

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS 101

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CONTENTS OF THE TRAINING SESSION

- Duties of the persons in charge of academic affairs & some vocabulary
- How to attend to the duties?
- Structure of the University
- Activating assignment
- Current issues



**KOPO IS A MARATHON
NOT A SPRINT**

DUTIES OF THE PERSONS IN CHARGE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



DUTIES OF THE PERSONS IN CHARGE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

- Monitoring current issues related to study affairs in your own faculty / degree programme as well as at the University in general
 - E.g. what is happening with curriculum work right now, what the faculty thinks about increasing the number of student places and where they should be increased, etc.
- Relaying information related to study affairs
 - From the board to the members and vice versa
 - From the faculty and/or degree programme to the board and members and vice versa
- Coordinating advocacy work in the degree programme / faculty
 - E.g. staying in contact with student representatives to efficiently plan collective stances on current issues in relevant administrative bodies at the University
- Creating and maintaining constructive relations to teaching and administrative personnel at the University

VOCABULARY RELATED TO ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

- **Curriculum** = valid for 3 years. Determines the degree structures as well as the learning goals, contents and assessment methods of study units
- **Teaching schedule** = valid for 1 year. Determines how teaching is organised in degree programmes each year in accordance with the curriculum
- **University Services** = produces services such as study guidance, international exchange services, admission services...
- **Academic Affairs Council** = the University's highest administrative body processing academic affairs. Has the authority to issue recommendations and statements in support of decision-making processes
- **Steering group of a degree programme** = directs the development of an individual degree programme
- **Kopo** = abbreviation of the Finnish word for educational policy, 'koulutuspolitiikka'. Can also refer to or someone involved in educational policy
- **Faculty council** = directs and develops a faculty

- **UH:** University of Helsinki (Finnish abbreviation: HY)
- **HYY** = Student Union of the University of Helsinki, an umbrella organisation responsible for students' advocacy work. All student organisations at the UH operate under HYY.
- Read more from HYY's guide: <https://hyy.fi/en/guides/student-representatives#student-representatives-glossary>

HOW TO ATTEND TO THE DUTIES?

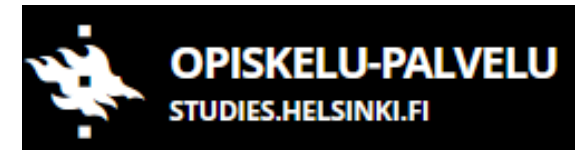
1. Where can I get information?
2. How do I communicate to other students?
3. How do I keep in touch with the University's personnel?
4. Who can I get support from



WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION?

The University's channels

- Flamma:
 - Current news about your own faculty or the entire University
- The external website
- The 'Instructions for students' site



Decision-making processes

- Faculties' Flamma pages! Especially the meetings of faculty councils
- Riihi: meeting material for the University's highest decision-making bodies
- Current news from the Ministry of Education and Culture
- UH's regulations and Strategic Plan



HOW DO I COMMUNICATE TO OTHER STUDENTS?

- Use your organisation's channels!
 - Plan how to communicate about academic affairs with the person in charge of communication
 - Organisation's email lists, chat groups, Instagram, Facebook, newsletters, bold memes about study affairs...
- Participate in study-themed meetings
 - HYY's Studies Committee! In the committee, you will hear what is happening all around the University
 - The collective advocacy work committees of the organisations in the faculty, for instance
 - Create structures for communication between the persons in charge of academic affairs and student representatives! This provides both parties with information and support with advocacy work
- Organise a study-themed event yourself! 'Wine & Whine' evenings, events for discussing your worries while sewing overall badges, etc. Having a concrete theme is key!

HOW DO I KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE UNIVERSITY'S PERSONNEL?

- Make sure that you have direct contacts: organise an introductory meeting with the most important people. It is a good idea to make a tradition out of this, as it is useful for the University's personnel to maintain good connections with organisations, too!
- Good practices?
 - Inviting persons in charge of academic affairs into staff meetings
 - Getting the persons in charge of academic affairs in faculty organisations included in the faculty's email lists
 - Including personnel in students' communication channels, such as email lists?

WHO CAN I GET SUPPORT FROM?



ADVOCACY WORK IS ALL ABOUT COOPERATION!

- Others in charge of academic affairs in your faculty
- Student representatives!
- HYY's educational policy sector and specialists
- HYY's Studies Committee

ABOUT STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:



- At the beginning of the year, find out who are serving as student representatives
 - In the steering groups of relevant degree programmes
 - In the faculty council of your faculty
 - On your faculty's seats in the collegium
- Student representatives provide you with information on current issues directly from the University's decision-making bodies. On the other hand, you can inform them about important things they should take into account.
- Good practices
 - Create a discussion group, for instance, with all the relevant student representatives
 - Invite them to advocacy work meetings, committees, etc.
 - Organise an event together with the student representatives
 - E.g. on collecting feedback related to curriculum work right now

WHERE CAN I FIND THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES?

<https://beta.halloped.fi/helsinki.fi/>

Open calls for applications, all student representatives appointed by HYY, information on the administrative bodies where the student representatives serve in...

Follow the system to notice open positions for student representatives!
Communicate about the positions in your organisation's channels: it is beneficial for organisations, too, that you have sources of information in all positions for student representatives!

The screenshot shows the HALLOPED.FI website interface. The left sidebar contains the following elements:

- Logo: YIY UIS HELSINKI STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
- HALLOPED.FI
- Language selection: FI | SV | EN
- Current page: helsinki.fi
- User profile: Jenna Sorjonen | helsinki.fi
- Logout button: Kirjautu ulos
- Admin menu: Show admin menu
- Navigation menu: Yliopistot, Ohjeet, Edustajat, Etsi paikkoja ja hae, Omat hakemukset

The main content area on the right is titled "Nykyiset opiskelijaedustajat" (Current student representatives) and includes a search bar and filters:

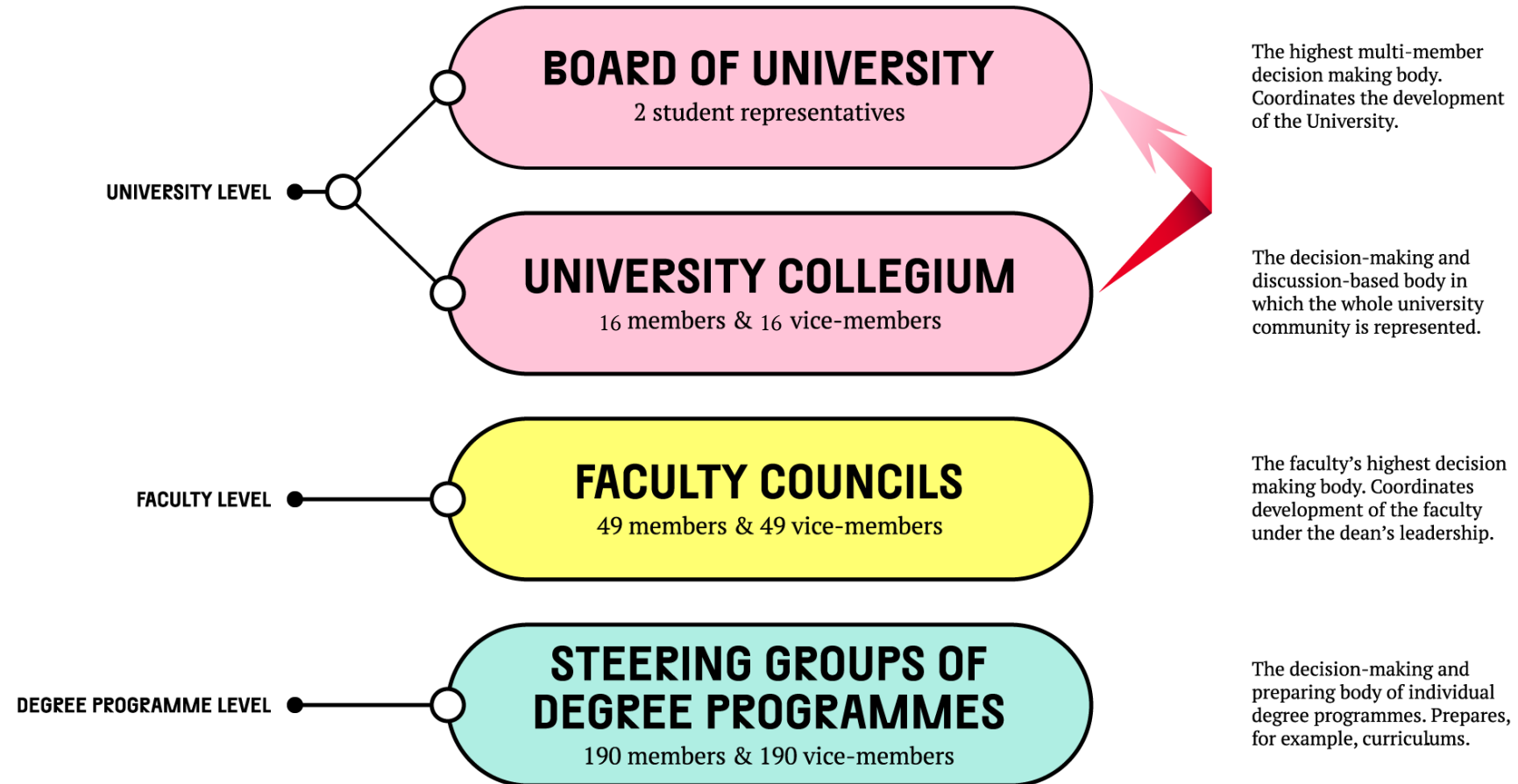
- Search bar: Hae
- Filter: Näytä vain valitut
- Filter buttons: Kandiohjelmien johtoryhmät, Maisteriohjelmien johtoryhmät, Yliopistotaso, Tiedekuntaneuvostot
- Filter button: Yliopistokollegio
- Year selection: Valitse vuosi 2021
- Section: Kandiohjelmien johtoryhmät
- List of groups:
 - ▶ Tietojenkäsittelytieteen kandiohjelman johtoryhmä
 - ▶ Taloustieteen kandiohjelman johtoryhmä
 - ▶ Filosofian kandiohjelman johtoryhmä
 - ▶ Kotimaisten kielten ja kirjallisuuksien kandiohjelman johtoryhmä

STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES OF THE UNIVERSITY

Relevant to persons in charge of academic affairs

- Contacts with at least the student representatives in steering groups and faculty councils
- The most important people in the faculty
- Cooperation with the faculty's other organisations and persons in charge of academic affairs
- Cooperation with the faculty's student representatives



DEGREE PROGRAMMES

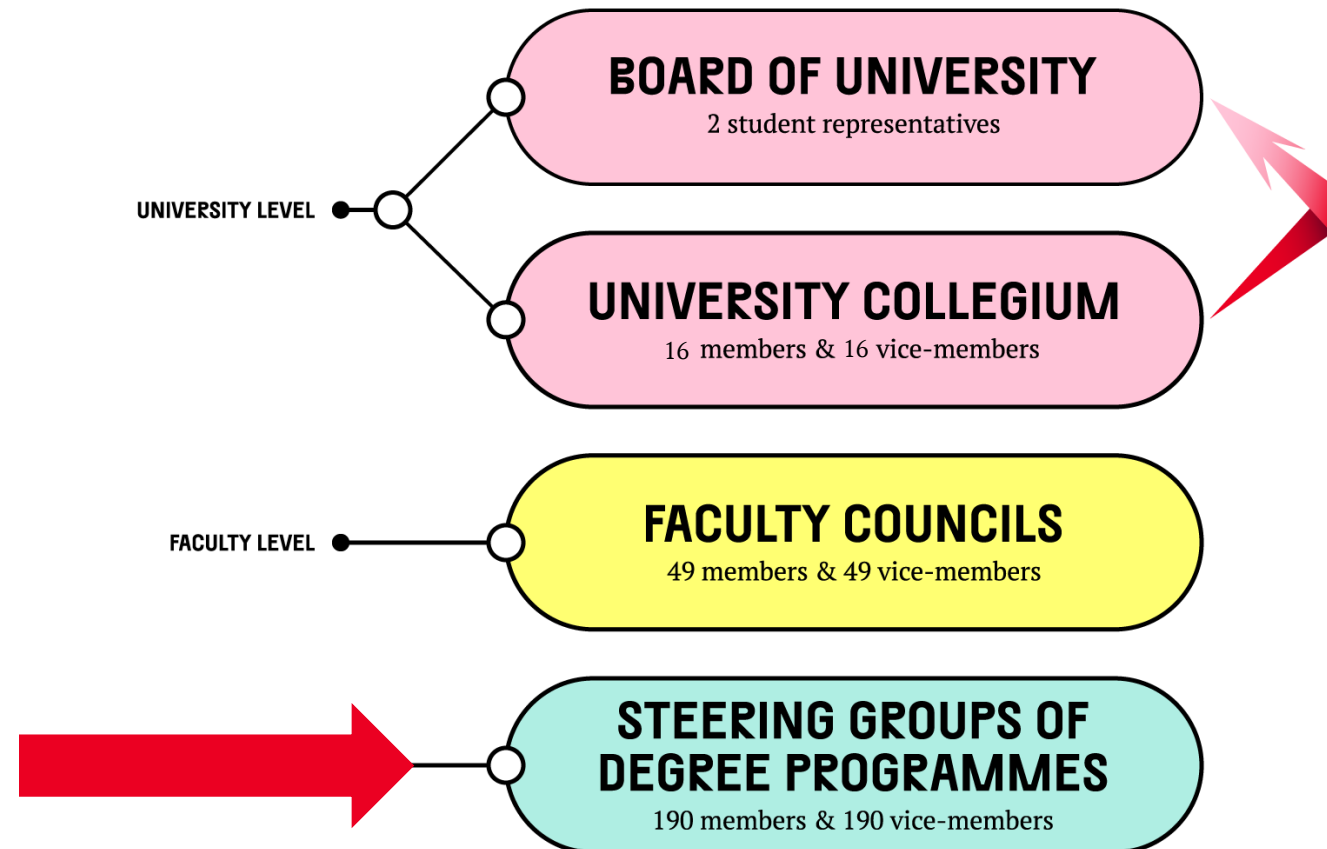
Around 95 bachelor's and master's programmes, 32 doctoral programmes

Degree programmes may contain several study orientations, study modules and courses.

Managed by: director of the degree programme & steering group with student representation

Influence: teaching contents and arrangements – the grassroots level of teaching!

Example decision: teaching programme decided for each academic year (the only decision matter, everything else is preparation and discussion). Also prepares the three-year curricula → very important to students!



FACULTIES

11 faculties + the Swedish School of Social Science, under which there are:

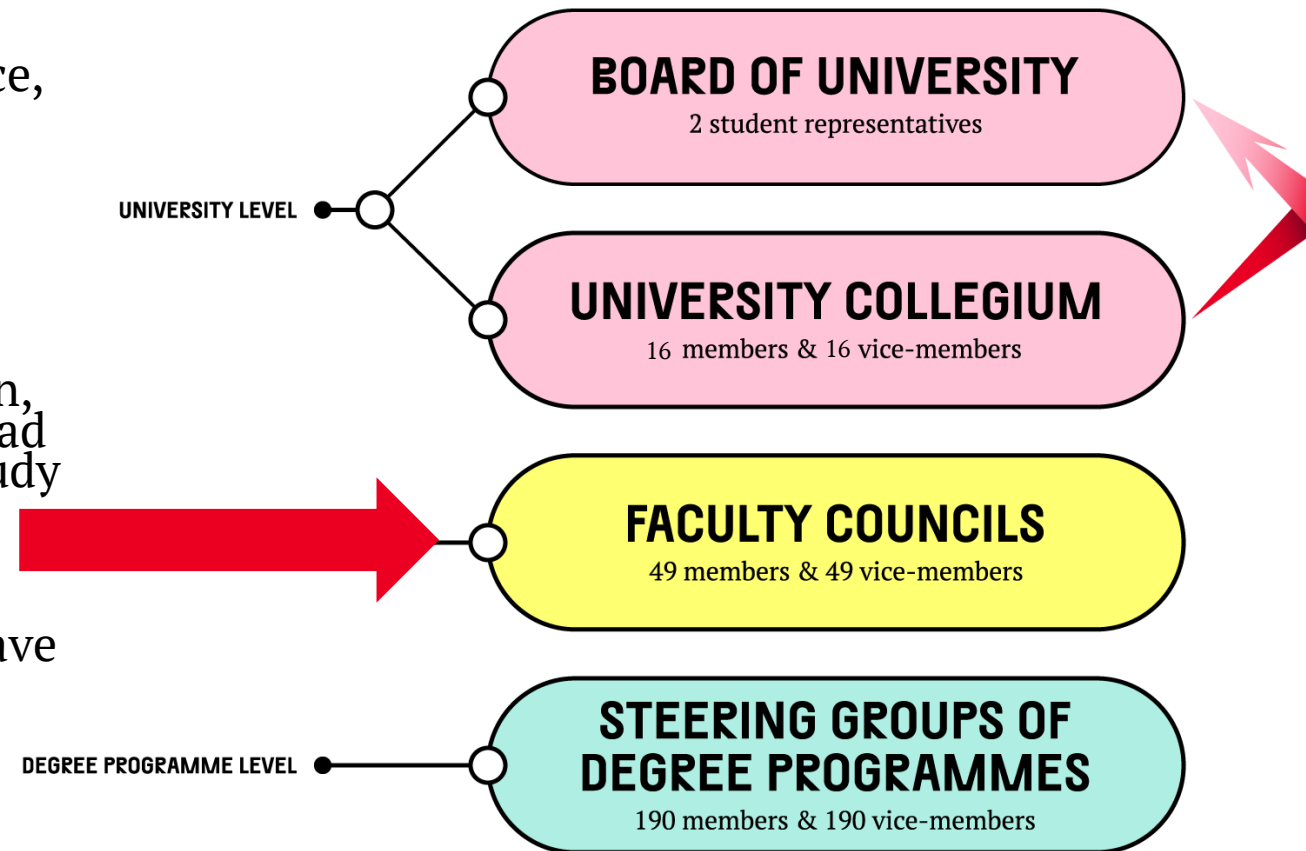
- Degree programmes
- Departments
- Other units (e.g. research stations)

Faculties have their own academic administration, with the most important people including the head of academic affairs, educational coordinators, study advisors...

Managed by: deans & faculty councils, which have student representation

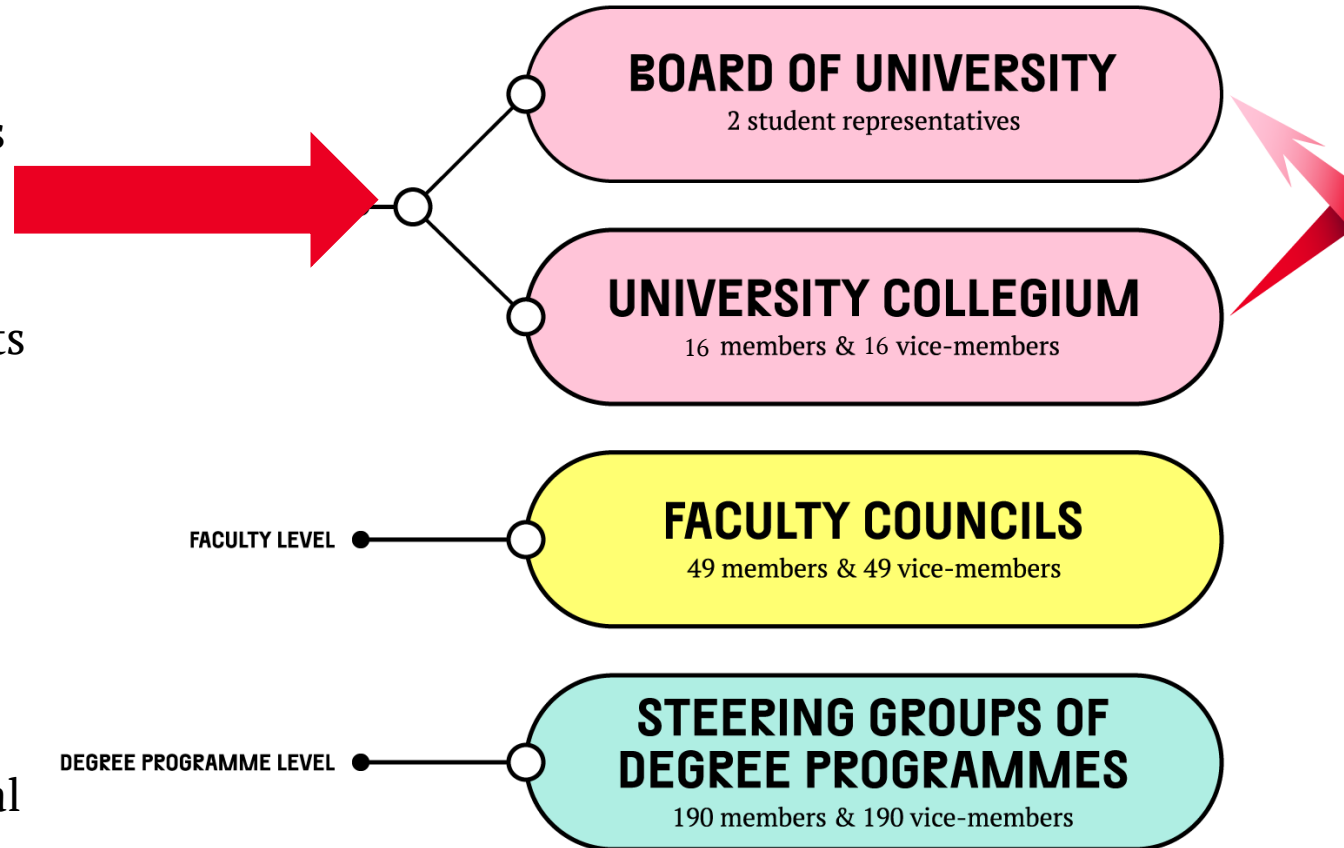
Influence: the faculty's teaching, research and societal interaction

Example decisions: selection of the dean, degree structures, curricula and grounds for the budget



UNIVERSITY LEVEL

- Collegium (48 members, 16 student representatives)
 - Appoints the Board and discusses matters concerning the entire University
- Board (13 members, 2 student representatives)
 - Strategic leader of the University, appoints the Rector
- Rectors (Rector + 3 vice rectors)
 - Operative leader of the University, extensive authority in managing the University
- Decisions of the central management concern the entire University
 - Regulations
 - The University's Strategic Plan and annual implementation plans
 - Policies concerning studies and degrees



OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES

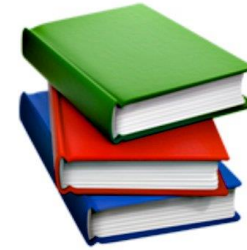


- The University also has several other administrative bodies that do not necessarily hold any decision-making authority but do have extensive preparatory and executive authorities → those important to students have student representation
- Various councils
 - Academic Affairs Council: able to give recommendations and proposals to decision-making bodies
- Independent institutes
 - Those important to students include the board and campus advisory boards of the library, the Open University and the Language Centre
- Various working groups, steering groups, administrative committees...
 - E.g. the administrative committees of campuses' discipline-specific funds, which award grants, the Facilities Committee and the Language Centre's Committee for the Development of Teaching
- Services of the University administration
 - Strategic services, teaching and student services, campus coordination...

ACTIVATING ASSIGNMENT

- OPEN PADLET: https://padlet.com/hyy_helsinki/v6k3ieixa1pf3n3y
- **CASE:** A steering group is preparing the curriculum. You hear rumours that a course in one of the faculty's degree programmes will be organised at the same time as other mandatory teaching in the curriculum. Could you do something about this, who could you contact, what kind of a change do you propose?
- What kind of good practices for persons in charge of academic affairs or in study advocacy work in general do you know from your own faculty or elsewhere?
- What goals and projects do you have for this year?

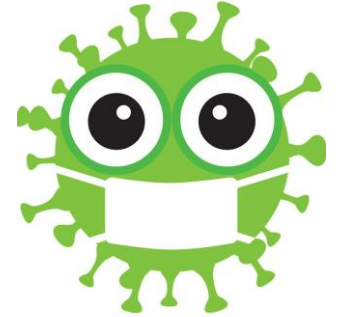
CURRENT NEWS



CURRICULUM WORK

- The curriculum of degree programmes defines teaching for 3 years at a time.
- Includes
 - The degree structure: study units and courses included in the degree
 - The learning objectives, contents and assessment methods of study units and modules
- The curriculum work is happening **NOW!** You should pay attention to the following:
 - Diversity of completion methods, how are remote opportunities taken into account?
 - The minimum amount of teaching on study units and on teachers in different groups providing the same amount of teaching. Especially relevant in seminar groups!
 - Mandatory study units being organised at the same time
- Who affects the curriculum work?
 - Preparation in the steering groups of degree programmes → maintain contacts with their student representatives!

TEACHING AND STUDIES AFTER THE CORONAVIRUS ERA



- The key question is finding the balance between distance and contact teaching
 - Consider what serves a purpose: what kind of teaching is important to organise as contact lectures and what can be organised remotely
 - The University also has an interest to keep students in contact teaching, which means that it will not be abandoned
- The University does not want to adopt hybrid teaching = the lectures of the same course organised as both contact and distance teaching
 - Extremely taxing to teachers, while pedagogics also suffers significantly, which is obviously bad for students, too
- Teachers are free to organise study units as they like to the extent that it is not stated in the curriculum
- **NOW:** The University intends to organise the fourth period as if the situation is normal. Contact teaching and events are a priority
 - The state also has a high threshold to intervene in the organisation of teaching at higher education institutions at this point

RESTORING CONTACTS BETWEEN HYY AND ORGANISATIONS



- HYY is here for you!
- We have good contacts with the University → opportunities to influence matters that concern all students
- Contact the educational policy sector in the following situations, for instance:
 - You observe extensive problems in your faculty and cannot resolve the matter unaided
 - There are problems with Student Services
 - You want to know what a certain decision means and what effects it has in more detail
 - You would like to invite us to a study-themed event or plan such an event together, for instance
- What kind of communication method would you prefer and what sort of things would you like to use it for? Write your answer in Padlet!

https://padlet.com/hyy_helsinki/v6k3ieixa1pf3n3y

DO NOT REMAIN ALONE!

- The most important support mechanism: **cooperation** between everyone in charge of academic affairs in your own faculty!
 - Establish close contacts with the faculty organisation and the persons in charge of academic affairs on it!
 - Find out if you have a collective studies committee
- HYY's **Studies Committee!** Contacts with people active in study affairs in all faculties and administrative bodies guarantees peer support!
- **Remember!** Persons in charge of academic affairs do important work with complex, important matters. Results are achieved in the long term, and your input is an important part of the work for a better future for students!



BRACE YOURSELF



STAY IN TOUCH!

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IMPORTANT LINKS

- HYY's Studies Committee!
 - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/185236442046918>
 - Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/hyy_opinnot/
- 'HYYn opintoasiat', a Facebook group for HYY's study affairs: use the group to ask questions, discuss matters and get information about current issues related to studies. The student representatives of the University Board also belong to the group, which means that there will be insider information!
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/147709798724931>
- Flamma (log in using your UH user account):
<https://flamma.helsinki.fi/fi/group/flamma/>
- Riihi: <https://riihiweb.it.helsinki.fi/1>
- The University's regulations:
<https://www2.helsinki.fi/en/university/university-of-helsinkis-regulations-and-statements>