



## MID-TERM DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AUTUMN 2022 - BACKGROUND MATERIAL FOR THE STAFF AND STUDENTS' MEETING

### **As background**

The Ministry of Education and Culture's steering of institutes of higher education is based on four-year terms. The current period 2021–2024 is approaching its mid-term and the Ministry of Education and Culture will organise mid-term discussions with all institutes of higher education during autumn 2022. These events will be accompanied by a meeting between the Ministry of Education and Culture and staff and students at each institute of higher education.

At the University of Vaasa, the meeting will take place as an open discussion event with the University community on Thursday 29 September 2022 at 12.40–2.00 p.m. in the Levon auditorium. Participants will be invited to a joint lunch before the meeting. Director General Atte Jääskeläinen, Director Jonna Korhonen, Senior Ministerial Adviser Jorma Karhu and Senior Ministerial Adviser Soili Vasikainen from the Ministry of Education and Culture will attend the meeting, as well as representatives of the University's management. The event will be chaired by Director General Atte Jääskeläinen.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has prepared advance information for the event, which aim to provide the necessary information to staff and students attending the meeting. Discussions with students and staff can also address some of the same issues related to strategic objectives as with the University's management. The aim is to have an open dialogue between the different actors. It is hoped that, in the debate, participants will also raise issues they consider important outside the questionnaire, which have a bearing on governance between the ministry and universities.

## **General questions of the mid-term review of the 2021–2024 higher education contract period**

The aim of the mid-term discussions is to clarify the ministry's view of the specific challenges and direction of the University and its domain, to ensure progress towards the objectives of higher education and science policy, and to support the management in the strategic development of the University. The mid-term discussions continue the strategic dialogue between the two sides.

The framework for the mid-term review is the five strategic objectives derived from the Government's Sustainability Roadmap and the Sustainable Growth Agenda for Higher Education:

- *High-quality education increases skills and the supply of skilled labour.* The aim is to raise the percentage of young people attending tertiary education to 50%.
- *Continuous learning supports the renewal of skills and working life.* The aim is to contribute to the systemic change of continuous learning through a strong higher education offering.
- *The number of international experts in higher education and the labour market is growing.* The aim is to increase the intake of foreign students to 15,000, and increase their employment rate to 75%.
- Research supports knowledge, education, well-being and sustainable growth. The aim is to increase RDI intensity and research funding to reach a share of 4% of GDP by 2030.
- *Digitalisation improves the quality of higher education and research and the appropriate use of resources.* The aim is to ensure a coherent implementation of the common digital vision of institutes of higher education.

Through the framework, the progress of the University's key strategic objectives, the strengthening of its capabilities and the implementation of systemic change in the University will be examined, as well as the potential needs for reassessment and repositioning in higher education value creation. The ministry is also looking for input for the preparation of the next contract period.

### **Specific questions for the staff-students' meeting**

The aim of the event is to raise awareness of changes in the University's environment. At the same time, members of the community will have the opportunity to put forward ideas on how the ministry could support the well-being of staff and students.

The preliminary questions put forward by the Ministry of Education and Culture are:

1. How has the University managed to ensure that staff and students have the opportunity to participate and influence?
2. What measures have been taken to engage the University community in the University's strategy?
3. How are the profiles and priorities defined in the University's strategy reflected in its activities and the quality of its teaching and research?
4. How have the coronavirus pandemic and the changes in the international situation affected people's well-being and working atmosphere?
5. What are the main changes in staff numbers or job content that have been implemented and planned, and what are their effects (strengthening staff skills and management)?
6. What good practices exist in the University to develop pedagogical leadership, teacher competence or the career system?
7. How successful has the integration of international students and its support been in the activities of the University and Student Union?
8. How does the university ensure that the principles of equality and diversity are implemented among its staff and students?
9. How could the Ministry of Education and Culture contribute to the well-being of staff and students and the smooth running of studies?