



Vaasan yliopisto
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA



University of Vaasa Accessibility Plan 2024–2026

University of Vaasa 2024

The draft Accessibility Plan has been produced by Ilpo Ojala, Senior Advisor, and Sannakaisa Holmlund, Specialist in Study Affairs. It has undergone a participatory round of comments in the University of Vaasa's Accessibility Working Group and has been discussed in the University of Vaasa's Management Team. The Rector approved the plan on 14.6.2024.

Contents

	Page
1 ACCESSIBILITY IS EQUALITY	3
1.1 What does accessibility mean as a concept?	3
1.2 Accessibility in this plan	5
2 BACKGROUND ON PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VAASA	5
3 ACCESSIBILITY LEGISLATION	7
3.1 National legislation	7
3.1.1 Constitution, Universities Act and Non-Discrimination Act	7
3.1.2 Web Accessibility Directive and digital services	8
3.1.3 Obligation of public authorities to provide digital services	8
3.1.4 European Accessibility Act	9
3.1.5 Accessible and barrier-free study environment	9
3.2 Regulations and instructions of the University of Vaasa	10
4 ACTION PLAN	11
4.1 Campus area and premises	12
Measures	12
4.2 Personnel and services	13
Measures	13
4.3 Student admission, studies, teaching and supervision	14
4.3.1 Student admission	14
4.3.2 Studying, teaching and study guidance	14
4.3.3 Learning materials	15
Measures	16
4.4 Digital accessibility: communication and IT	16
Measures	17
4.5 Library	18
Measures	18
5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PLAN	19
6 SOURCES	20

1 ACCESSIBILITY IS EQUALITY

The University of Vaasa is committed to supporting its members' engagement in the university community and their participation in its activities. At the level of day-to-day operations, we also strive to ensure the equal implementation of participation in the university's activities and the use of services.

Accessibility is a prerequisite for the realisation of equality in the university's operations and the use of its services.

The aim of the Accessibility Plan is to support and promote accessibility in the university's operations. The development of accessibility is a process that aims to improve operations and promote the realisation of accessibility in day-to-day operations. Various barriers and gaps in the accessibility of services may actually weaken the realisation of opportunities for participation. The Accessibility Plan aims to promote practices and methods that support the promotion of accessibility, and to support as inclusive accessibility development as possible.

Another goal of accessibility work is to produce and share information, understanding and expertise related to accessibility for both university employees and students. By increasing knowledge, we contribute to the identification of accessibility barriers and support the dissemination of good practices related to accessibility in the university community.

The implementation of the Accessibility Plan is ultimately a development activity by the actors in the university's service organisation. This plan briefly describes the background to accessibility work and the norms guiding it and defines accessibility development targets for the period 2024–2026. The Accessibility Plan defines the goals, targets and responsibilities for the promotion of accessibility.

The plan sets realistic and measurable objectives for operations, which are used to monitor the development of accessibility. In this way, the plan forms an operating model to support the development of accessibility, which can be used to assess accessibility and its realisation.

1.1 What does accessibility mean as a concept?

An accessible and barrier-free operating culture focuses on equality, equity, non-discrimination and inclusion, as well as interaction and communality. The physical, mental, social and digital environment must be organised and implemented such that everyone can

operate on equal footing with others regardless of their characteristics. Different groups and individuals must have opportunities to influence things, especially in matters concerning themselves, so that everyone can feel part of the community. An accessible operating culture is marked by acceptance and a positive attitude towards diversity. An accessible environment can also be viewed from the point of view of safety; an accessible and barrier-free environment is also safe and functional. Although the meanings inherent in the concepts are partially differentiated, accessibility and a barrier-free environment are often mentioned together.

As a concept, 'barrier-free environment' refers to the consideration of all kinds of people in the physical environment. The physical environment includes outdoor areas, buildings, facilities and furniture, as well as their maintenance. A barrier-free environment benefits all users of the premises.

“A barrier-free environment does not differentiate people based on their functional capacity” -Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities

Accessibility, on the other hand, refers to the non-built environment, that is, the 'intangible' environment. Accessibility is pervasive and needs to be taken into account in all activities; for example, information, websites and services are suitable for everyone, or the atmosphere and attitudes take into account the diversity of people. The accessibility of communications, information and services takes into account different ways of communicating and obtaining information and services. Social accessibility refers to attitudes, equality and non-discrimination. Social accessibility is a positive attitude towards diversity and appreciative behaviour towards others.

In reality, the different levels of accessibility overlap and are interconnected. In fact, it can be considered a chain of accessibility and barrier-free environments, where all elements of the service must be accessible and barrier-free.

Accessibility is closely linked to the concept of inclusion or inclusiveness, as well as the *Design for All* principle in planning and design. The idea is to modify the service environment and systems so that they can be used by all users despite the person's disability, dyslexia or other difficulty. This reduces the need to make things separately accessible or barrier free. The definition of inclusion also includes the idea that all people are equal. The development of accessibility is ideally initiated already at the planning stage of the function, in which case different user needs can best be taken into account. However, it is also possible to develop accessibility in terms of existing facilities and services.

Accessibility has often been perceived as meaning a barrier-free operating environment or facilities, the development of which has contributed to the opportunities for people with physical or other functional challenges to study, operate on the university's premises or use

the university's services. The University of Vaasa has carried out accessibility development work for a long time, at first especially from the point of view of an accessible environment in terms of premises, student admission, teaching and guidance services.

1.2 Accessibility in this plan

The general concept used in this plan is the concept of accessibility, which includes the concept of a barrier-free physical and service environment. In addition to the Accessibility Plan, the university has an Equality Plan, a Code of Conduct and, among other things, language policies that concretise the goals outlined in the university's strategy and guide the activities of the university community.

Accessibility means the implementation of services in such a way that they are accessible to as many users as possible, regardless of personal characteristics.

The main objective of the development of accessibility is to enable as equal opportunities as possible for different groups of actors to participate in the activities of the university community. Another objective is the development of the university's services in such a way that the user's personal characteristics do not restrict or exclude anyone from the services. In practice, this means that the diversity and individual needs of people are taken into account in operations and the development of services.

2 BACKGROUND ON PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

The University of Vaasa has been engaged in accessibility work since the early 2000s. Initially focused on improving the prerequisites for barrier-free studying and student admission, the activities have since expanded to cover not only barrier-free physical premises, but also the usability of the university's services and the development of accessibility and equality related to the social environment.

In the development of accessibility, there has been a strong objective of engaging and consulting the university community, which has been implemented with several different methods. Students have participated in the development of activities, for example by working in various working groups and responding to the university's own and national surveys directed at the university community. The university has prepared reports and

development plans related to accessibility in cooperation, and accessibility has also been taken into account in the university strategy.

Cooperation and development with the student union and other stakeholders

Issues related to accessibility are communicated, for example, on the university's website, on the intranets of staff and students, guides, instructions and recommendations. The university has organised various own events and training sessions, in addition to which university students have participated in the production of national materials, events and trainings.

The University has collaborated with local and national actors and projects, such as the ESOK project for barrier-free studies in higher education (2006–2011), the OHO! project for study ability, wellbeing and inclusion (2017–2019), Pohjanmaan lukiyhdistys Lössin ry and Datero ry. In addition, the university develops accessibility practices in close cooperation with the student union.

The University of Vaasa has long-standing practices concerning accessible studies and supporting the progress of studies, which have been updated as necessary. Students can apply for individual study arrangements related to their studies, which are special measures taken to support their studies. The university has also developed other measures to support accessibility, including courses for students who suffer from stage fright.

Work on barrier-free environments resulted in need-based arrangements, the 'exam aquarium' and EXAM activities

In addition to the training modules provided, instructions on the accessible teaching methods and the production of accessible materials, along with a knowledge bank on difficulties of studying and learning, have been put together for the staff. The staff have also been instructed, among other things, on subtitling videos and taking into account a wide range of learners and students, especially in distance education.

Barrier-free university premises has been developed based on the results of the surveys conducted for the university community. This has improved the operating environment's mobility conditions and the sensory environment. Accessibility has also been emphasised in the extensive renovations of the campus facilities. In the procurement and development of the university's electronic systems and services, the requirements of the Act on the Provision of Digital Services are taken into account.

3 ACCESSIBILITY LEGISLATION

Accessibility in higher education is regulated by legislation and other standards. In addition to domestic legislation, several international agreements and standards lay the foundation for accessible activities and services. Below are some of the main national standards that influence and guide the implementation of accessibility in the activities of higher education institutions.

3.1 National legislation

3.1.1 Constitution, Universities Act and Non-Discrimination Act

Equality is provided for in the Constitution (731/1999, section 6), according to which no one shall, without an acceptable reason, be treated differently from other persons on the ground of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, health, disability or other reason that concerns his or her person. According to the Universities Act (558/2009, section 37a), factors relating to the health and functional capacity of an applicant may not preclude admission. The Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014, section 8) contains a clause stating that no one may be discriminated against on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, denial of reasonable accommodation and an instruction or order to discriminate constitute discrimination as referred to in the Non-Discrimination Act. The Non-Discrimination Act obliges the education provider and the educational institution to evaluate the realisation of equality in their activities and take necessary measures to promote the realisation of equality with measures that are effective, expedient and proportionate, taking into account the educational institution's resources and other circumstances (section 6). The education provider has to make due and appropriate adjustments necessary in each situation for a person with disabilities to be able, equally with others, gain access to education (section 15).

In practice, the promotion and monitoring of equality and accessibility take place through the measures, monitoring and evaluation presented in the Equality Plan and the Accessibility Plan. The University of Vaasa has an Equality Plan, which includes policies on the prevention of discrimination and measures related to their monitoring, whereas the Accessibility Plan defines the measures concerning accessibility and its monitoring.

3.1.2 Web Accessibility Directive and digital services

Promoting accessibility is an important part of the digitalisation of services. In terms of digital services, accessibility means that websites and mobile applications, as well as content, are such that they can be used and understood by anyone.

The Web Accessibility Directive (EU 2016/2102) provides for a minimum level of accessibility of online public administration services and the monitoring of the implementation of accessibility. The Web Accessibility Directive aims to

- promote the ability of all to play a full role in the digital society,
- establish a Europe-wide set of harmonised minimum standards for the accessibility of public websites and mobile applications,
- improve the quality of digital services, and
- improve the internal market for making accessibility a reality in the European Union.

The accessibility requirements are binding on public administration organisations, as well as some civic organisations and companies. The Web Accessibility Directive and the nationally enacted Act on the Provision of Digital Services have been in force since 2019.

3.1.3 Obligation of public authorities to provide digital services

The Act on the Provision of Digital Services (306/2019) implements the above-described EU Web Accessibility Directive in Finland. The requirements of the act apply to public authorities, that is, to all organisations that perform public administration tasks. The act also applies to universities as applicable. The act aims to guarantee the users of the services the right to good digital service. (Ministry of Finance 2022). Act contains principles for the organisation of digital services, including

- obligation to provide digital services and e-services,
- ensuring the availability of digital services,
- compatibility with support services and other public authorities' digital services,
- identification of users only when necessary, and
- high-quality design, data security and compatibility of digital services.

Accessibility is also related to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), according to which digital online services should aim to reach the AA level of the latest WCAG guidelines.

3.1.4 European Accessibility Act

The European Accessibility Act, or the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council (2019/882), aims to promote the possibility for all, but especially for persons with disabilities, to engage in independent activities in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Products and services must be designed and manufactured such as to ensure that people with disabilities can use them as independently as possible.

The implementation of the European Accessibility Act has brought, among other things, amendments to the Act on the Provision of Digital Services and the Act on Electronic Communications Services. The amendments to the legislation cover, for example, the accessibility and barrier-free environments of online shops and mobile apps. The acts entered into force on 1 February 2023, and their application will, as a rule, begin on 28 June 2025.

3.1.5 Accessible and barrier-free study environment

The university's goal is to ensure the most accessible and barrier-free study and work environment possible for students and staff.

The barrier-free nature of the university's premises and study environments is dealt with in various regulations. The barrier-free nature of buildings and courtyards is regulated by the Land Use and Building Act (132/1999) and the Government Decree on Accessibility, which entered into force in May 2017. The purpose of the minimum requirements for barrier-free buildings is to promote the equality of people and the accessibility of services.

According to the Ministry of the Environment's guidelines on barrier-free buildings (2018), if there is an audio system in an auditorium, classroom, conference room, restaurant or similar assembly room or public service room, it must have an induction loop or other similar sound transmission system. In addition, there must be a sufficient number of wheelchair spaces in the premises. Public buildings, such as universities, must have parking spaces reserved for people with reduced mobility in the parking areas, and the entrances to the buildings must be barrier-free for users of wheeled assistive devices.

Accessibility and barrier-free environments are also regulated by several norms, guidelines and recommendations for premises, some of which are mentioned in the sources of the plan.

Promoting accessibility is everyone's business. On a practical level, the accessibility work at the University of Vaasa is promoted and monitored by the Accessibility Working Group. As a tool in the promotion of accessibility, there is the Accessibility Plan with its objectives, which ensure that the work is carried out in a purposeful and systematic manner. Accessibility is also promoted on a practical level by the university's services, especially facility

management, human resources management, information management, communications and student services.

3.2 Regulations and instructions of the University of Vaasa

In addition to legislation, the university's accessibility work is supported by the university's internal regulations, instructions and guidelines that steer its operations. The operations of the University of Vaasa are guided by its **University Regulations**. They define the tasks, organisation and management practices of the university. The **University of Vaasa Degree Regulations** cover, among other things, student admission, right to study, curricula and the grading of study attainments. The purpose of the **University of Vaasa rules of conduct** is to ensure peaceful studying and working conditions, a barrier-free, comfortable and safe study and work environment, as well as the equal treatment of persons.

The **instructions supplementing the University of Vaasa Degree Regulations** concern, among other things, the completion and assessment of studies. The instructions include practical instructions and guidelines for the assessment of study attainments and the organisation of exams. The **University of Vaasa Ethical Guidelines** contain the ethical principles and recommendations that steer the university's operations. The **University Code of Conduct** and the **University of Vaasa language policies** set goals for the development of the university's administration, the language proficiency requirements for degrees and the teaching and research languages. These documents guide and align the university's ways of operating in terms of different functional and linguistic practices in the implementation of services.

The university also has a rector's decision concerning staff on the **operating procedure for the use of Finnish and English**. The **University of Vaasa career structure** defines the key personnel policy practices and development principles and clarifies the division of responsibilities between operators. The **recruitment instructions** ensure an open, transparent and equal staff selection procedure.

The Equality Working Group under the university's Occupational Safety and Health Committee prepares the university's **Equality Plan**, which aims to promote equality and prevent any discrimination or harassment at the university. In accordance with the division of labour, the Accessibility Plan focuses particularly on issues of accessibility and barrier-free environments, while the Equality Plan includes a section related to the prevention of harassment and discrimination, among other things.

The **Accessibility Plan** has been implemented at the University of Vaasa as a separate but parallel and complementary document that aims to deepen the goals and practical actions for enhancing accessibility at the university.

4 ACTION PLAN

The University of Vaasa Accessibility Plan for 2023–2026 examines the university's accessibility situation after nearly two decades of work on accessibility and equality. In accordance with its strategy, the university directs and develops its activities towards the goal of being an internationally recognised research university. The university lives with the times, and through this, its development goals guide and are reflected in its activities and accessibility work.

The Accessibility Plan describes the objectives of accessibility work and the means by which accessibility is developed. It is also important to link the accessibility goals into indicators through which the progress towards the goals is monitored and evaluated.

The indicators are mainly based on user surveys, customer reviews and other feedback. The evaluation of the realisation of accessibility is also important because accessibility as a concept extends to the most significant and, at the same time, the broadest functions of the university. These include studying, teaching and supervision, human resources and student administration service processes, the physical environment (such as the campus area and facilities), the university's digital services, systems and communications, and the operations of the academic library.

The development of accessibility applies to all the activities of the university.

Accessibility is a cross-cutting theme in the university's operations. According to the university's strategy, the university seeks to be international in its operations. This means that, in all activities and in promoting accessibility, internationality is a cross-cutting theme that is taken into account in the development of activities.

The university also aims to support and promote the wide-ranging promotion of accessibility in the university community and to monitor the progress of development work. In order to achieve an overview of the realisation of accessibility, comprehensive monitoring is needed. The following sections present the state of play of accessibility policies by function and related development activities.

4.1 Campus area and premises

The University of Vaasa's premises are mainly located on the Palosaari campus in Vaasa. In addition, the university has facilities in Helsinki, the University Consortium of Seinäjoki UCS, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, the University Consortium of Pori, the Ilmajoki Campus and the SCR unit in Lapua.

On the Palosaari campus in Vaasa, the University of Vaasa operates in several buildings (Tervahovi, Ankkuri, Fabriikki, Luotsi, Konttori and Puuvillatalo) and the Technobothnia and VEBIC laboratories. The building stock is of varying ages; the newest building was completed in the early 2000s, other fairly new buildings were built in the early 1990s, and the oldest buildings used to house a cotton mill in the 19th century.

The University of Vaasa is undergoing a campus reform spanning several years. The purpose of the reform is to centralise the activities of the Palosaari campus on the buildings to be renovated and to make them into a modern campus area with modern and adaptable facilities that meet the needs of all users.

From the point of view of accessibility, the premises of the campus area refers to the real estate, yard and parking areas and related passageways, facilities and functions, within the framework of which the university staff and the student operate. The functionality of the premises is of great importance for the accessibility of services and functions. In practice, the equipment, operational and health-related safety, lighting and signage, as well as the furniture and material solutions of the facilities are relevant to the functionality, usability and accessibility of the facilities.

From the point of view of accessibility and barrier-free environments, the facilities are quite different from each other. On the other hand, the university's premises have undergone development activities in the 21st century, as a result of which the accessibility and barrier-free environment of the premises has been significantly improved. The oldest buildings have received lifts, automatic doors, accessible toilets, lighting improvements and signage, among other improvements. In addition, the overall functionality, space divisions and equipment of all facilities have been improved.

Measures

- 1) The barriers of university premises will be mapped. Policies and responsibilities related to accessibility and barrier-free environments will be clarified. The requirements of accessible and barrier-free operations will also be taken into account in the campus renovation and in the development of the premises.
- 2) Based on the mapping of the premises, targets for improvement will be selected and prioritised by building. Recommendations will be drawn up according to the need for use of the premises, concerning, among other things, the lighting of the premises, acoustics, sound transmission and sound reproduction systems, as well as other solutions related to the accessibility of the premises. Service design will be utilised in the development of the premises.

- 3) The general accessibility, equipment, functionality and ergonomics of teaching facilities will be improved. It will be ensured that sufficient and accessible facilities are reserved for the performance of independent study rooms and electronic exams.
- 4) The lighting, signage and guiding materials and markings of campus routes, parking areas and green areas will be improved and harmonised. Signage will be implemented and positioned in an accessible manner. It will be ensured that parking spaces reserved for people with reduced mobility are appropriately located. Signage will be clear and uninterrupted. Accessible signage will be legible, noticeable and correctly positioned.
- 5) Adequate level of winter maintenance of campus areas will be ensured to ensure barrier-free and safe mobility. Sufficient lighting will be provided in outdoor areas.
- 6) Various disturbances critical to operations and security of supply, including power outages, heat distribution, data connections, security situation, and access control, will be prepared for, and barrier-free emergency exits will be ensured.

4.2 Personnel and services

The university's staff consists of different personnel groups – teaching and research staff as well as expert and support staff – whose tasks differ from each other. The university's goal is to produce services according to the strategy in the most accessible way possible. When selecting measures for the development of accessibility, the development needs of the services, the individual needs of the teams and staff, as well as the available resources are taken into account.

The University of Vaasa promotes accessibility, for example, by developing internal and external communication, especially related to the provision of services, and by offering staff training in accessibility issues for the development of services. The university also promotes participation in the activities of the university community, for example through the language policies and the Equality Programme. The training of staff promotes accessibility in the university's various activities and aims to make accessibility part of everyone's daily work.

Measures

- 1) Accessibility training will be provided for both supervisors and other staff.
- 2) Accessibility training will be made part of the induction programme for new employees.
- 3) Supervisors will contribute to the realisation of accessibility for their own team by encouraging team members to participate in relevant training. The theme of accessibility will be included as part of development discussions and the topic will be highlighted in supervisory work.
- 4) Supervisors will be advised to appoint an accessibility manager from their team, who will take a deeper look at the topic and support accessibility work in their team.
- 5) Feedback will be collected and the progress of accessibility work evaluated on a regular basis.

4.3 Student admission, studies, teaching and supervision

The objective of accessible studies is the equality of students and the accessibility of study services, including teaching, guidance and so on, from the time of applying for studies to the completion of studies. The Open University follows the same practices as the degree programmes of the University of Vaasa.

4.3.1 Student admission

The aim is to produce entrance exam pre-reads, that is, specific texts that applicants are required to read in preparation for the entrance exam, and other materials in an accessible format. This applies both to the materials of commercial publishers and to the materials published in the university's own publication series.

The entrance exam pre-reads must be announced in time so that the applicant can contact Accessibility Library Celia to order the entrance exam pre-reads in an accessible format, if necessary. Entrance exam pre-reads published in the University of Vaasa's own publication series are automatically delivered to Celia for audiobook production. They are also produced in EPUB format, which is an open file format adaptable to many kinds of hardware or software. In the entrance exams of the University of Vaasa, entrance exam pre-reads are only required for the entrance exam of Communication Sciences. Entrance exams organised under the joint application system do not have pre-reads.

Individual arrangements for entrance exams refer to practices related to participation in entrance exams. The purpose of the arrangements is to ensure that all applicants are in an equal position in the admission process.

If an entrance exam participant needs other individual arrangements, they must contact the admission services to start the necessary individual arrangements. Individual arrangements in entrance exams may include extra time, a desk apart from others, or exam materials in large print or Braille.

More information about the individual arrangements available for admissions can be found on the Opiskelijaksi (Study with us) page under Kandidaattiohjelmat > Näin haet > Yksilölliset järjestelyt valintakokeessa ("Bachelor's programmes > How to apply > Individual arrangements for the entrance exam").

In student admissions and admission criteria, the functionality and development of the process is monitored from the point of view of the legal protection and equality of the applicant.

4.3.2 Studying, teaching and study guidance

It is important that study and teaching arrangements and practices are implemented in such a way that all students receive the support they need in their studies. Study counsellors and teachers provide curriculum-specific study guidance. The content of the studies and other plans can also be discussed with the personal study plan (PSP) counsellors of the training programmes/subjects.

Students at the University of Vaasa can apply for individual arrangements related to their studies due to a particular reason. Individual study arrangements are measures taken to support studies, which are related to the completion and assessment of studies.

Individual study arrangements are intended to secure for students the opportunity to learn and demonstrate their competence based on the objectives of the course. Individual arrangements must not affect the achievement of the learning outcomes of the course.

Individual study arrangements may include the transfer of teaching to a space that is accessible for the student, the delivery of teaching materials in advance, or other support measures or solutions related to methods of performance and teaching. They can also be related to exams, such as extra time, a quiet room or being allowed to use a computer. The grounds for applying for individual study arrangements may include a hearing impairment, visual defect or other disability, neuropsychiatric challenges, such as ADHD or an autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia or other learning difficulties, challenges in concentration and attention, mental health problems, allergies or other hypersensitivities. More detailed instructions on the grounds and application for individual study arrangements, as well as, for example, information on contact persons, can be found on Students page and in the student intranet Jolla under Saavutettava opiskelu (Accessible Studying).

Instructions for teaching staff have been compiled in the staff intranet Messi, covering things like accessibility and individual study arrangements, as well as tips and support for accessible teaching. The Messi intranet also contains a knowledge bank on difficulties of studying and learning.

4.3.3 Learning materials

The accessibility of learning materials means that each student can equally benefit from the learning material distributed and from the learning environment, regardless of their individual needs. Accessible material is clear, logical and easy to read. Accessible learning materials benefit all students, but especially students with reading and learning difficulties.

Materials published in the University of Vaasa's own publication series are automatically delivered to Accessibility Library Celia for audiobook production. Publications are produced in EPUB format, which is an open file format adaptable to many kinds of hardware or software. Other learning materials should be announced as early as possible so that the student can contact Celia if necessary to request the editing of the materials into an accessible format.

Accessibility legislation affects digital teaching materials, so they must comply with the accessibility criteria. However, accessibility legislation does not apply to the following digital educational materials.

- Teaching materials that are only used for one academic year for a limited group. If the material is used year after year with minor changes, it should be available in the same way as if the material is aimed at an unlimited group.
- Learning materials created by the students themselves, which are published, for example, in Moodle.

- Video recordings published within Moodle and used for up to one academic year do not have to be subtitled. There is also no need to subtitle streaming broadcasts and similar materials.

Detailed information on, for example, the accessibility requirements for digital materials can be found in the university's staff intranet Messi in the section Saavutettavat materiaalit ("Accessible materials").

Measures

- 1) Individual study arrangements related to accessibility will be further developed. Instructions related to study arrangements will also be highlighted in Messi, thus increasing the staff's awareness of, among other things, study arrangements related to accessibility.
- 2) In student admissions, the functionality and development of the process will be monitored from the point of view of the legal protection and equality of students.
- 3) Teaching and study facilities will be developed so that they enable individual study arrangements in teaching and exam situations as well as in independent study.
- 4) In teaching and study guidance, accessibility aspects will also be extensively taken into account online. Pedagogical solutions will take into account a wide range of learners.
- 5) General accessibility training and orientation for staff will be increased and the university will be prepared to add resources for staff training related to accessibility.
- 6) In terms of international mobility, information on individual arrangements will be provided for both incoming and outgoing students in Finnish and English.
- 7) The accessibility of e-learning materials will be promoted as required by the Act on the Provision of Digital Services. The production of accessible teaching and guidance materials will be supported and related tools, training and advice provided to staff. The Eduwasa network will be utilised in the development of digital accessibility and digital pedagogy.

4.4 Digital accessibility: communication and IT

At the University of Vaasa, information targeted at staff and students is shared not only on the main channels, the Messi and Jolla intranets, but also, for example, on the university's website. The main channel of communication for students is Jolla, the student intranet. Other student information channels include e-mail, the Moodle learning environment, the Peppi study information system, the Tuudo application and the university website. The main channel for staff communication is the Messi intranet. Other information channels for staff are Teams and e-mail.

In terms of information and communication, it is important that accessibility is taken into account widely in different channels. The university provides information and communicates in Finnish and English. Finnish and English language versions of communications are available in online communication channels. Integration into the

university community and Finnish society is promoted by offering Finnish language training to international staff. At the same time, opportunities for everyday participation and actual accessibility are facilitated. Language-related guidelines are described in more detail in the university's Equality Plan.

The accessibility of communications and IT services is based on ensuring that communication channels, contents and services are as clear and understandable as possible. All content must be produced in both of the languages used at the university. The university's communications use multiple channels and clear standard language. From the point of view of accessibility, specific measures should be targeted at persons who find it more difficult to understand the language.

In producing the university's communications and IT services, attention should be paid to customer orientation and usability. The service processes of university services must also be understandable, clear and properly communicated, so that their use is as clear as possible and the instructions are easily accessible. This helps reduce the need for advice and the number of inquiries, as well as streamline the implementation of service processes.

Attention is paid to the accessibility aspect. Instructions and operating practices are updated and take into account the accessibility requirements. Uniform instructions and operating methods support accessibility in the operations of different units, as well as in the university's communications and IT services.

Measures

- 1) Feedback will be collected on the accessibility of communications, IT and university services. Procedures for handling and responding to feedback and promoting digital accessibility in cooperation with services will be developed.
- 2) The accessibility of services and systems will be evaluated and the use of accessibility reports increased. Those responsible for the procurement of the university's information systems, administrators and developers will be supported in taking into account the accessibility of services. Services and systems must serve equally all those who use them.
- 3) Staff training for carrying out self-assessments related to accessibility will be increased. Staff will be trained to develop the accessibility of websites and systems. The participation of personnel in language training will be promoted.
- 4) Guidance will be developed and awareness promoted of good practices and methods related to digital accessibility. Multi-channel accessibility information and staff training will be increased.
- 5) Teachers will be introduced to the production of accessible digital teaching materials.

4.5 Library

Tritonia is a joint academic library of the University of Vaasa, Vaasa University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences. Tritonia provides library services in Finnish, Swedish and English. As a public scientific service institution, it is open to everyone. The library's collections primarily serve the teaching and research fields of the three framework universities. Nowadays, the main emphasis in the library's collections is on digital e-books and other e-materials. Accessibility is taken into account as one of the criteria in consortium and direct procurement of materials.

The library staff are familiar with accessibility and promote the realisation of equal opportunities in their activities. University library services and library environments take into account the individual needs of students, such as extended of loan periods and quiet study facilities. Students have the opportunity to receive guidance in an accessible way in the use of the library's information retrieval systems and in questions related to scientific information search. Accessibility is taken into account in library procurements and the library cooperates with Accessibility Library Celia, allowing the student to take advantage of Celia's audiobook services. Tritonia also cooperates with Datero, the learning disability and learning competence centre.

The physical facilities of Tritonia Academic Library comply with the principles of accessible space and take into account the need for sliding doors, ramps, elevator, accessible toilets and disturbance-free study environments. Celia's services are available through the library and customers can be given a longer loan period if necessary. Accessibility requirements are also taken into account in the procurement of materials. In addition, accessibility is taken into account in the library's other activities, such as communication, website, teaching material, and linguistic accessibility in three languages: Finnish, Swedish and English. The library has also carried out an accessibility assessment of Tritonia's Finna search service.

Measures

- 1) Active information regarding library services will be increased. If necessary, information will be increased through multiple channels.
- 2) The openness of science, research and learning will be promoted in accordance with national and international guidelines, for example, by preparing for the costs of open access publishing.
- 3) It will be ensured that users of library services have sufficient places for reading and studying with individual needs. The accessibility of signage will be ensured.
- 4) A special accessibility working group will be set up for Tritonia Academic Library to deal with accessibility themes specific to the library.

5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PLAN

During the preparation of the Accessibility Plan, a need clearly emerged for a working group to coordinate accessibility at the University of Vaasa and monitor its implementation. Accessibility work must be decisive, purposeful and systematic. Groups belonging to the university community must also be extensively involved in accessibility work.

The implementation of the Accessibility Plan and the progress of accessibility work will be reported to the university management team. In addition, the implementation of the plan will also be presented to other university working groups or committees as necessary, including the occupational safety committee.

The implementation of the Accessibility Plan can be monitored, for example, with an accessibility survey. Actions related to the implementation of the Accessibility Plan must be scheduled and linked to other development activities.

6 SOURCES

Digital services are for everyone. Regional State Administrative Agency for Southern Finland. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.webaccessibility.fi/>

Esteetön opiskelijavalinta -suositus ja -opas ("Recommendation and guide for barrier-free student admission"). ESOK project 2006–2011. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <http://www.esok.fi/hankkeet/esok-hanke/suosituksset/esteeton-opiskejavalinta-opas>

Esteetön opiskelu korkea-asteen oppilaitoksissa ("Barrier-free studies in higher education"). ESOK project 2006–2011. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <http://www.esok.fi/hankkeet/esok-hanke>

European Accessibility Act, or the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council (2019/882) on the accessibility requirements for products and services. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://stm.fi/en/the-european-accessibility-act>

Esteettömyys kampuksella ("Barrier-free campus"). University of Vaasa staff intranet Messi. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.uwasa.fi/messi/fi/services/2779>

Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016L2102&from=EN>

Holmlund, Sannakaisa & Rossi Kari (2006). Vaasan yliopiston esteettömyysselvitys 2006 ("The University of Vaasa's accessibility survey 2006"). University of Vaasa.

Kilpelä, Niina (2019). Esteetön rakennus ja ympäristö ("Guide for barrier-free buildings and environments"). (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <file:///C:/Users/ikao/Downloads/Esteet%C3%B6n%20rakennus%20ja%20ymp%C3%A4rist%C3%B6.pdf>
Link to downloaded file: <https://www.ymparisto.fi/download/noname/%7bEA70FE2A-FF14-4FC8-96B6-AE6B32F89BB7%7d/144306>

Kosunen, Tapio (2021). Towards more accessible higher education and higher education institutions (in Finnish). Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture 2021: 35. Ministry of Education and Culture, Helsinki.

Act on the Provision of Digital Services (306/2019). (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2019/en20190306>

Land Use and Building Act (132/1999): Finlex. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990132.pdf>

Märsy, Kaisa (2020). Tritonian Finna-hakupalvelun saavutettavuusarviointi ("Accessibility evaluation of the Tritonia Finna search service"). (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-2020111622997>

Right to social inclusion and equality. National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2020–2023). Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2021:22. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at

<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/163217>

Permanent address: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-5422-9>

Opintojen ja muun osaamisen hyväksilukeminen Vaasan yliopistossa 1.8.2022 alkaen (“Recognition of Prior Learning and Other Competence at the University of Vaasa as of 1 August 2022”) (2022). Decision of the Rector 9 August 2022. University of Vaasa. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at

https://www.uwasa.fi/sites/default/files/2022-08/Opintojen%20ja%20muun%20osaamisen%20hyv%C3%A4ksilukeminen%20Vaasan%20yliopistossa%201.8.2022%20alkaen_0.pdf

Opintojen suorittaminen ja arviointi (“Completion and assessment of studies”) (2022). Decision of the Rector 9 August 2022. University of Vaasa. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at

https://www.uwasa.fi/sites/default/files/2022-08/Opintojen%20suorittaminen%20ja%20arviointi_2022.pdf

EXAM – Instructions for Students University of Vaasa. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.uwasa.fi/en/students/completion-and-assessment-studies/exam-instructions-students>

Accessible studying. University of Vaasa. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.uwasa.fi/en/students/accessible-studying-and-individual-study-arrangements>

Saavutettavat materiaalit (“Accessible materials”). University of Vaasa staff intranet Messi. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.uwasa.fi/messi/fi/services/40>

Accessibility Implementation Plan 2022–2024. Aalto University. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.aalto.fi/sites/g/files/flghsv161/files/2022-01/Saavutettavuuden%20toimeenpanosuunnitelma%202022%E2%80%932024.pdf>

Saavutettavuus (“Accessibility”). Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities. (Accessed 16 December 2022). Available at <https://www.invalidiliitto.fi/esteettomyys/saavutettavuus>

Saavutettavuus (“Accessibility”). Ministry of Finance. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at <https://vm.fi/saavutettavuusdirektiivi/>

Saavutettavuus opetuksessa ja yksilölliset opintojärjestelyt (“Accessibility in teaching and individual study arrangements”). University of Vaasa staff intranet Messi. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.uwasa.fi/messi/fi/services/2766>

Similä, Anni (2021). Korkeakoulujen verkko-opetuksen saavutettavuus (“Accessibility of online teaching in higher education institutions”). Thesis on the views of research and teaching staff at the University of Vaasa on accessibility and its application in online education. Master’s Thesis in Technical Communications. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at

https://osuva.uwasa.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/12842/UniVaasa_2021_Simila_Anni.pdf?sequence=2

Permanent address: <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2021042820699>

Suomen ja englannin kielen käytön toimintaperiaatteet (henkilöstö) ("Operating procedure for the use of Finnish and English (staff)") (2019). Decision of the Rector 15 February 2019. Record number 24/0.005/2019. University of Vaasa.

Constitution of Finland (11 June 1999/731). Finlex. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990731>

National Building Code of Finland. Ministry of the Environment. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://ym.fi/en/the-national-building-code-of-finland>

Electronic Exam Service (EXAM). University of Vaasa. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at (<https://www.uwasa.fi/en/students/completion-and-assessment-studies>)

Welcome to Celia! Accessibility Library Celia. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at <https://www.celia.fi/eng/>

Tietopankki opiskelun ja oppimisen vaikeuksista ("Knowledge bank on difficulties of studying and learning"). University of Vaasa staff intranet Messi. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.uwasa.fi/messi/fi/services/2765>

Accessibility Policy of the University of Turku 2020–2024. University of Turku 2020. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at https://www.utu.fi/sites/default/files/public%3A//media/file/Accessibility%20Policy%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Turku_0.docx

University Regulations (2020). University of Vaasa. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at https://www.uwasa.fi/sites/default/files/2021-04/university_regulations_3.12.2020.pdf

Vaasan yliopiston järjestyssääntö (University of Vaasa rules of conduct, 2017). University of Vaasa. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at https://www.uwasa.fi/sites/default/files/2020-12/vaasan_yliopiston_jarjestyssaanto_13.2.2017.pdf

University of Vaasa Equality Plan (2017) University of Vaasa. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at https://www.uwasa.fi/sites/default/files/2020-11/University%20of%20Vaasa_Equality%20plan.pdf

University of Vaasa Code of Conduct. University of Vaasa staff intranet Messi. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.uwasa.fi/messi/fi/services/2162>

Degree Regulations of the University of Vaasa (2020). University of Vaasa. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at https://www.uwasa.fi/sites/default/files/2021-04/tutkintosaanto_en_degree_regulations_01012021.pdf

Vapauttamisperusteet toisen kotimaisen kielen opinnoista 29.9.2022 alkaen ("Exemption criteria for studies in a second domestic language as of 29 September 2022") (2022).

- Decision of the Rector 2 November 2022. University of Vaasa. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at https://www.uwasa.fi/sites/default/files/2022-11/Vapauttamisperusteet%20toisen%20kotimaisen%20kielen%20opinnoista_rehtorin%20p%C3%A4%C3%A4t%C3%B6s%202.11.2022.pdf
- Vainioma, Sunna, Rossi, Kari & Mikkilä, Miia-Leena (2008). Vaasan yliopiston esteettömyyssuunnitelma ("University of Vaasa Accessibility Plan") 2008. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at https://www.uwasa.fi/sites/default/files/2020-11/esteettomyyssuunnitelma2008_1.pdf
- Government Decree on the accessibility of buildings (241/2017). Finlex. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2017/20170241>
- Obligation of a public authority to provide digital services. Ministry of Finance. (Accessed 10 December 2022) Available: <https://vm.fi/velvollisuus-tarjota-digipalveluja>
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). (Accessed 23 January 2023). Available at <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>
- Equality.fi website. Ministry of Justice. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at: <https://equality.fi/>
- Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014). Finlex. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2014/20141325>
- National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2020–2023). Finnish Government. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-5422-9>
- Permanent address: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-8459-2>
- Yksilölliset järjestelyt valintakokeessa ("Individual arrangements in entrance exams"). University of Vaasa. (Accessed 31 January 2023). Available at <https://www.uwasa.fi/fi/koulutus/kandidaattiohjelmat/nain-haet/yksilolliset-jarjestelyt-valintakokeessa>
- Universities Act (558/2009). Finlex. (Accessed 9 December 2022). Available at <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2009/20090558>