

The Council's principles for safer spaces

Council of Representatives of the Student Union of Tampere

University

*Approved in the meeting of the Council of Representatives on 11 February
2020*

A safe space is a method for creating an equal and comfortable atmosphere for everyone to work and spend time in. Spaces are made by people, so it is important that everyone participates in the active encouragement of an open atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable to discuss and express their opinions.

All operations of the Student Union of Tampere University conform to the Equality Plan that this document will complement for the Council of Representatives. The following principles are based on the background work of TREY specialists and they were specified based on a workshop that was organised on 28 October 2019. The council members will be able to comment

on the principles in 2019, after which they can be officially adopted as principles to guide all council activities.

- Each person is free to determine their own identity, and no one's gender, sexual orientation, political views or nationality can be deduced based on their appearance. Respect the personal boundaries of everyone who participates in council activities.
- Recognise and acknowledge your own privileges. Privileges are advantages that certain social groups possess based on their personal characteristics. In society, privileges are determined in relation to one's identity: one's social status is affected by different factors, such as skin colour, social class, gender, sexual orientation, language, geographical location, state of health and religion.
- In council activities, social status in the student community, council experience and so-called tacit knowledge can be considered as privileges. Aim to recognise your own position of power in relation to others and acknowledge it in your actions. You can influence the council work culture positively by sharing information and speaking understandably.

- Be open-minded and listen to others. Avoid making assumptions about other participants. You do not possess any knowledge of the others' experiences, thoughts, situation or self-determined identity. As humans, we are prone to make assumptions about others, but we can reduce it by observing our own actions and attitudes towards others.
- Students and other people from many different backgrounds participate in the council work. Respect all community members and acknowledge that everyone has their own interests and reasons to participate in the council work. Remember and appreciate this diversity whenever you participate in council activities.
- Give others space and ensure that everyone is heard and free to participate in discussions. If you speak a lot, ask for others' opinions and offer them opportunities to speak. Through your own actions, you can make council meetings, group meetings and evening sessions more diverse. However, accept that not everybody wants to speak up as much as others and that there are many ways to participate in council activities.
- Do not degrade or ridicule others' words or ideas. Avoid using loaded language even if you disagree with another council member.

Acknowledge your own style both in spoken and verbal communication, including unofficial circumstances. Be aware of the fact that your message can be understood differently from how you meant it. Positive and constructive work culture is achieved by following shared principles.

- If you detect inappropriate behaviour, intervene in a calm, appropriate manner. If you are criticised for your actions or behaviour, take a constructive approach. Everyone's cooperation and understanding are needed to ensure functional and equal council work.
- TREY activities are free of harassment. Harassment includes verbal harassment, touching without consent and staring. If you are asked to stop inappropriate behaviour, you must do it. TREY's trained harassment contact persons help and support anyone who has been harassed.