

# Student Union of Tampere

## University equality survey 2021 – summary of the results

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TAMPEREEN YLIOPIKILASKUNTA  
STUDENT UNION OF TAMPERE UNIVERSITY

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## Execution of the survey

TREY's first equality survey was open from 16 March to 11 April 2021. The survey was conducted using Jotform. Emmi Juolahti, Member of the Board responsible for equality, and Laura Kaipia, an employee, were working on the survey. The last time the equality survey was conducted was in 2018 in co-operation between the old Student Unions (Student unions of the University of Tampere (Tamy) and the Student Union of Tampere University of Technology (TTY)).

The survey was actively advertised on TREY's social media channels, mailing lists and website. In order to reach more students, the survey was also sent by mass email to all students of the University of Tampere via the university's email list.

We received a total of 849 responses to the survey. No question was made mandatory, meaning respondents were free to choose which questions they wanted to answer. 95% of the answers were in Finnish and 5% in English. The proportion of English-language responses remained low despite active advertising.

## Background information

Response activity was highest among those identified as female. 57% of respondents were women, 37% were men, 2% chose the option "other" and 4% of respondents did not want to specify their gender in their response.

We received responses from all faculties. The responses were distributed by faculty as follows: ITC 29%, SOC 17%, ENS 16%, MAB 14%, EDU 10%, MET 9%, and BEN 6%.

The number of responses was relatively evenly distributed among students in different stages in their studies. The proportion of first-year students was slightly higher (22%) than others. With the remaining classes, the percentages were distributed as follows: 2nd year students 17%, 3rd year students 18%, 4th year students 14%, 5th year students 12%, and more than fifth year students 16%. Only 1% of the respondents were exchange students. This is probably explained by the corona pandemic and the considerably smaller number of exchange students.

With one question, we mapped students' experiences of belonging to a social group of student organizations. 54% of respondents said they felt they belonged to a social group in an organization. 46% of respondents gave a negative answer.

## Questions regarding equality in teaching and learning

### Equality in teaching

The state of equality and experiences in teaching were surveyed with the question: "Teaching (e.g. distance teaching, lectures, calculation exercises, small group teaching, exam situations) at the University is, in my opinion, equal and non-discriminating." The question received 846 answers of which 39% agreed completely with the statement and 40% quite agreed. 13% of the answers either quite disagreed or disagreed completely (10% quite disagree, 3% completely disagree).

Comments that repeated in the open-ended answers:

- The effects of Covid-19 on teaching
- The flexibility made possible by working remotely
- The accessibility of teaching
- Discriminating use of language in teaching

### Equality in assessment

The state of equality in assessment was surveyed with the question: "Assessment of coursework (e.g. scoring of calculation exercises, exam and course grades, assessment of group work and learning diaries) is, in my opinion, equal and non-discriminating." The question received 841 answers. Based on the multiple-choice answers, the assessment of coursework is equal. 81% of the answers either agreed completely or quite agreed (46% agree completely, 35% quite agree). In total, 9% felt that assessment is not equal (7% quite disagree, 2% disagree completely).

Experiences in the open-ended answers included

- Differences in assessment
- Tight schedules
- Lack of feedback

- The effect of gender on assessment

## The accessibility of the University's activities

835 people answered the question on the accessibility of the University's activities in Finnish and English. 73% agreed with the statement: "The University's activities are accessible in Finnish and English." (37% agree completely, 36% quite agree). A remarkable percentage chose the neutral option neither agree nor disagree (17%). In addition, 10% felt that the University's activities are not accessible in both Finnish and English (quite disagree 7%, disagree completely 3%).

The open-ended answers highlighted:

- Difficulty of finding information on the University's website or the intranet
- Deficiencies in bilingual communication
- Difficulty of finding information about decision-making and influencing in English
- Speech that is difficult to understand on courses

## Harassment, discrimination, bullying or racism in teaching or the University facilities

Experiences and notices of inappropriate behavior were collected with three questions. In the first question of this section the statement was: "I have experienced harassment, discrimination, or bullying at the University in teaching situations or elsewhere in the University facilities.". Most respondents chose the option: disagree completely (68%). 13% of respondents quite disagreed with the statement, so in total 81% disagreed with the statement. 5% chose the neutral option. A total of 14% of the respondents agreed with the statement (5% agree completely, 9% quite agree). The following question surveyed noticed harassment in teaching situations or elsewhere in the University's facilities. Every fifth respondent agreed with this statement (7% agree completely, 13% quite agree). 72% of respondents disagreed with the statement (disagree completely 54%, quite disagree 18%). Based on this we can say that more people have noticed harassment, discrimination or bullying than experienced them. Experiences and noticed racism were asked in the same question: "I have

encountered or noticed racism in teaching situations or elsewhere in the University facilities.” 64% of the respondents disagreed completely with the statement and 15% quite disagreed. 8% of respondents chose the neutral option. 14% answered that they had encountered or noticed racism in teaching situations or the University’s facilities (5% agree completely, 9% quite agree).

The open-ended answers of the question “I have experienced harassment, discrimination, or bullying at the University in teaching situations or elsewhere in the University facilities.” included:

- Experiences on inappropriate, discriminative, racist or sexist use of language from the University’s staff
- The biases and loaded opinions of the teaching staff

The most mentioned noticed form of harassment, discrimination or bullying in the open-ended answers was inappropriate behaviour from the teaching staff. The responses included:

- Comment or jokes that are inappropriate, sexist, racist, chauvinistic or underestimate students and the belittling of sexual and gender minorities from the teaching staff
- Inappropriate feedback on courses
- Misogyny and chauvinism in teaching
- Experiences of antagonism towards trans people
- Discrimination based on opinions or beliefs

With the question about racism, the open-ended answers highlighted the prejudices, racist assumptions and racist jokes from the teaching staff. The answers also described racist contents in course materials.

The survey also asked respondents to evaluate if they would know how to act in a situation where they feel that teaching is not equal or non-discriminative. 52% of respondents thought that they would know how to act (18% agree completely, 34% quite agree). 16 % did not agree nor disagree with the statement. In total, 32% disagreed with the statement (23% quite disagree, 9% disagree completely).

Students could specify in the open-ended answers how they would act in a situation where they felt that teaching was unequal or discriminative. The most common places to contact were subject associations and TREY. A common mention was also feedback to a teacher. Some answers named they would contact the faculty or student representatives. The University's harassment contact persons were not mentioned in any answer.

## Accessibility at the University

The accessibility of the University's facilities as well as materials and systems were surveyed with two multiple-choice questions. Both questions also offered the chance for the respondents to elaborate their thoughts in open-ended questions.

The first question posed the statement: "University facilities are accessible." 62% of the respondents felt that the facilities are accessible (agree completely 23%, quite agree 39%). 28% chose the neutral option. Every tenth respondent disagreed with the statement (quite disagree 8%, disagree completely 2%).

The open ended-answers highlighted for example:

- It is difficult to find information on the accessibility of campuses
- The lack of automatic doors and signs, and heavy doors
- The small number of accessible and gender neutral toilets
- The lack of undisturbed study spaces
- The accessibility of association facilities

The other statement was: "The University's online materials, teaching materials and electronic systems (e.g. websites, course materials and lecture slides, e-learning environments such as Moodle) are accessible." 66% of the respondents felt that materials and systems are accessible (27% agree completely, 39% quite agree). Every fifth respondent felt that materials and systems are not accessible (16% quite disagree, 6% disagree completely). 12% chose the neutral option.

Themes that repeated in the open-ended answers were:

- The disorderliness of the University's website and the intranet
- The difficulties in using Sisu
- Unclear or inaccessible course materials

### The atmosphere at the University

The last question surveying the equality of teaching and learning was "The atmosphere at the University is supportive of non-discrimination". 69% of respondents felt that the atmosphere supports non-discrimination. One fifth of the respondents chose the neutral option (19%). 11 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement (7% quite disagree, 4% disagree completely).

Comments in the open-ended answers included:

- The lack of equality measures
- The lack of concrete actions
- Only accepting certain opinions

### Questions regarding equality in study guidance and support

Next theme in the survey was whether respondents find support services and students' treatment in them equal. The question was presented as a statement: "Support services and the treatment of students in them are, in my opinion, non-discriminating (for example, FSHS, sports services, University guidance services, study psychologists)." Examples of support services were given so that students get a clearer view on what is meant by them. 58% of respondents either quite agreed or agreed completely with the statement (29% agree completely, 29% quite agree). One fourth of respondents chose the neutral option (26%). 16% of respondents disagreed with the statement (12% quite disagree, 4% disagree completely).

Open-ended answers highlighted:

- The services of the FSHS and difficulties in receiving treatment
- Underestimating problems at the FSHS office
- Difficulties in receiving study guidance

In the next multiple-choice and open ended questions, students were asked if they knew how to act if they needed individual special arrangements. The answers were



spread out fairly evenly. 45% of respondents stated that they knew how to act if they needed special arrangements (18% agree completely, 27% quite agree). 21% of respondents chose the neutral option. 34% of respondents did not know how to act if they needed special arrangements (22% quite disagree, 12% disagree completely).

The survey asked students if they had encountered or noticed harassment, discrimination or bullying in support services. 3% of respondents answered that they had encountered or noticed inappropriate behaviour (1% agree completely, 2% quite agree). Every fifth respondent chose the neutral option (20%). 77% of respondents answered that they had not encountered or noticed inappropriate behaviour in support services (7% quite disagree, 70% disagree completely).

The last question in this segment was “I have encountered or noticed racism in support services.”. 79% of respondents disagreed with the statement (73% disagree completely, 6% quite disagree). 19 % answered that they neither agree nor disagree. 2% of respondents had noticed or encountered racism in support services.

## Questions regarding the equality of TREY's operations

### Equality of TREY's operations and events

The first statement in the section was “TREY's events and activities are non-discriminating”. More than half of the respondents to the question either agreed completely (28%) or quite agreed (26%) with the statement. However, the most common answer was “neither agree nor disagree” (38%). A total of 8% of respondents completely or quite disagreed with the statement (4% quite disagreed and 4% completely disagreed).

In the open answers a few things were brought up several times:

- Respondent has not attended TREY events or participated in activities
- The politics of TREY
- Language barrier
- The work done in TREY to promote equality
- Accessibility of TREY for small organizations

Next, the claim “TREY’s events are accessible” was made. 53% of respondents did not agree nor disagree with the statement. The relatively small number of positive responses (17% completely agree and 24% quite agree) means that there is still room for improvement in accessibility. However, only 6% of respondents quite (4%) or completely disagree with the statement (2%).

In the open answers a few things were brought up several times:

- Respondent has not participated in events
- Reflections on one’s own able-bodiedness
- Some mentions of the accessibility of individual events, e.g. due to slippery weather

### Accessibility of TREY’s communications

Next was the statement “TREY’s website and communication are accessible”. The most common answer was “quite agree” (36%). There were only slightly more “neither agree nor disagree” answers (29%) than “completely agree” answers (28%). 6% of respondents quite disagreed with the statement and 2% completely disagreed.

In the open answers, e.g these were brought up:

- TREY’s website is not easy to use. It is hard to find information
- Request for additional information e.g. in FSHS matters
- Too many messages on the associations mailing list
- Thanks for TREY bulletin Telegram-channel
- Criticism was given to the use of social media channels, which require signing up

The next statement was “The activities of the Student Union are accessible in Finnish and English.”. Significantly, the most common answer to this question was strongly agree (34%) although “neither agree nor disagree” (33%) came right behind it. Only 5% of respondents quite disagreed (3%) or completely disagreed (2%) with the statement.

In the open answers, e.g.

- It is difficult for non-Finnish speakers to work in the Council of representatives
- Information is well available in both Finnish and English
- Experiences of the quality of communication in English vary
- Participating in events is still quite easy, but the deeper you go into the activities of the student union, the harder it is for a non-Finnish speaker to participate.

### TREY decision-making

The next statement was “TREY’s decision-making is transparent and equal”. Most of the answers were “neither agree nor disagree” (42%). However, half of the respondents agreed with the statement (agree completely 18% or quite agree 27%). It is noteworthy, however, that 7% strongly disagree and 6% completely disagree.

In the open answers we received answers about:

- A large proportion of respondents have answered “I can’t say”
- Respondents were not interested in seeking information on the decision-making of TREY’s Board or Council of representatives
- The decision-making of the student union and, for example, the activities of the board or the council of representatives are not transparent enough
- Respondents hoped for more communications about the decision-making and meeting schedules of TREY’s Council and Board
- Respondents hoped for more communications about TREY’s finances
- Politics in TREY
- Automatic membership
- Reactions to individual cases, for example in courses

### Harassment, bullying and racism in the student union

In the question “TREY communicates sufficiently on anti-harassment work and non-discrimination.”, again the highest number of answers was “neither agree nor disagree” (32%). However, more than half agree either completely (29%) or quite agree (27%). What is also significant is that 9% quite disagree and 3% completely disagree.

In the open answers we got comments on:

- Too much information
- Too little information
- It was also hoped that information would be implemented for student associations
- Communication about university working groups and students selected for them

Only half of respondents completely disagreed (54%) with the statement "I have encountered or observed harassment, discrimination or harassment in the activities of the student union (institutions, events, etc.)." with 12% quite disagreed. Slightly less than a tenth of the respondents completely (3%) or quite agreed (6%) that they have encountered or perceived harassment, discrimination or bullying in the activities of the student union. 25% of respondents do not agree or disagree with the statement.

In the open answers these were mentioned:

- Harassment experienced at events
- Pressure to consume alcohol in fuksi events
- Discrimination on grounds of opinion
- Aggressiveness of TREY operators

Racism has been encountered or observed in the activities of the student union less than harassment. Only 5% of respondents state that they completely agree (2%) or quite agree (3%) with the statement. 61% completely disagree, 8% quite disagree and 26% neither agree nor disagree.

In the open answers there were mentions about:

- Racist humor or sitsi songs
- Reflections on one's own privileges

## Equality in Student Activities

Equality in student associations and association events

Most respondents do not agree or disagree (34%) with the statement “Association activities and the events of associations operating within TREY are, in my opinion, non-discriminating.”. This may be explained by the fact that in the open answers, many feel that there are large differences between the organizations and some stated that they responded directly based on the experience of their own subject association. However, more than half of the respondents fully (24%) or fairly agree (29%) that the activities and events of the organizations are equal. 8% of respondents quite disagree and 4% completely agree with the statement.

In the open answers there were mentions about:

- Invite-based associations
- Equality is better taken into account nowadays
- Gendered or discriminatory practices in sisis, for example
- Problems in students singing culture
- Harassment at events

### Harassment, bullying and racism in the student activities

Nearly one-fifth of respondents either completely (7%) or quite agree (12%) with the statement: “I have experienced harassment, discrimination, or bullying in student activities (the leisure activities of students, association activities, student events).”. Only just over half of the respondents completely disagree with the statement (54%). 12% quite disagreed and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed.

In the open answers there were mentions on e.g:

- Sexual harassment
- Exclusion
- Underestimation

Less than half of the respondents completely disagree (44%) with the statement “I have noticed harassment, discrimination, or bullying in student activities (the leisure activities of students, association activities, student events).” A total of 25% of students have noticed harassment, discrimination or bullying in student activities,

of which 9% completely agreed and 16% quite agreed with the statement. 16% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and 15% disagreed quite a lot.

In the open answers, there were answers about:

- Inappropriate jokes, offensive language and sexual harassment
- Excluding from activities
- Forming of cliques

Most respondents disagreed with the statement “I have encountered or noticed racism in student activities (the leisure activities of students, association activities, student events).” but a total of 11% (5% completely agree and 6% quite agree) have still either encountered or perceived racism in student activities. Also significant is the 19% share of respondents who do not agree or disagree. The most completely disagreed with the answers (58%) and 12% of the respondents quite disagreed.

In the open answers there were:

- Reflections on one's own privileges
- Mentions about the singing culture, especially sitsis
- Racist jokes and racist language

### The effect the use of alcohol has on treatment

The statement “I have noticed that people who use alcohol in a different way (more/less than others) are treated differently.” divided opinions, as many of the answer options were chosen by about 20% of the respondents. The option “completely disagreed” (24%) got chosen the most and “completely agree” (14%) was chosen the least. Both “quite agree” and “neither agree nor disagree” responses accounted for 22% and fairly disagree responses for 18%.

This division between those, who felt that alcohol had little effect and / or the situation has improved in recent years, and those who continued to feel that alcohol had a strong effect on experiences, was clear. Both types of answers mentioned personal experiences of absolutism as either a nuisance or an insignificant factor. It

was also interesting to note that a few answers mentioned that those individuals who consume a lot of alcohol get resentment.

### Accessibility in student activities

To the statement “Accessibility is realised in student activities (the leisure activities of students, association activities, student events).”, the most common answer was “neither agree nor disagree”(43%). Many respondents were satisfied with the accessibility of the events (16% agree completely, 27% quite agree), but also 14% of the answers disagreed with the statement (11% quite disagree, 3% disagree completely).

Many open answers raised concerns about the lack of accessible event spaces in Tampere, which in itself means that events are not accessible. However, it was also stated that many student associations either communicate about the accessibility information of the event or adapt their activities to be more accessible. The students association's efforts to take accessibility into account were praised. There were many comments about the lack of events and difficulty of evaluation. In addition, a few respondents commented on their own able-bodiedness and how it affects their evaluation.

Most respondents agreed with the statement “Communication and websites of associations are accessible.” (23% agree completely and 41% quite agree). However, a total of 9% of respondents disagreed with the statement, either quite (7%) or completely (2%), which means that there is still room for improvement. In addition, 27% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

There are differences in the accessibility of communication between student associations, as evidenced by the large number of “association dependent” responses, but the lack of English-language websites and information was most often cited as a shortcoming. The accessibility of the website was also considered in some responses, but respondents did not express a reliance on, for example, screen readers that could have verified accessibility.

One third of the respondents did not agree or disagree with the statement “Participation in the activities of associations is possible in both Finnish and English”.

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in both Finnish and English (19% completely agree and 34% quite agree), but at the same time 14% do not believe that both Finnish and English speaking students can participate in the activities of association (12% quite disagree and completely disagree with 2%). 33% of respondents do not agree or disagree with the statement.

Participation in associations, especially being a member of the board, is perceived as quite impossible for non-Finnish speaking students, but exceptions were also mentioned. Also in this question, the different situations of the associations were emphasized. There were also some mentions that the events are organized in a seemingly international way, but when participating in the event, the language is mainly Finnish, even if a non-Finnish speaker has dared to attend.

### Action in unequal situations

A total of 60% of the respondents agreed with the statement "I know how to act in harassment or other situations of unequal treatment." (25% agree completely, 35% quite agree). 20% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. 20% of the respondents either quite (13%) or completely disagreed (7%) with the statement.

In the open-ended answers, many respondents mentioned their subject association or the student union. Open responses also highlighted the fear of addressing inappropriate behavior and uncertainty about first contact, but many also expressed a willingness to seek information on procedures in cases of harassment.