

# UNIVERSITIES ACT

## 27 June 1997/645

On the referral of the Ministry of Education it is enacted:

### *Chapter 1*

#### *General provisions*

#### *Section 1*

##### *Application*

The universities referred to in this Act shall be:

- 1) University of Helsinki,
- 2) University of Joensuu,
- 3) University of Jyväskylä,
- 4) University of Kuopio,
- 5) University of Lapland,
- 6) University of Oulu,
- 7) University of Tampere,
- 8) University of Turku,
- 9) University of Vaasa,
- 10) Åbo Akademi University,
- 11) Lappeenranta University of Technology,
- 12) Tampere University of Technology,
- 13) Helsinki University of Technology,
- 14) Helsinki School of Economics, and Business Administration,
- 15) Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration,
- 16) Turku School of Economics, and Business Administration,
- 17) Academy of Fine Arts,
- 18) Sibelius Academy,
- 19) University of Art and Design, and
- 20) Theatre Academy.

Attached to the University of Helsinki is the Swedish School of Social Science.

#### *Section 2*

##### *Autonomy*

The universities shall have autonomy.

During the preparation of acts and decrees solely concerning the universities, the universities shall have an opportunity to issue statements on the matter.

#### *Section 3*

### ***Persons belonging to a university***

The university shall consist of teachers, researchers, other personnel and students.

### ***Section 4***

#### ***Mission***

The mission of the university shall be to promote free research and scientific and artistic education, to provide higher education based on research, and to educate young people to serve their country and humanity.

The universities shall seek to cooperate amongst themselves with a view to a viable division of work.

The Åbo Akademi University, the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, the University of Helsinki, the Helsinki University of Technology, the Sibelius Academy, the University of Art and Design, and the Theatre Academy shall be responsible for ensuring that a sufficient number of Swedish-speaking persons are educated to meet national needs.

The universities shall arrange their provision with a view to achieving a high international level of research, education and teaching in conformity with ethical principles and good scientific practices.

### ***Section 5***

#### ***Evaluation***

The universities shall evaluate their education, research and artistic activities and their effectiveness. The universities shall also take part in external evaluation of their activities.

The university shall publish the results obtained in the evaluation it has undertaken.

## ***Chapter 2***

### ***Research and teaching***

#### ***Section 6***

##### ***Autonomy of research, arts and teaching***

The universities shall have autonomy in research, arts and teaching. The teacher must, however, observe the regulations and stipulations in force concerning educational and teaching arrangements.

The teaching of the universities shall be public. For certain well-founded reason, it shall be possible to limit access to teaching.

#### ***Section 7***

##### ***Degrees and other education***

The universities shall confer lower and higher university degrees, and scientific, artistic and professional postgraduate degrees. The universities may also provide continuing professional education and open university education.

Education leading to a university degree shall be based on the upper secondary school curriculum or a corresponding level of education. Scientific, artistic and professional postgraduate education shall be based on the higher university degree or education of a corresponding level.

More detailed provisions pertaining to degrees conferred by the universities shall be enacted in a decree.

### ***Section 8***

***Education leading to a university degree shall be free of charge for the student.***

Open university instruction and continuing professional education shall be subject to the provisions of the Act on the Charge Criteria of the State (150/1992).

### ***Section 9***

***Languages of instruction and examination***

The language of instruction of the universities shall be Finnish without prejudice to the following provisions.

The languages of instruction and examination of the University of Helsinki, the Helsinki University of Technology, the Academy of Fine Arts, the Sibelius Academy, the University of Art and Design, and the Theatre Academy shall be Finnish and Swedish. The language of instruction and examination of the Åbo Akademi University, the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, and the Swedish School of Social Science of the University of Helsinki shall be Swedish.

The university shall decide upon the use of languages other than its language of instruction in teaching and study attainments.

## ***Chapter 3***

### ***Organisation***

#### ***Section 10***

##### ***Chancellor***

Both the University of Helsinki and the Åbo Akademi University have a chancellor. Any of the other universities, if it so wishes, may have a chancellor, which shall be provided for in a decree. Two or more universities may have a joint chancellor.

The chancellor shall promote science, look after the general interests of the university and supervise its activities. The chancellor shall confirm the regulations and other corresponding general stipulations of the university. The other tasks of the chancellor shall be subject to the provisions of other acts and decrees.

The chancellor shall be a person who has merits in promoting science or the university system. The chancellor shall be appointed by the President of the Republic for a five-year term at a time on the proposal of the Council of State from a shortlist of three candidates nominated by the electoral college of the university.

The qualifications, term and appointment, and certain tasks of the chancellor of the Åbo Akademi University shall be subject to the provisions of the Act on Swedish-Language Higher Education (1354/1990).

### ***Section 11***

#### ***University senate and its tasks***

The supreme executive body of the university shall be the university senate, whose mission shall be to develop the university's activities and:

- 1) to approve the economic and action plans and other large-scale plans of the university;
- 2) to decide the overall lines of resource allocation;
- 3) to issue statements on important matters of principle concerning the university; and
- 4) to adopt the regulations and other corresponding stipulations of the university.

Other tasks may be assigned to the university senate in a decree and in the internal regulations of the university.

### ***Section 12***

#### ***Composition of the university senate***

The university senate shall be presided over by the rector. In addition, the university senate must include representatives of the following groups:

- 1) the professors and associate professors of the university;
- 2) the other teaching and research staff and other personnel; and
- 3) the students.

Members representing each of the groups referred to in Subsection 1 shall constitute less than half of the total membership of the university senate. The members of the university senate may have deputies.

The total number of members of the university senate and the number of the representatives of the groups referred to in Subsection 1 shall be determined in the regulations. The regulations may also determine that a maximum of one third of the university senate members may be selected from amongst persons who do not belong to the personnel or the students of the university.

### ***Section 13***

#### ***Rector and vice-rectors***

The rector shall direct the activities of the university and deal with and resolve matters relating to its general administration, unless otherwise provided in acts, decrees or university regulations.

The rector shall be elected for a five year term at a time. The rector shall be elected by the electoral college of the university. The rector elect shall have a doctor's degree or have been appointed professor at some university. It shall be possible, however, to elect as rector of the Academy of Fine Arts, the Sibelius Academy, the University of Art and Design, and the Theatre Academy a person who has been appointed to the post of associate professor, senior assistant or lecturer.

The university may have one or more vice-rectors as decided by the university senate.

***Section 14***  
***Organisation of teaching, research and services***

The university senate shall decide the division of the university into faculties or other units and into departments or institutes subordinate to them with a view to the organisation of teaching and research.

The university may have administrative bodies consisting of several members for the development of teaching and research and the assessment of study attainments and for the nomination of candidates for professorships and associate professorships, provided that these tasks have not been assigned to the multi-member administrative body of a faculty or other unit. The composition of the administrative body shall be subject to what is provided in Section 12, Subsection 1 regarding the university senate.

The university may have independent institutes which are not subordinate to any of the faculties or departments referred to in Subsection 1. The decision to establish these institutes shall rest with the university senate.

The university may have units in common with other universities and with other institutes and organisations. The administration of these institutes shall be enacted in a decree, wherever needed.

***Section 15***  
***Administration of university units***

The activities of a faculty or other unit referred to in Section 14, Subsection 1 shall be directed by a dean or other director. In addition, the unit shall have a multi-member administrative body. The composition of the administrative body shall be subject to what is provided in Section 12, regarding the university senate. However, for the purpose of appointing a professor or an associate professor, it shall be possible to appoint additional members as determined in the university regulations.

The multi-member administrative body of a faculty or other unit referred to in Subsection 1 shall elect a dean or other director from amongst the professors and associate professors without prejudice to the provisions of a decree pertaining to any of the universities.

The administration of an independent institute shall be provided for in the university regulations. It shall be possible to select as members of the administrative body of a department persons who do not belong to the personnel or the students of the university.

***Chapter 4***  
***Personnel and administrative language***

***Section 16***  
***Structure of personnel***

The university shall have professorships. In addition, it has teaching and research personnel and personnel to execute other tasks.  
The university shall have docents.

The appointment of professors and associate professors shall be subject to separate statutes.

### ***Section 17***

#### ***Administrative language and language proficiency requirements***

The administrative language of the university shall be Finnish. The administrative language of the Åbo Akademi University and the Swedish School of Social Science of the University of Helsinki shall be Swedish.

However, everyone shall have the right to use Finnish or Swedish in the conduct of his or her own business and to receive a document in the language he or she uses.

Provisions pertaining to the skills in the Finnish and Swedish languages required from teachers, researchers and officials shall be enacted in a decree, without prejudice to the provisions of the Act on the Language Skills of Civil Servants (149/1922). The language skills required from teachers at the Åbo Akademi University shall be provided for hereinafter.

## ***Chapter 5***

### ***Students***

#### ***Section 18***

##### ***Admission***

The students shall be admitted by the university. The university may restrict the number of students. A student may accept only one student place in a degree programme during one academic year.

Whenever it is not possible for the university to admit all the applicants owing to a need to restrict the number of students, the university shall apply consistent admission criteria to all the applicants. With the purpose of ensuring the educational needs of one language group, it shall be possible to deviate from the consistent admission criteria to a limited extent.

Have recourse to

In student selection use shall be made of the applicant register provided for in the Applicant and Matriculation Examination Registers Act (1058/1998) unless otherwise provided elsewhere, or unless the competent ministry decides otherwise. Provisions concerning the student selection process may be enacted in a decree. (18 Dec. 1998/1059)

Student selection may also be arranged as a joint application between universities.

The former Subsection 4 has been repealed by Act 1059 of 18 December 1998.

#### ***Section 19***

##### ***Disciplinary action***

A student who has committed an offence against teaching or research activities can be punished by a warning or by suspension for a maximum of one year. The relevant procedure shall be enacted in a decree.

## ***Chapter 6***

### ***Special provisions pertaining to the University of Helsinki***

#### ***Section 20***

##### ***The right of the Chancellor to speak at sessions of the Council of State***

The Chancellor of the University of Helsinki shall have the right to be present and speak at the sessions of the Council of State which concern matters pertaining to the University of Helsinki.

#### ***Section 21***

##### ***Konsistori***

The administrative body of the University of Helsinki shall be called *konsistori*.

**Subsection 2 has been repealed by Act 1251 of 23 December 1999.**

#### ***Section 22***

##### ***Tasks of the administrative body of a faculty or a corresponding unit***

The tasks of the administrative body shall be:

- 1) to develop teaching and research;
- 2) to make proposals for the action and economic plan and for the budget and to determine the grounds for the allocation of funds;
- 3) to deal with matters pertaining to the appointment of a professor and an associate professor;
- 4) to deal with matters relating to a doctoral dissertation and a licentiate thesis; and
- 5) to deal with and resolve other matters submitted to its deliberation and decision under a decree or the university regulations.

#### ***Section 23***

##### ***Swedish-language instruction and Swedish-speaking vice-rector***

The University of Helsinki shall have a minimum of 27 chairs for Swedish-language instruction in disciplines determined in a decree.

The University shall have a committee for the development and coordination of Swedish-language instruction.

One of the vice-rectors shall be a professor appointed to a chair established for Swedish-language instruction, unless the rector is a person appointed to such a chair.

#### ***Section 24***

##### ***Swedish School of Social Science of the University of Helsinki***

Provisions pertaining to the Swedish School of Social Science of the University of Helsinki shall be enacted in a decree and in the university regulations under the provisions of the decree.

The posts of this unit shall not be included in the posts defined in Section 23, Subsection 1.

***Section 25***  
***National library***

The library of the University of Helsinki shall act as the national library. Its tasks shall also be subject to the provisions of the Legal Deposit Act (420/1980).

***Section 26***  
***Education of persons proficient in Swedish***

In the admission of students to disciplines which are taught in the Swedish language only at the University of Helsinki, measures shall be taken to ensure that a sufficient number of Swedish-speaking people can be educated to meet the national needs. The University may reserve a quota of the intake for applicants proficient in Swedish.

***Section 27***  
***The rights and property of the University of Helsinki***

The University of Helsinki shall have the right to maintain one pharmacy in the City of Helsinki. The University shall furthermore have all the rights, privileges and liberties and the property and the income which it possesses at the time this Act comes into force.

The assets of the University referred to in Subsection 1 and its donated and bequeathed funds shall be managed separately from the appropriations allocated to the University in the state budget. The decision on the use of the assets shall rest with Senate. The University shall take any legal action concerning this property in its own name and shall exercise the right to be heard at a court of law and in dealings with authorities as regards the property.

With regard to the assets referred to under Subsection 1, the University shall be exempt from tax and from fees payable to the state, unless otherwise provided regarding some tax or payment in an act.

***Chapter 7***  
***Special provisions pertaining to the Åbo Akademi University***

***Section 28***  
***Special mission***

The Åbo Akademi University, hereinafter Åbo Akademi shall especially satisfy the educational and research needs of the Swedish-speaking population and take account of the bilingualism of the country in its activities.



The units of Åbo Akademi in Vaasa form the University of Ostrobothnia, the joint activities of which shall be managed by a multi-member administrative body.

### ***Section 29***

#### ***Language skills required from the teachers***

The requirement for a teaching post at Åbo Akademi shall be perfect proficiency in the Swedish language and an ability to understand the Finnish language. The decision on the degree of proficiency in the Swedish and Finnish languages to be required from a foreigner or a non-native Finnish citizen shall rest with Åbo Akademi.

Åbo Akademi has a language board to which the proficiency in Swedish referred to in Subsection 1 can be demonstrated.

### ***Section 30***

#### ***Language skills required from students***

The requirement for admission to Åbo Akademi shall be that the applicant has sufficient skills in Swedish to pursue studies in the language, unless otherwise decided by Åbo Akademi.

### ***Section 31***

#### ***Property***

Åbo Akademi has the right to accept property in its own name and use it for its activities. Åbo Akademi shall take legal action concerning this property in its own name and shall exercise the right to be heard at a court of law and in dealings with authorities as regards the property.

The assets and donated and bequeathed funds referred to in Subsection 1 shall be managed separately from the appropriations allocated to Åbo Akademi in the state budget.

### ***Section 32***

#### ***Provisions pertaining to certain posts***

The posts of professor and associate professor established at Åbo Akademi since the first of August 1981 shall be permanent posts at Åbo Akademi.

Without prejudice to the provisions of Subsection 1 and after obtaining the opinion of the foundation called "Stiftelsen för Åbo Akademi", Åbo Akademi may change the field of instruction and the duties of these posts and, within the scope of the appropriations at its disposal, upgrade a post of associate professor to a post of professor.

## ***Chapter 8***

### ***Appeals***

### ***Section 33***

#### ***Rectification procedure***

A person who has applied for entry to university may claim rectification of the decision on admission in writing from the university. A student may claim rectification of the grading

of a study attainment and of certain other decisions pertaining to studies, which shall be provided for in more detail in a decree.

The rectification procedure shall be enacted in a decree.

#### ***Section 34***

##### ***Appeal***

Appeal against a university decision shall be lodged at the provincial administrative court in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (586/1996), unless otherwise provided by this Act or other statutes.

#### ***Section 35***

##### ***Prohibition against appeal***

No appeal may be lodged against a university decision pertaining to the election of the chancellor, the rector, the vice-rector, the head of a unit and the chair of a multi-member administrative body or to the university regulations or other general provisions. A decision pertaining to a grant or subsidy may not be appealed.

A decision the rectification of which can be claimed under Section 33 may not be appealed. An appeal against a decision on a claim for rectification may be lodged at the provincial administrative court. No appeal may, however, be made against a decision on a claim for rectification of the grading of a study attainment.

No appeal may be made against a decision issued by a provincial administrative court regarding admission to university referred to in Section 18 or disciplinary action referred to in Section 19.

#### ***Section 36***

##### ***Implementation of a decision on suspension***

A decision to suspend a student may be implemented irrespective of an appeal pending against it, unless otherwise provided by the university or the provincial administrative court.

### ***Chapter 9***

#### ***Further provisions***

#### ***Section 37***

##### ***Electoral college***

The electoral college shall be composed of representatives of the professors, associate professors, other teaching, research and other personnel and students. In addition, the composition of the electoral college shall be subject to the provisions of Section 12, Subsection 2.

More detailed provisions pertaining to the members and selection of the electoral college shall be stipulated in the university regulations, except as regards the University of Helsinki, the composition of whose electoral college shall be enacted in a decree.

#### ***Section 38***

##### ***University training school***

Attached to a university which provides teacher education shall be a sufficient number of training schools to meet the needs of teaching practice and the development of teacher education; the training schools may provide basic and preschool education and upper secondary education. The pupils of the training school shall not be students of the university.

The arrangement of the instruction referred to in Subsection 1 and the discontinuation of the activity shall be subject to the provisions of statutes concerning basic education, preschool education and upper secondary education in state educational institutions. The same provisions shall apply to a decision to expand the training school to provide instruction and education for more age groups than before and to effect a corresponding reduction in the activities of the school. The activities may be reduced or discontinued when the need for education decreases or ends.

The training school shall have an executive board appointed by the university, which may include members who do not belong to the university.

More detailed provisions concerning the activity and administration of the training school may be enacted in a decree, and the university may issue relevant stipulations in its regulations.

### ***Section 39***

#### ***Donated and bequeathed assets and posts established with them***

The university shall have the right to accept donated and bequeathed funds. These assets may also be used to hire personnel and establish posts.

A post established with donated and bequeathed funds shall encompass the same rights and duties as other corresponding posts.

### ***Section 40***

#### ***Student union and student nation***

All the university students who have been admitted into programmes leading to the lower or higher university degree shall belong to the student union. The student union may also accept other students of the university as members.

The purpose of the student union shall be to act as liaison for its members and to promote their societal, social and intellectual aspirations and aspirations relating to studies and students' status in society.

The student union shall have self-government. More detailed provisions and stipulations shall be enacted in a decree and the regulations of the student union.

Students may form student nations, which shall have self-government. Provisions pertaining to student nations shall be enacted in a decree, if needed.

### ***Section 41***

#### ***University regulations and stipulations***

The university regulations shall determine the competence, the tasks, the term of office, the number of the members, and the election of the members of administrative bodies, the appointment and hiring of personnel and other administration of the university unless otherwise provided in acts and decrees.

The university may provide in its regulations or other stipulations for internal matters other than those referred to in Subsection 1, unless otherwise provided in acts or decrees.

***Section 42***  
***Decision-making***

In case of a dispute, the multi-member administrative body shall resolve matters other than those referred to in Subsection 3 with a simple majority. If the votes are equally distributed, the opinion seconded by the chair shall win. However, in a vote on a matter pertaining to appointment to a post or disciplinary action against a student, the procedure shall be the procedure applied by a panel of judges at a court of justice.

A study attainment may be graded only by those members or deputies who have a study attainment of a corresponding level or who have been appointed professors. At the Academy of Fine Arts, the Sibelius Academy, the University of Art and Design, and the Theatre Academy also members or deputies who have been appointed lecturers may take part in the grading of study attainments. (18 Dec. 1998/1059)

If the decision concerns election or appointment to one position or post, the election shall be executed as a majority election. If, however, no candidate receives more than half of the votes, the new election shall be between the two candidates who have received the largest numbers of votes. When the decision concerns election or appointment to more than one position or post, the election shall be executed as a proportional election. If the votes are equally divided the result shall be decided by lot.

***Section 43***  
***Further provisions***

More detailed provisions pertaining to the implementation of this act shall be enacted in a decree.

***Section 44***  
***Implementation***

The implementation of this act shall be enacted separately in a decree.

Given on the 27th of June 1997

President of the Republic  
Martti Ahtisaari

Minister of Education and Science  
Olli-Pekka Heinonen

