



**University of the Arts Student Union's statement:
The University of the Arts must invest more in the wellbeing of students**

According to various surveys, the students at the University of the Arts are not feeling well. In the national bachelor's graduate survey, Uniarts has for many years ranked last with the statement "I am feeling well at my university". From a student perspective, wellbeing issues at our university are an acute crisis and they are related to practices, attitudes and structures at different levels. At the same time, students are very satisfied with the quality of teaching and our university has huge potential as a unique art education institution and art community.

The University of the Arts has a great need for more determined, systematic and goal-oriented work to promote the wellbeing of students. The wellbeing of students must be at the centre of all activities, it must be taken into account in all solutions and more resources must also be allocated in it. We need extensive changes in attitudes and structures to address the root causes of the wellbeing crisis and, on the other hand, acute measures to deal with the crisis. In practice:

- More human resources are needed to deal with welfare issues. The Student Union is very happy with the second study psychologist, and this position must be made permanent. At the same time, adequate personal career guidance must be ensured and opportunities for mentoring, for example, must be increased.
- The role of the student wellbeing group must be increased. In addition to various projects and services, we need broad, critical reviewing of all attitudes, structures, operating culture and practices.
- The university's teaching staff must be trained and the operating instructions must be clarified, for example, in relation to what kind of culture is built with words and actions related to activities that take place outside the studies or one's own field of art. From the point of view of supporting diverse career paths and strengthening interdisciplinary relationships, in addition to structures, it is essential how these issues are talked about and what kind of opportunity is seen as an opportunity to expand one's own competence without prejudice. Working alongside studies should not be blamed on the student, as it is often even a requirement for networking and livelihood.
- Similarly, the guidelines for what is required of students in terms of, for example, availability, flexibility and schedules need to be clarified. Students must have a real opportunity for leisure, weekends and holidays.
- As the highest provider of art education in Finland, the University of the Arts Helsinki has a special responsibility for the development of the structures of the entire field of art. We need courage.

The new curriculum and its implementation must put the well-being of students at the centre. The attendance requirements and workload must be critically examined and care must also be taken to familiarise hourly teachers with the practices. In practice:



- The courses must have alternative implementations. For example, it should also be possible to complete courses in theoretical subjects in the form of lectures independently, in the form of an essay or exam.
- The attendance requirements for studies should be eased. For all teaching, there must be a critical examination of what kind of attendance requirements are reasonable. Here, too, the student's opportunity to do other things in addition to their studies must be taken into account – art requires freedom, livelihood and the future sometimes requires work, and life cannot be put on hold for the duration of studies.
- At the University of the Arts Helsinki, you have to learn how to lower the bar. Each course cannot be the most important, and the workload in relation to the number of credits should be aligned. In connection with curriculum work, it must be ensured that the computational workload of each course also includes the required independent work and thought work.

Personal, artistic guidance, i.e. individual and small group teaching, is a tremendously valuable resource that still needs to be improved in reaching its full potential. It is alarming that students at the University of the Arts who receive regular, personal guidance are doing worse than students from other universities studying in lecture halls or remote lectures.

There is a lot of inappropriate behaviour and harassment in individual teaching, but only a few cases come to the fore, as students are concerned about the effects of raising issues on their own careers and studies. The processes in situations where a student encounters inappropriate behavior, harassment or other challenges related to the implementation of teaching are not clear to students.

- The guidelines for dealing with situations of inappropriate behaviour should be clarified. The university and the student union could jointly carry out a communication campaign on the topic and create clear guidelines for acting in different situations.
- The mutual feedback culture between the student and the teaching staff must be developed. Mutual feedback must be a built-in part of the studies, especially in individual teaching. Staff at the subject group and degree programme level throughout the university must be obliged to improve the opportunities for giving feedback, and good practices must also be shared between academies. For example, the joint discussion events of the degree programmes used at the Theatre Academy that lower the threshold for giving feedback should be organised throughout the university.
- Individual guidance includes the possibility that teaching can be carried out regularly in the presence of a third party and that the situation of in-person teaching can be discussed with that person. This would increase the student's security and reduce the risk of inappropriate behaviour; This would also potentially serve as in-service training.
- There is a need for more low-threshold contact points to avoid, for example, the obsolescence of cases of inappropriate treatment. One way could be a phone number that a student could call immediately, for example, if they are the victim of inappropriate behaviour or witness such actions.

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