

1 QUALITY AND PREDICTABILITY FOR 2 STUDIES

3 *HYY'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION PROGRAMME 2023*

4 There is much work to do to achieve a better everyday life and brighter future for students.
5 Investing in students will help ensure that the welfare state can be built on a sustainable
6 foundation in the future, too. However, this requires financial investments and a strong will
7 to make a long-term commitment. Investing in students' subsistence and high-quality
8 teaching at the University is a way of conducting preventive work for students' wellbeing.

9 Our Parliamentary Election Programme has been made with students' interests as the
10 priority. For students, the issues that have an especially important role are the predictability
11 and sufficiency of subsistence as well as ensuring the quality of education. By investing in
12 these themes, we will improve the status of all students. Society must prevent crises that
13 affect students, and immediate action must be taken on the student mental health crisis and
14 environmental crises in particular. This will help us ensure that students retain their study
15 ability and the Earth remains viable.

16 Our Parliamentary Election Programme highlights students' hopes and needs. At the same
17 time, it also offers solutions to the problems. These solutions come with a price attached.
18 We believe that the measures we propose are necessary not only for a better student life but
19 also for the development of our welfare state. Without healthy students and high-quality
20 teaching, new ideas will not emerge and development will stall. Resolving the issues that
21 are important to students is thus, above all, an investment in the future.

22

23 SUFFICIENT AND PREDICTABLE SUBSISTENCE FOR STUDENTS

24 The cuts made to student aid in 2017 had a major impact on the subsistence of higher
 25 education students. An increasing number of students has to take on an unreasonable
 26 amount of debt, while the student loan stock has doubled during the last five years. Many
 27 students also finance their studies by working, which slows down their study progress in
 28 many cases. Up to 13% of students estimate their subsistence to be extremely meagre and
 29 uncertain.

30 Sufficient and predictable subsistence promotes wellbeing among students and helps them
 31 maintain their study ability. Students' subsistence must be developed to ensure that it
 32 enables full-time studying for the entire duration of studies. Taking out a student loan and
 33 working must be voluntary choices – not a necessity to secure one's livelihood.

34 The main aim of the social security reform must be a simpler system that takes students'
 35 needs into account. Students are a diverse group of people, and everyone does not receive
 36 student aid for their studies. The criteria for other benefits must also account for students'
 37 needs. A gratuitous basic income that covers the basic needs in life would be a good solution
 38 in the light of all the perspectives mentioned above.

39 Measures

- 40 - A gratuitous basic income is adopted in connection with the social security reform.
- 41 - The level of study grant must be increased by at least one hundred euros per month.
- 42 - The number of months of student aid is increased.
- 43 - The maximum price of meals at student restaurants must be increased by €0.70, and
 44 the increase must be tied to a simultaneous increase in the meal subsidy. The
 45 maximum price of the meals must be tied to the index.
- 46 - Student benefits must be developed as part of the social security reform, and
 47 students must be actively consulted in the work of the social security committee.
- 48 - Student aid must be moved from the Ministry of Education and Culture to the
 49 Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.



50 - The number of credits completed by students who receive sickness allowance should
51 not be limited.

52 - The two-tier nature of student aid must be abandoned.

53



54 **QUALITY TEACHING WITH SUFFICIENT FUNDING**

55 The keys to the solutions to modern challenges lie with research, science and education. To
56 help universities meet the expectations and obligations placed on them, their operation
57 must be secured through sufficient funding. Raising the level of basic funding for
58 universities to an internationally competitive level is the first step.

59 During the pandemic era, wellbeing among students has decreased. Study guidance, the
60 services of study psychologists and individual arrangements can help guarantee smoother
61 study progress and increase wellbeing by answering the need for support. Sufficient
62 resources must also be allocated for supporting the wellbeing and integration of
63 international students.

64 Implementing these measures requires financial commitment. Investments in education
65 and science have been much discussed, but despite this, we have only witnessed year after
66 year of cuts. Now is the time to take action and make an investment in our common future.

67 **Measures**

- 68 - The level of basic funding for universities must be increased to a Nordic level.
- 69 - Competition between universities, which is encouraged by the current funding
70 model, is dismantled. The sufficiency of other resources than just financial ones
71 must also be taken into account when increasing the number of student places to
72 ensure the quality of education. Cooperation between higher education institutions
73 is supported, and the Finnish higher education sector is strengthened. Funding for
74 universities must account for the quality of degrees and teaching better than it does
75 at present, and the funding indicator for the number of completed degrees must be
76 removed.
- 77 - Increases in the number of student places at universities must be funded in full. The
78 focus on allocating the student places must be on Uusimaa, where the current
79 number of places does not correspond to the pressure exerted by the number of
80 applicants.



- 81 - Student wellbeing is supported by adding sufficient resources for guidance and
82 support services. Students must be able to access study psychologists' services
83 within one month.
- 84 - Finnish university education is made more accessible to international experts by
85 removing tuition fees. Staying in Finland is made easier for international experts by
86 providing enough opportunities and resources for studying the official languages of
87 Finland, by guaranteeing support for career planning and for looking into work
88 opportunities that correspond to their skills and by supporting integration into civil
89 society during their studies. This also requires national antiracism and anti-
90 discrimination measures to dismantle the obstacles they produce for international
91 students wishing to stay in Finland. A grant system for students fleeing persecution
92 and war is established in Finland.
- 93



94 **TREATMENT MUST BE ACCESSIBLE**

95 The coronavirus pandemic has further deepened the mental health crisis of students.
96 Studies have shown that the move away from campuses has led to an accumulation of
97 mental health problems, an increased risk of burnout and a decrease in the importance of
98 student communities.

99 Admission reforms have led to a situation where students admitted into the University are
100 already under more strain than before. At the same time, university studies have become
101 performance-oriented and schedules have tightened. Credits are counted closely both at the
102 University and in Kela.

103 The act on healthcare for students in higher education that came into force at the beginning
104 of 2021 doubled the number of the FSHS's customers. However, the FSHS has not been able
105 to fully rise up to the challenges brought along by the reform and the pandemic. The reform
106 also brought along a significant change in the payment method of the health care fee, which
107 is threatening to force thousands of students to be referred to the enforcement authorities
108 every academic term.

109 The growth in mental health symptoms among students must be stopped, and access to
110 treatment must be available on short notice.

111

112 **Measures**

- 113 - The FSHS's operating conditions must be secured in the long term by increasing the
114 funding allocated to it. Reception times should be added to correspond to the
115 demand. Students must have quick access to treatment.
- 116 - An invoice for the FSHS fee must be sent to all students. The service provider's
117 communication channels must feature extensive communication about the
118 payment.
- 119 - Access to psychotherapy must be improved. Psychotherapy training must be made
120 publicly funded and free to students. Rehabilitative psychotherapy should be made
121 free to all students.

122



123 **SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE EVERYDAY LIFE**

124 The environmental crisis is one of the greatest intergenerational issues of our time,
125 affecting both current and future students. To prevent suffering, uncertainty and costs that
126 fall especially on young people and on humans and other species that are, on a global scale,
127 in the weakest position, Finland must be ambitious in its climate action. Phasing out fossil
128 fuels is a more topical issue than ever, and the carbon neutrality goal of 2035 requires
129 binding action. The holistic nature of the current crisis must be acknowledged, which
130 requires us to stop biodiversity loss and to protect and restore endangered ecosystems.

131 Students must be guaranteed the opportunity to live sustainably, which can be done by
132 promoting ecologically sustainable travel, housing and consumption. Public transport has
133 been hit hard by the pandemic, and the state must therefore ensure its continuity and the
134 retention of its quality. By enabling the adoption of congestion charges, we can promote
135 smoothly running public transport as well as make it more profitable. An act on corporate
136 responsibility would ensure that students are able to make sustainable choices in their
137 everyday life.

138 We believe that Finland must act with determination and ambition in the fight against the
139 environmental crisis. We must act now – there is no more time for delays.

140 **Measures**

- 141 - The state must support public transport to ensure the quality and continuity of
142 services. Cities must be allowed to adopt congestion charges.
- 143 - An ambitious national act on corporate responsibility must be enacted in Finland to
144 support EU-level regulation. The national act on corporate responsibility must also
145 cover small and medium-sized enterprises.
- 146 - The taxation and subsidisation systems must be rapidly changed to strongly
147 incentivise the reduction of emissions and environmental conservation. A carbon
148 tax for companies is adopted to complement the emissions trade.