standard forms are used to input the majority of content (text and selections), but in some cases, file attachments can be uploaded to the service. The University of Oulu is responsible for the accessibility of the attachments uploaded by its personnel.

*Moodle – e-learning environment*

Moodle is open-source software, and the accessibility of its user interface is the hands of its developer community. The University of Oulu is responsible for

- Evaluating and monitoring the service’s accessibility.
  - Making accessible themes and colours available to the extent allowed by settings.
- Maintaining the university’s accessibility statement for Moodle.
- Receiving feedback regarding accessibility and responding to said feedback.
  - If the feedback concerns a problem with user interface accessibility that is not included in the accessibility statement, the university must do one of the following:
    - a. Correct the problem, if possible.
    - b. Instruct its users to avoid the function or task with the accessibility problem or offer an accessible alternative.
    - c. Inform the Moodle developer community of the problem with the UI.

- The accessibility of the content uploaded to the service: The University of Oulu is responsible for the accessibility of content produced by its personnel. However, the accessibility of the content is not monitored systematically, there is a lot of it, and it changes. Some content is excluded from the accessibility requirements, but the accessibility of all content can be improved by improving accessibility capabilities.

#### *Exam system*

Exam is a shared system used by Finnish higher education institutions. The accessibility of its user interface is the responsibility of the Exam Consortium led by CSC. The University of Oulu is responsible for

- Maintaining the university's accessibility statement for Exam.
- Receiving feedback regarding accessibility and responding to said feedback.
  - The University of Oulu is responsible for the accessibility of content produced by its personnel. Problems must be corrected in-house, if possible.
  - If feedback concerns a problem with user interface (UI) accessibility that is not included in the accessibility statement, the university must inform the Exam Consortium of the UI level problem.

#### *Patio, public website and JOY*

The Patio intranet, Oulu.fi online services, and the course search for continuous learning (JOY) provided as part of the online services are tailor-made solutions based on the Drupal content management system. The development is coordinated by the Communications, marketing and community relations unit and Extension School (for continuous learning). According to the contract (from 23 May 2022), the technical and visual accessibility related to the online services are the responsibility of the service provider. In the contract, the service provider has agreed to deliver an expert review of the realisation of technical and visual accessibility, along with a plan to remedy any defects.

The University of Oulu is responsible for

- Evaluating and monitoring the services accessibility.
- Maintaining the accessibility statement for the Patio intranet and the Oulu.fi online services.
- Receiving feedback regarding accessibility and responding to feedback.
  - If the feedback concerns a problem with user interface accessibility that is not included in the accessibility statement, the university must do one of the following:
    - Instruct its users to avoid the function or task with the accessibility problem or offer an accessible alternative.
    - Inform the service provider of the problem about the user interface.
- The accessibility of the content updated to the service: The University of Oulu is responsible for the accessibility of content produced by its personnel. However, the accessibility of the content cannot be monitored systematically, the amount of the content is large, and it changes. Some content is excluded from the accessibility requirements, but the accessibility of the content can be improved by improving accessibility capabilities.

The service provider has audited the online services: the Patio intranet was audited for accessibility in 2021 and issues were fixed in 2022 based on the audit. The University of Oulu reviewed the accessibility of the Oulu.fi online service in May 2022 (excluding attachments linked to the online service). The evaluation focused on the user interface, typography, page templates and other recurring elements; all the individual pages (numbering in the thousands) or the elements (can be dozens, used in different ways in each individual pages)

were not included. The audit also excluded the online service's maintenance mode and update views. Both the desktop and mobile version of the web service were evaluated.

Neither online service complies with accessibility requirements for technical implementation or content production – the AA level of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 requires complete fulfilment of the criteria to deem the website to be in compliance with the accessibility requirements. The online services' content production is distributed to the units responsible for the substance, and the accessibility requirements are not monitored for individual content updated to the online service. The responsibility for implementing accessibility in online content lies with the respective unit and the persons responsible for the content.

The content production instructions for the Oulu.fi online service consist of self-study training materials provided in personnel training portal OSKU. The self-study materials have three sections, one of which covers accessibility in general. After viewing the materials, the user must pass a final test to receive access. The test includes a few questions about accessible online content. User instructions and the related accessible online content instructions are also available on the Patio intranet. Patio's user training (organised for new users when necessary) includes accessibility awareness regarding the implementation of accessible online content.

#### *Oulu.fi and Patio accessibility statements*

The accessibility statements of online services are included in the services. The accessibility statement directs accessibility feedback to [saavutettavuus@oulu.fi](mailto:saavutettavuus@oulu.fi). Accessibility feedback for online services is processed by the Communications, marketing and community relations unit in the service desk system. The statutory period for responses to accessibility feedback may not be met for either online service.

#### Measures for 2023–2024 – development of Oulu.fi online services and the Patio intranet

1. The identified accessibility issues in the online services are corrected continuously as a development measure, and the accessibility statement will be updated regularly to reflect with the corrections.
2. The content production self-study materials for the Oulu.fi online service will be remade in their entirety in 2023, including the section on accessibility, and video instructions meeting accessibility requirements will be created for online content. The instructions will aim to increase awareness of how to implement accessible online content.

## 7. All members of personnel produce content for digital services

The personnel of the University of Oulu produce digital content for the digital services used by the university. In some services, the user inputs the content in a predetermined form, using various web forms, or a block editor. In these cases, user's content input is mainly text, or various selections from ready-made options. The service then generated the content to a web page in a specific manner: for example, the heading levels will be automatically correct. The more freedoms users are given for content creation, the more they must understand digital accessibility. Full-featured web editors that allow the user to freely edit the content, require training to ensure that the content produced with the editor can be accessible. The same applies to file attachments: If the service permits file attachments, it is up to the user to make the files accessible.

### Content must be made more comprehensible

Understandable content serves all users, and it is essential for accessible digital services. This means using clear and comprehensible language. The University of Oulu does not require the use of simplified language as such, but its features can be applied to write text that is easy to understand. Guidelines are provided on the Patio intranet for the tone of voice for university communications and the writing style of communications and marketing for external stakeholders. In communications, the expression must be clear and concise, the language easily understood, and the text quick to read at a glance.

Integrated tool guidance for accessible content production is on its way

The accessibility of content could be improved with tools that steer the user towards good accessibility. Some tools are already taking steps in this direction, but the development has just started. For example, some software offer limited accessibility checking functionality. Some tools do not allow images to be added without an alternative description or without marking the image as a decorative element, but the software cannot yet help the user write a correct description. The University of Oulu can further the development through its procurement by adding points for accessibility-improving features, for example.

Providing accessibility instructions promotes accessibility even outside the university community

The university's public instructions at [ict oulu.fi](http://ict oulu.fi) provide accessibility instructions for digital content creators. They can be used by anyone, and while some of the instructions are made for the university's (and Oamk's) systems, some of them are general purpose. The traffic statistics show that the pages are often visited through Google, and some of the pages are relatively popular: for example, the video accessibility instructions page was visited some 7,500 times in 2022. The instruction pages have not been fully translated but will be translated to English in early 2023.

Objective: Improving personnel's accessibility skills and knowledge for digital content production

Metric 1: The digital pedagogy skills survey, organised biannually. The objective is to have all respondents of the next survey (in 2024) be aware of what accessibility means for online learning.

Metric 2: The number of people who have completed the online course on accessibility for content creators. The objective is for the majority of teachers to have completed the online course by the end of 2024.

Training personnel is key

For the time being, the training of users is key for promoting the accessibility of content. The University of Oulu provides a self-study online course in Moodle for content creators, and ICT Services have provided online accessibility training in 2020–2022 on accessibility regarding the following: files, videos, websites, social media, and Moodle. The accessibility project also organised a series of accessibility training events in spring 2022 where experts by experience explained digital accessibility from different perspectives. HR Services have provided other accessibility training, which has been covered in chapter 1, Accessibility in the Work Community.

Participation has been voluntary. The training has failed to find traction. The 2022 digital pedagogy skill survey revealed that the university still has teachers who are unaware of what accessibility means in online learning (20 per cent of respondents). Two in three respondents said they had studied accessibility from instructions and/or by training. A total of 515 teachers responded, about 23 percent of all teachers and researchers. The comments suggested that some respondents would like to receive training but cannot arrange time for it. Seeing as voluntary training has failed to engage the personnel, the training of personnel should be a central development objective.

## 8. Conclusion

All faculties and service units of the University of Oulu are already engaged in accessibility work, but we are only taking our first steps in this area. Our aim is to make accessibility a part of everything we do. Accessibility work means continuous development and requires objectives and determination on all levels. Accessibility must be included in all of the university's processes and their development. The first challenge is to familiarise everyone with the importance of seeking equality, and only then can we expect everyone to be capable of adjusting to work in the required way.

## We promote accessibility through projects and networks

The University of Oulu participates in projects and networks focused on accessibility. For example, the description of our current situation used in this plan was based on the accessibility survey we completed as part of the EUni4All network. The purpose of the Euni4All network is to describe the accessibility of student exchange institutions, allowing students to research the accessibility of their host universities in advance.

The university is also part of the European University of Post-Industrial Cities (UNIC) that started in autumn 2020. The European Universities Initiative was launched by the European Commission. The initiative aims to establish a European Education Area by 2025. Two of the main themes of UNIC have a strong connection to accessibility: Superdiversity and Inclusion.

The University of Oulu is the head of an unofficial national accessibility network that includes accessibility experts from many other Finnish higher education institutions. The network was created as a temporary solution while we waited for the Ministry of Education and Culture's national accessibility forum to materialise. With the forum cancelled, the network has become permanent.

Accessibility is also important for the Digivisio 2030 project where we have promoted the themes of digital accessibility in particular. We are also working to include accessibility in the Noste education programme as a shared and acknowledged theme with objectives. The programme will emphasise inclusion in particular this coming spring.