

Equality and diversity plan 2026–2029

University of Oulu



UNIVERSITY OF OULU

Table of contents

Foreword	3
Key terms and legislation	5
1. Current state of equality, diversity and accessibility	6
1.1. Evaluation of development actions in the Equality and diversity plan 2024–25	6
1.2. Key indicators of equality, diversity and accessibility among students and staff	9
1.2.1. Student equality, diversity and well-being	9
1.2.2. Staff equality, diversity and well-being	10
1.2.3. Digital and physical accessibility	12
2. Organisation of equality and diversity work	15
2.1. Equality and Diversity Committee	15
2.2. Equality and diversity working groups	15
2.2.1. Equality and diversity contact persons	16
2.3. Digital accessibility working group	16
2.4. Language working group	17
3. Actions to promote equality and diversity	19
3.1. Action 1: Promoting awareness, dialogue and training on equality and diversity	19
3.2. Action 2: Advancing inclusive decision-making	20
3.3. Action 3: Promoting multilingual practices	21
3.4. Action 4: Supporting diverse life situations	22
3.5. Action 5: Preventing racism and other forms of discrimination and harassment	23
3.6. Action 6: Advancing digital accessibility	24

Foreword

The diverse community of the University of Oulu is united by the search for excellence in science and education. Equality and accessibility are essential conditions for achieving this excellence and for ensuring our collective success. Our commitment to promoting diversity, equality and accessibility is firmly rooted in national legislation – including the Equality Act, the Non-Discrimination Act, and the Digital Services Act – as well as in international frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Equality and diversity are also embedded in the University of Oulu’s strategy, values and code of conduct. Furthermore, the University of Oulu is proud to carry a national responsibility for academic teaching and research in Sámi languages and culture, fulfilled through the Giellagas Institute. The Sámi are the only indigenous people in the European Union, and their rights in Finland are safeguarded by international treaties and national laws.

This Equality and diversity plan 2026–29 presents the current state, key structures and planned actions to promote a more inclusive, equal and accessible University of Oulu. The European Commission has set specific requirements for universities regarding gender equality planning, particularly as a condition for participation in Horizon Europe funding. These include the collection and monitoring of gender-disaggregated data, regular training on gender equality, and annual progress evaluations. These commitments, together with the requirements set out in national legislation, are addressed in this Equality and diversity plan 2026–2029. In accordance with the Equality Act, the plan will be monitored and reviewed after two years to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

The University of Oulu is committed to fostering an inclusive, equal, and diverse academic community where every student and staff member – regardless of background, identity or ability – can thrive, participate fully and help shape a more knowledge-driven future. We invite everyone to take an active role in putting this plan into action by staying informed, speaking up and working together to drive lasting progress in equality and belonging within and beyond our university.

The University of Oulu Equality and Diversity Committee on 13 November 2025

The University of Oulu Equality and diversity plan 2026–29 has been reviewed by the Cooperation Council on 24 Nov 2025 and approved by the Rector on 6 Dec 2025.



Key terms and legislation

Digital accessibility refers to the principles and technical standards that ensure digital services, such as websites and applications, are usable by a wide range of users, including persons with disabilities. Its implementation is guided by the Act on the Provision of Digital Services (306/2019), and its scope extends to learning platforms, publicly accessible theses, most teaching materials and other digital content produced or used in university settings.

Diversity refers to the variety of backgrounds and characteristics among individuals, including nationality, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, and language. The Finnish Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014) promotes diversity by advancing equality, preventing discrimination, and ensuring legal protection for those who experience discrimination.

Equality refers to the right of all individuals to be treated equally regardless of personal characteristics. The Act on Equality Between Women and Men (609/1986) focuses specifically on gender equality, aiming to prevent gender-based discrimination and promote equal opportunities in education, employment, and decision-making.

Physical accessibility refers to the design and adaptation of built environments to ensure they are usable and navigable by all individuals, including persons with disabilities. It includes elements such as accessible entrances, toilets, signage, and pathways that enable individuals to move and participate independently. The principles outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities guide its implementation.

1. Current state of equality, diversity and accessibility

1.1. Evaluation of development actions in the Equality and diversity plan 2024–25

The Equality and diversity plan 2024–25 outlined seven development actions. Overall, the Equality and Diversity Committee, in collaboration with other stakeholders, was able to effectively advance their implementation.

Diversity in working groups: The Committee tracked gender balance in working group appointments. In 2024, 45% of the 91 groups met the 60/40 gender distribution target, increasing slightly to 47.5% of 101 groups in 2025. The gender balance objective has also been formally included in the guidelines for appointing working groups at the university. The Committee released a statement ahead of the University's elections in autumn 2025, encouraging university members from diverse backgrounds to stand as candidates.

Promoting dialogue, training, and communication: Awareness and engagement were supported through the launch of the online course *Equality and Non-Discrimination at the University of Oulu* and a spring 2024 webinar series on diversity and inclusion. As of September 1, 2025, the online course has been completed by 989 staff members. Equality Week was organised in both 2024 and 2025, featuring pop-up events, guest lectures, and cultural celebrations such as *Nowruz*. In 2025, the two guest lectures of Equality Week attracted a total of 90 attendees, and *Nowruz* was attended by over 300 people. University hired an accessibility coordinator in May 2025 particularly to develop the process of individual study arrangements further and increase knowledge of it. Communication on equality and diversity was further supported through intranet news updates, a blog post titled *Co-creating Better Knowledge Together*, and printed materials such as table triangles placed in coffee rooms to raise awareness of the Equality and diversity plan and its measures. Several faculty visits also helped promote the plan and support its implementation.

Developing equal recruitment and increasing the number of women in leadership: In 2024, a question on how equality and non-discrimination were realised in recruitment was added in the university's applicant feedback survey. To support more equal recruitment practices, training videos on responsible research assessment, including guidance on addressing unconscious bias, will be made available at the university by the end of 2025. Although the planned update to recruitment guidelines is still pending, information on diversity in recruitment has been made available on the intranet. While systematic anonymous recruitment is not currently in use, earlier trials have been conducted, and preparations for a new pilot are underway in 2025, with implementation scheduled for early 2026. In 2023, women made up 31 percent and men 69 percent of research unit directors, with 15 women and 34 men in these roles.

This data was presented to university's research leadership and discussed as part of ongoing efforts to advance gender equality.

Increasing participation of international employees and students through multilingual practices: A training session on language-aware practices in multilingual work communities was held in spring 2024, and bilingual document templates are now in use. Tips for inclusive language and responsible interaction were published on the intranet and Oulu.fi in March 2025. An intranet page *Multilingual university* was launched, and discussion cards were distributed in coffee rooms to encourage Finnish learners to use the language more actively. Language learning opportunities for staff and students have also been expanded, for example, with the UniOulu Kickstart course offered in 2024.

Promoting equal pay and pay awareness: Training sessions on the university's salary system were held in both Finnish and English in September 2024 and 2025 to improve understanding of pay structures. The informational leaflet is still in progress and expected to be completed at a later stage.

Bolstering a family-positive operating culture: Information and instructions on work-life balance were added to the intranet in 2024. In November 2024 and 2025, the university organised a *Children's Day at Work*, attracting 400–500 participants on both occasions. Additionally, breastfeeding and wellness facilities at the Linnanmaa and Kontinkangas campuses were mapped, and related information was made available on the intranet.

Improving racism detection and prevention: Anti-racism efforts were integrated into Equality Week activities in both 2024 and 2025, including an awareness-raising quiz with 70 participants. Staff received targeted anti-racism training in November 2024. The University of Oulu also joined the Finnish government's anti-racism campaign at the end of 2024. Instructions on how to address racism was shared in autumn 2024 through the intranet, Oulu.fi and campus screens. Bystander training on how to address racist discrimination was organised in September 2025 for the university's equality and diversity contact persons and wellbeing ambassadors.

To engage the university community and gather feedback, the Equality and Diversity Committee included questions on the listed actions in the university's responsibility survey conducted in spring 2025. The survey received 311 responses, with 90% from staff and 10% from students. Feedback on equality and diversity was mixed, making it difficult to draw firm conclusions. Feedback included calls for more ambitious actions, regular reporting on progress and impact, and compulsory training. The Committee has aimed to reflect these perspectives in the wording of the new actions and in enhancing the reporting of equality and diversity efforts within the current plan.



1.2. Key indicators of equality, diversity and accessibility among students and staff

1.2.1. Student equality, diversity and well-being

In 2024, the University of Oulu had a total of 15,099 students. Of these, 2,010 were international degree students, and an additional 509 were international exchange students. In terms of legal gender distribution, the student population included 7,851 women (52%), and 7,242 men (48%). The gender distribution varied notably across disciplines: for example, 89% of the students in education and psychology were women, while 74% of the students in information technology were men. (Vipunen, PowerBi).

While legal gender categories are limited to two, the university community includes individuals who identify across a broader spectrum of gender identities. According to the Student Barometers from 2019 and 2022, 15% of University of Oulu students identified as part of gender or sexual minorities. This was the fourth-highest proportion among Finnish higher education institutions taking part in the Student Barometers (N=34). The Student Barometers also showed that students belonging to gender and sexual minorities rate their well-being lower than others. To address these disparities, the University of Oulu is committed to fostering an inclusive university environment that raises awareness of the diverse needs of students and staff from various backgrounds (Action 1).

According to the 2024 Bachelor's Graduate Survey, students at the University of Oulu reported a score of 4.08 for the statement "I feel comfortable at my university", and 4.15 for "When needed, I have found a person to ask for help." These scores were above the national averages of 4.02 and 4.06. The University of Oulu offers a wide range of services to support student well-being and academic success, including counselling by study psychologists, peer groups, workshops, online courses, staff training, and individual study arrangements. The number of students entitled to individual study arrangements has grown significantly, from 61 in 2017–18 to 145 in 2024–25, highlighting the increasing need for more accessible teaching and tailored support to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all. More information on study support services and individual study arrangements is available on the University of Oulu website at oulu.fi.

According to the 2024 International Student Barometer, 94% of international students who responded to the survey at the University of Oulu (N=603) agreed with the statement: "There is a friendly attitude towards international students at my institution." This matched the national average of 94%. However, when asked about hosting culture and the possibility of making local friends, the international students gave overall ratings of 78% and 50%. These indicators of social integration were below the national averages of 82% and 58%. The results suggest that increasing the participation and integration of international students remains an important focus at the University of Oulu (Actions 2, 3 and 5).

When asked about experiences of discrimination, 82% of the International Student Barometer respondents stated that they had never encountered discriminatory behaviour at the University of Oulu based on their race or ethnicity. Regarding discrimination based on nationality, 81% reported no such experiences. These figures represent a decline compared to the 2023 results, when the corresponding percentages were 87% and 85%. When asked about discrimination based on gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or mental or physical disability, between 90% and 96% of respondents reported that they had never experienced such discrimination. These results highlight the continued importance of anti-racism efforts at the University of Oulu (Action 5).

1.2.2. Staff equality, diversity and well-being

In August 2025, the University of Oulu employed a total of 4,165 staff members, with a full-time equivalent of 3,344. Of these employees, 28% were of international origin. The top five countries of origin for international staff were Iran (157), China (113), India (109), Pakistan (106), and Sri Lanka (77).

Among full-time employees, there were 1,749 women and 1,744 men based on legal gender categorisation. A majority of staff, 65%, were engaged in teaching and research roles, while the remaining 35% held other positions. The most common job titles among teaching and research staff were doctoral researcher (942) and postdoctoral researcher (467). (PowerBi, Vipunen). In addition to employed staff, the university hosts grant-funded researchers who have partial or no formal employment contracts. While not fully visible in official staff statistics, their contributions to research and the academic community are significant and should not be overlooked.

In August 2025, nearly half of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers were women, accounting for 44% and 45%. Gender imbalance persisted at the professorial level, with 67% of professors being male. The gender distribution varied notably across disciplines: for example, 76% of the staff in the Faculty of Education and Psychology were women, while 74% of the staff in the Faculty of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering were men. The underrepresentation of women in professorial roles underscores the continued need to promoting and increasing discussion, training and communication on gender equality in academia (Action 1).

The 2025 well-being survey reported an average score of 4.04 in the section addressing non-discrimination and equality. This represents a slight increase from the 2023 average of 4.01, with the highest possible score being 5. A total of 2,601 staff members responded, corresponding to a response rate of 67%. The lowest average scores in the non-discrimination and equality section were observed in questions related to physical accessibility (3.89) and work-life balance (3.90). The high proportion of temporary contracts in academia, 59% of staff at the University of Oulu were employed under fixed-term contracts as of August 2025, poses a significant challenge to work-life balance and complicates matters such as family planning. It is therefore important that the university contributes to improving work-life balance and fosters a working culture that is inclusive and responsive to diverse life situations (Action 4).

The well-being survey index score for the entire staff increased to 3.95 in 2025, up from 3.89 in 2023. The index is derived from the average score across 32 core questions. The overall index for women was 3.92, while for men it was 4.04. When focusing on questions related to equality and non-discrimination, the average score was 3.93 for women and 4.21 for men. When asked about experiences of discrimination over the past year, 92% of men reported none, compared to 86% of women. These lower well-being rates among women highlight a continued need to promote gender equality within the university (Action 1).

The 2025 Well-being Survey included an open-ended question asking staff members: “What concrete actions do you think would best support diversity, equity, and inclusion at the university or in your own unit?” A total of 488 responses were received, covering a wide range of topics. Among the most frequently mentioned issues were the need for more Finnish and/or more English in communication, increased training and dialogue on diversity and inclusion, and more transparent and inclusive decision-making processes. These concerns are acknowledged in Actions 3, 1, and 2 of the current Equality and diversity plan 2026–29.

According to the 2023 pay survey, gender-based salary differences at the University of Oulu are generally small. However, when examining average salaries across the four research career stages, women slightly outperform men in the first stage, while men earn more in all subsequent stages. These discrepancies warrant further analysis, which will be addressed in the next pay survey by the end of 2025. Potential salary differences between women and men underscore the ongoing importance of monitoring and promoting gender equality in academia (Action 1).

Since 2024, the university’s applicant feedback survey has included a question on how equality and non-discrimination are experienced in recruitment. The question was added mid-year and received 909 responses, with an average rating of 8.31 on a scale from 1 to 10. Recruitment data from Varbi for the full year 2024, covering both open and direct appointments, showed the following gender breakdown: 7,842 applications were submitted by women, with 335 selected and 9,870 applications by men, with 325 selected. This corresponds to a recruitment success rate of 4.3% for women and 3.3% for men. These figures warrant further analysis and highlight the importance of continued monitoring of gender equality in academia (Action 1).

In 2024, the survey for early career researchers, conducted by the Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers, found that 32% of doctoral researchers or recent graduates reported experiencing bullying or violence at least occasionally within the academic environment. Respondents from the University of Oulu were slightly overrepresented in the national survey relative to the number of doctoral researchers at the university, which suggests that the survey results may offer particularly valuable insights for the university of Oulu to consider. The findings stress the on-going and essential importance of anti-discrimination efforts at the university (Action 5).

1.2.3. Digital and physical accessibility

Digital accessibility at the university means that all digital services, such as websites, mobile apps, learning platforms, files, videos, podcasts, e-books, and navigation tools, are accessible in both content and functionality. These services must be usable by all students, staff and visitors regardless of, for example, visual or hearing impairments. The aim is to integrate the implementation of digital accessibility into all activities. The main responsibility for advancing digital accessibility lies with the units designated as owners of systems and services. Everyone is, however, responsible for the accessibility of the digital content they produce, such as teaching materials. At the University of Oulu, a Moodle online course and other accessibility training sessions are available for content creators.

The university offers digital services maintained in-house as well as services provided by contractual partners, along with an increasing number of cloud-based platforms where the university manages the content. The university is always responsible for the accessibility of the services it provides, regardless of who maintains the technology. Under the Act on the Provision of Digital Services, each service must include an accessibility statement documenting its status, any content or functionality deficiencies, and the reasons for them. A feedback channel for accessibility issues must also be provided. In general, there is still significant room for improvement in the accessibility of the university's digital services, both in correcting deficiencies and in documenting them clearly in accessibility statements. Special attention has been and will be paid to monitoring and improving the digital accessibility of the following systems: Peppi student information system, Moodle e-learning environment, Exam electronic examination system, Patio intranet, Oulu.fi web service, JOY continuous learning courses service, Oula-Finna printed collections and e-resources, OuluREPO open access repository and OuluCRIS research information system.

Digital accessibility is being integrated into procurement practices for new services and systems. All competitive tenders for system procurement and maintenance now require compliance with accessibility standards. To ensure this, accessibility must be assessed annually during the agreement period, along with a plan to address any identified deficiencies. The procurement contract also includes sanctions if accessibility is not achieved within a specified time after deployment. In systems acquired without competitive tendering, accessibility has not yet been systematically considered at the procurement stage. There is a clear need to further increase awareness and training related to digital accessibility across the university to ensure continuous improvement (Action 6).

The University of Oulu has staff and students across two campuses in Linnanmaa and in Kontinkangas. Additionally, the university operates in the Teacher Training School, Sodankylä Geophysical Observatory, Oulanka research station, Kajaani University Consortium and Kerttu Saalasti Institute in Nivala. While built before modern accessibility standards, many facilities have been upgraded over time to better meet the needs of diverse users.

The need to improve physical accessibility was underscored in the 2025 staff well-being survey, where the lowest average score (3.89) in the non-discrimination and equality section was linked to physical accessibility. This concern aligns with findings from a 2023 survey conducted at the Linnanmaa and Kontinkangas campuses, which identified several key challenges in physical accessibility. These issues are currently being addressed based on priority. Accessibility improvements are being advanced in collaboration with Suomen Yliopistokiinteistöt Oy, the primary owner of the university's facilities. Main structures and practices currently supporting staff, students and visitors with specific needs include accessible entrances and toilets, disabled parking, hearing loops, portable audio guide systems, wheelchair for borrowing and unisex toilets. To support navigation and accessibility, the MazeMap platform offers detailed maps of the Linnanmaa and Kontinkangas campuses. Available via mobile devices and web, it provides information on features such as accessible entrances and toilets.

3L



2. Organisation of equality and diversity work

2.1. Equality and Diversity Committee

At the University of Oulu, work on equality and diversity is coordinated by the Equality and Diversity Committee, which is appointed by the Rector for a term of three years at a time. The Equality and Diversity Committee consists of faculty representatives, equality and diversity working group representatives, representatives of student and employee organisations, Giellagas Institute, and other relevant specialists. The Committee Chair is appointed by the Rector, and the Committee meets approximately ten times a year.

The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for the following:

- serving as a university-level cooperation forum that collects and conveys information and expertise on equality and diversity issues to the university community in cooperation with internal university stakeholders and external experts,
- monitoring the overall state of equality, non-discrimination, and accessibility at the university, and identifying areas for improvement through collaboration, feedback, and data-informed evaluation,
- preparing the university's Equality and diversity plan in accordance with relevant legislation and monitoring its implementation consistently,
- organising training, communication and events to promote equality and diversity at the university,
- awarding the University of Oulu's Equality and Diversity Award annually and
- communicating and reporting annually to the university's management on its activities.

2.2. Equality and diversity working groups

There are four equality and diversity working groups at the University of Oulu that coordinate and promote equality and diversity efforts within their faculties and units. The E&D working groups are appointed for a three-year term. All faculties and units appoint representatives to their respective working groups, who, like Committee members, may include equality-related tasks in their duties and work plans. The working groups meet approximately six times a year, including two joint meetings that feature training and bring together all E&D working groups.

The equality and diversity working groups are responsible for the following:

- serving as a cooperation forum at the faculty and unit level that collects and conveys information and expertise on issues related to equality and diversity,
- supporting equality and diversity work within the faculties and units and regularly reviewing, monitoring and promoting the implementation of the Equality and diversity plan in collaboration with the faculties' and units' leadership and
- reporting to the Equality and Diversity Committee on their equality and diversity work.

2.2.1. Equality and diversity contact persons

The appointed members of the equality and diversity working groups also serve as the equality and diversity contact persons for their respective faculties or units. The E&D contact persons help promote equality and inclusion by acting as a link between their faculty or unit and the university's broader E&D efforts.

The equality and diversity contact persons are responsible for the following:

- sharing updates on equality-related policies, events, and initiatives within their faculty or unit,
- promoting inclusive practices by helping ensure that everyday activities in their faculty or unit reflect the principles of equality, diversity, and non-discrimination,
- providing a point of contact for staff and students in challenging situations, listening to concerns, and guiding individuals to appropriate resources or support services, especially in cases involving harassment or discrimination and
- participating in training designed to support their role in promoting equality and diversity.

2.3. Digital accessibility working group

The digital accessibility working group promotes the implementation of digital accessibility at the University of Oulu in accordance with relevant legislation. The digital accessibility working group is appointed by the Equality and Diversity Committee for a three-year term and it meets approximately six times a year. The digital accessibility working group supports the university in achieving its goal of ensuring that all staff and students, regardless of ability, can effectively access and use digital tools and services.

The digital accessibility working group is responsible for the following:

- monitoring and developing service-specific accessibility statements, with a focus on key platforms: Oulu.fi, Patio, Peppi, Moodle and Exam,
- promoting the integration of accessibility into procurement processes,
- advancing the centralised monitoring of accessibility statements and feedback and

- reporting annually on its activities and the overall state of digital accessibility at the university to the Equality and Diversity Committee, with the participation of the Director of Services, Administrative Director and Communications Director.

2.4. Language working group

The language working group promotes language awareness and develops the University of Oulu language policy across education, research and campus life. The language working group is appointed by the Equality and Diversity Committee for a four-year term and it meets approximately eight times a year. The language working group supports the university in achieving its goal of ensuring that language practices enable meaningful participation by promoting the use of both Finnish and English, and by fostering a multilingual and inclusive academic environment.

The language working group is responsible for the following:

- collecting and sharing information and best practices related to language policy and providing recommendations
- supporting collaboration on language-related issues within the university and with broader society
- initiating and proposing potential updates to the language policy to the Equality and Diversity Committee
- reporting annually on language matters to the Equality and Diversity Committee, with the participation of the Development Director





3. Actions to promote equality and diversity

3.1. Action 1: Promoting awareness, dialogue and training on equality and diversity

Rationale: Promoting awareness, dialogue, and training on equality and diversity is essential to foster an inclusive university culture where all individuals feel respected and valued. These efforts help equip individuals to recognise and respond to inequalities, such as those based on gender, in their everyday work and study, contributing to a fair and equal academic environment.

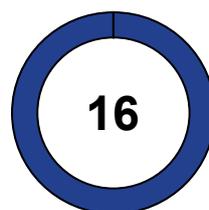
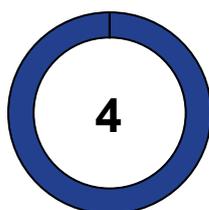
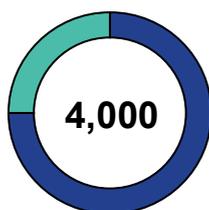
Measures: University-wide trainings are organised on rotating themes including gender equality, anti-racism, and neurodiversity. The online course *Equality and Non-Discrimination at the University of Oulu* and the CoARA ExPECT video series on *Responsible Researcher Assessment* (including unconscious bias) are promoted. Equality Week is held each spring, featuring changing speakers and events for staff and students. Targeted training is provided for equality and diversity contact persons. The Equality and Diversity Award is issued annually and topical commentaries (e.g. intranet and Oulu.fi articles) are published. Equality and diversity themes are also integrated into university curricula, for example through the development of the doctoral training course *Responsible Researcher's Toolkit*. Faculty visits are coordinated so that each faculty is visited at least twice during the four-year period.

Responsible parties: Equality and Diversity Committee, Equality and diversity working groups, HR, Unit for strategy and science policy

Timeline: 2026–29

Indicators of success:

- a) The number of completions of the online course *Equality and Non-Discrimination at the University of Oulu* exceeds 4,000 increasing from the 2025 baseline of 989.
- b) A total of four Equality and Diversity Awards are issued.
- c) The number of faculty visits coordinated by the E&D Committee and working groups reaches 16, ensuring each faculty is visited at least twice.



3.2. Action 2: Advancing inclusive decision-making

Rationale: In a diverse university community, it is important to promote inclusive decision-making where as many people as possible feel represented. Diverse representation brings a broader range of perspectives to decision-making and strengthens the community’s trust in its outcomes.

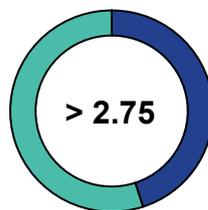
Measures: Gender equality and other forms of diversity are considered when working groups are appointed. Members from different genders are proposed in a balanced way so that at least 40% of each legal gender is included. In doing so, the university promotes the implementation of the Equality Act (609/1986). Appointments to working groups aim for balanced representation of different staff and student groups, with international representation included whenever possible.

Responsible parties: Parties appointing members to working groups

Timeline: 2026–29

Indicators of success:

- a) The proportion of working groups meeting the target for balanced gender distribution increases from the 2025 baseline of 47.5%, as monitored in the annual review conducted by the Equality and Diversity Committee.
- b) The average score in the staff well-being survey for the statement “I am able to influence our university’s decision-making through the existing channels of influence” increases from the 2025 baseline of 2.75/5.
- c) The average score in the Bachelor’s Graduate Survey for the statement “I have been satisfied with the opportunities I had to influence and participate in my university (e.g. participating in curriculum planning, and opportunities to give feedback)” increases from the 2024 baseline of 3.7/5.



3.3. Action 3: Promoting multilingual practices

Rationale: As a multilingual and multicultural university, fostering inclusive language practices is key to meaningful participation. Supporting the use of both Finnish and English, whenever feasible, in teaching, research, societal interaction, governance and decision-making as well as in internal communication and services, helps ensure transparency, inclusivity, and effective engagement across the university’s key activities. The use of other languages is also welcomed and encouraged.

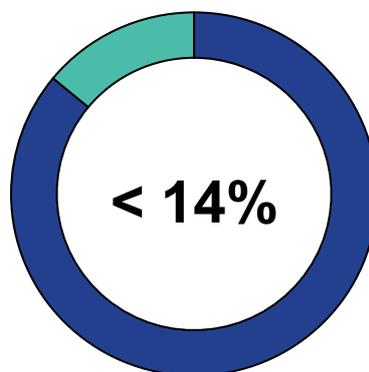
Measures: Language learning opportunities are actively promoted and developed to meet the diverse needs of staff and student groups. Awareness on the University of Oulu language policy is increased. University-wide communication and the dissemination of important information take place in both Finnish and English. Guidance and training are provided to support language awareness and the use of Finnish and English in teaching, studies, and everyday university communication.

Responsible parties: Equality and Diversity Committee, language working group, Lingua

Timeline: 2026–29

Indicator of success:

A decrease in the proportion of staff well-being survey responses highlighting issues with language practices under the question “What concrete actions do you think would best support diversity, equity, and inclusion at the university or in your own unit?”, compared to the 2025 baseline, where language-related concerns were mentioned in 68 out of 488 responses (14%).



3.4. Action 4: Supporting diverse life situations

Rationale: In a university community that values diversity and inclusion, recognising and accommodating different life situations, including caregiving responsibilities for children, elderly relatives, or others, is essential for fostering equality and inclusion. A supportive culture enhances well-being and satisfaction, while also contributing to improved productivity and retention among both staff and students.

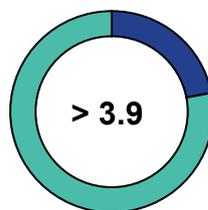
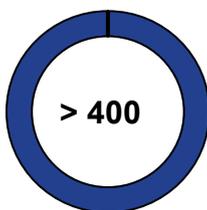
Measures: Work-life balance is implemented through various working-life flexibilities, such as flexible working hours and part-time work, when agreed upon between the employee and employer. An equal distribution of family leaves between parents is actively encouraged. The culture and positive attitudes supporting work-life balance are influenced through communication, training, and events, such as the annual *Children’s Day at Work*. Balancing studies and care responsibilities is also supported for students, and a student version of the event, *Children’s Day at Studies*, is organised.

Responsible parties: Line managers, Equality and Diversity Committee, HR, Learning Support and Wellbeing Centre and Student Union

Timeline: 2026–29

Indicators of success:

- a) The combined number of participants at *Children’s Day at Work* and *Children’s Day at Studies* exceeds 400 annually.
- b) The average score in the staff well-being survey for the statement “Our university takes different life situations into account in balancing work and personal life” increases from the 2025 baseline of 3.9/5.
- c) The average score in the staff well-being survey for the statement “Our university encourages the use of parental leave equally regardless of gender” increases from the 2025 baseline of 4.04/5.



3.5. Action 5: Preventing racism and other forms of discrimination and harassment

Rationale: Cooperation within the university community thrives when the principles of equality and diversity are respected, and when active efforts are made to identify and dismantle practices and structures that result in or maintain inequalities. Preventing racism and other forms of discrimination, harassment and inappropriate behaviour is essential in creating a safe and equal environment that supports the well-being of both staff and students.

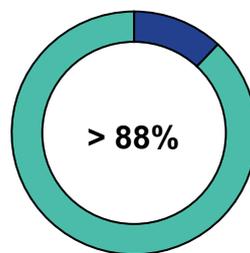
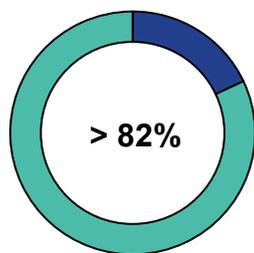
Measures: Bystander training is organised to equip bystanders, particularly the university’s equality and diversity contact persons, to act in cases of harassment. Communication at the university level is organised to provide guidance on what to do when facing discrimination or inappropriate behaviour. Equality Week is held each spring, featuring antiracism efforts and communication. Regional collaboration in the Oulu area is strengthened to enhance antiracism efforts.

Responsible parties: Equality and Diversity Committee, equality and diversity working groups, line managers

Timeline: 2026–29

Indicators of success:

- a) An increase in the proportion of students stating that they have never encountered discriminatory behaviour at the University of Oulu based on their race or ethnicity, compared to the 2024 International Student Barometer baseline of 82%.
- b) An increase in the proportion of staff stating that they have not experienced harassment, bullying or other inappropriate treatment during the past year, compared to 2025 staff well-being survey baseline of 88%.



3.6. Action 6: Advancing digital accessibility

Rationale: Ensuring digital accessibility means that everyone, including students, staff, applicants, library users, and others who use the university’s digital services, can access them on equal terms. Accessibility is not only a technical requirement for digital services; it also includes making content accessible, which is essential for creating an inclusive and equitable university environment. Since digital accessibility applies to a wide range of systems and content, its successful implementation relies on increasing staff and student knowledge and commitment.

Measures: The University of Oulu works with service providers to assess, monitor, and improve the accessibility of its digital systems. Accessibility statements are kept up to date, feedback is collected and answered within 14 days, and efforts are focused on developing a centralised system for tracking statements and feedback. All competitive system procurement and maintenance contracts require compliance with accessibility standards, verified through scheduled audits and enforced through contractual sanctions if requirements are not met. Training opportunities in digital accessibility are developed and promoted. Where necessary, participation in training is required for certain staff groups to ensure sufficient competence. Feedback on training needs and effectiveness is also collected regularly to support continuous development.

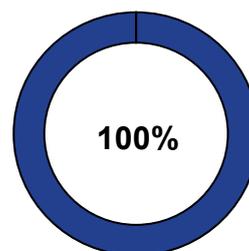
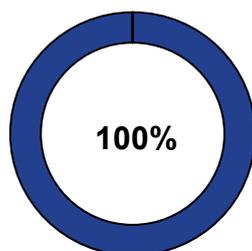
Responsible parties: Equality and Diversity Committee, digital accessibility working group, owners of digital systems and all content creators

Timeline: 2026–29

Indicators of success:

A system for tracking accessibility statements and feedback is identified and adopted (yes/no). Once in place, the system is used to ensure that:

- a) All digital services provided by the University of Oulu have accessibility statements.
- b) The University of Oulu responds to all accessibility-related feedback within its responsibility within 14 days.



University of Oulu

Equality and Diversity Committee

oulu.fi

