



ÅBO AKADEMIS STUDENTKÅR
THE STUDENT UNION OF ÅBO AKADEMI UNIVERSITY

Student's Rights at Åbo Akademi University

The Student Union's Guide to Student's Rights



Vänd mig för
SVENSKA!



ÅBO AKADEMIS
ALUMNER

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DEAR MEMBER OF THE STUDENT UNION,

we at the ÅAS often get questions from student who feel that things are not taken care of properly in their education but are uncertain of which rules are to be taken into account and what they can do. This guide is to briefly tell about the rules and principles that govern the education and everyday life in studies. Due to the fact that the Degree Statute and Instructions Examination and Evaluation of the ÅAU will be updated in the near future, this guide will not refer to them in much detail but has broader perspectives and uses more practical examples.

Hope you will have use of the guide!

The student union board and employees at the student union

PROTECTION OF STUDENT'S RIGHTS

WHAT IS PROTECTION OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS?

Protection of students' rights means that there are clearly stated rules for work of e.g. universities, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland(Kela) and Finnish Student Health Service and that the rules are the same for all.

The basis for protection of students' rights is, in addition to legislation concerning good governance, the statutes in the Act on Universities concerning evaluation of study attainments, correction procedure and appeals on decisions concerning students. Act on equality and equal treatment includes many statutes that are relevant for students and e.g. principle on publicity of information in Act on publicity of information is binding for universities as public institutions.

WHICH COURSES SHOULD I TAKE?

Students have the right to take any course at ÅAU except for some restrictions.

If you study a subject as your subsidiary subject, you have a priority in signing up for courses compared to others from other subjects. If you already know which subject you will have as you subsidiary subject, you should apply for the status as a student of subsidiary subject as soon as possible. Contact the subject if you do not find clear information

on ÅAU's website. The ways of how to apply for a subsidiary subject vary a lot within in ÅAU, contact the subject especially if there is not clear information on the website. If you are planning to have a subsidiary subject from another university, it is good to plan it early.

Practical courses with exercises / laboratory practises / field work have limited amount of places.

Requirements on advance knowledge; read the course description. If you have similar knowledge but not exactly what is described in the description, contact the teacher and ask whether or not you can take the course. E.g. basic courses in a similar subject to the one in which you have learnt scientific writing.

It is possible to take just one course in different subjects. This is up to how your examina is formed and if you can count them into freely chosen studies or just have them on the official transcript over your studies once you graduate. N.B. that only courses within your examina are taken into account for your ÅAU-mark.

Many courses have limits on how many can take the course and if everyone does not fit on the course, the students who have the subject as their major or as their subsidiary subject are prioritised. Problems arise often e.g. language courses being planned to be taken a certain year and are filled with students who have not taken the courses earlier in their



studies and have to take the course. Contact the subject or Centre for language and communications studies if you wonder about something.

Are you interested about a course or a study module at the other study location and the course description lacks the information whether you can participate in lectures via video link, contact the subject och the teacher to ask whether you can take the course on distance.

IF A COURSE IS CANCELLED?

If the course does not have enough participants can the course be cancelled. In that case you have the right to take the course as a self study course or do the course with same learning objectives, e.g. by writing an essay.

SIGNING UP FOR A COURSE

You need to sign up for most courses beforehand. Check how the signing up is done, e.g. if it is mandatory to be present on the first lecture or course meeting. Information on who can take the course and how the participants are prioritised should be stated clearly. If it is not, you can require that the information is updated, e.g. concerning subsidiary subject modules and requirements on advance knowledge.

INFORMATION ABOUT COURSES BEFOREHAND

The course description is a sort of table of contents for the course. Only what is stated in the learning objectives can be taken into account in the course evaluation. Learning objectives describe the core content of the course and level that is required for an approved study attainment.

N.B. that students on both regular courses as well as when writing their thesis have the right to choose not to continue working to get a higher mark if it is student's wish to return an assignment. Understandably, the course teacher or the supervisor of your thesis want to see you get the best possible result but it has to be clear what is the minimum for approved study attainment.

Read carefully what is stated in the course description and always ask if something seems to be unclear or is not stated at all. How evaluation is done and how different parts of the course are emphasised when deciding your final mark. If

the course has mandatory attendance, it should be clearly stated in hours or in percentage that you are expected to participate. Possible compensatory assignments should be described in case of being away. It should also be stated in the beginning of the course how and when you should let the teacher know if you are going to be away, e.g. due being sick, you participate in a university or faculty meeting as student representant or if have an exam e.g. in your subsidiary subject.

CHANGE IN TIMES

The times are stated in the study program should mainly be followed. The lecturer may sometimes ask whether some course meetings can be moved but if this is not suitable for all the participants, the teacher does not have a right to make changes. If change in times is proposed, you should check if you have e.g. another lecture during the proposed time and let the teacher know that the time is not suitable for you.



EVALUATION

RESULTS FROM EXAM

There are clear deadlines for when faculty personnel should correct the exams and register the results. This takes longer during the summer, when correcting e-exam and when group taking the exam is especially large.

Deadlines for correcting and registering the results will maybe be updated in the beginning of 2018. Check the new deadlines from ÅAU's website.

ARE WONDERING ABOUT A MARK YOU GOT?

The students always the right to get explained by the course lecturer why you got a certain mark and the course assignments not given back to the student are saved for a certain amount of time if you should have questions concerning how the assignment was evaluated.

Besides that this is one of student's rights and basis for quality in education that grounds for evaluation are clearly defined and it is also good for learning to know you have done in different assignments.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL A PART OF A COURSE?

You have a right to take the exams a certain amount of times. It is useful to discuss with the teacher what was lacking in

your answers after the first failed exam. This way you get useful tips on how you can better prepare for the next exam.

If it is question of a written assignment, you also have the right to further work on your assignment and better your work. In studies in which one seldom has written exams it can not be impossible to re-do the exam to get a higher mark.

LODGING APPEALS

If you are unhappy with the evaluation of a study attainment, you have the right to lodge an appeal. Forms and instructions on how to do this are found on ÅAU's website.



ABSENCE

Always let the lecturer know if you will be absent for a lecture where there is mandatory attendance. In the beginning of a course you are told how to how you should go about if you have to be absent. Check early if it is possible to do compensatory assignments instead. The assignments are meant to be done home when you have been absent due to e.g. illness and the assignments should not take a lot more effort than those done at the lecture or course meeting.

Your work is only to be evaluated in accordance with the criteria stated in the learning objectives of the course. **The amount of work and compensatory assignment should always be in balance with those you missed while being absent.**

SICK LEAVE IN STUDIES

If you get sick during your studies, especially if you get Finnish financial aid for students. If you get financial aid for another country, check which rules apply. If you are sick maximum of two months, it is better to keep the financial aid for students if you can receive some study credits during the time of illness, at least in the Finnish system.

It can, in some cases, be better to change to sickness allowance and take sick leave from studies also during period of illness which is shorter than two months. Sick leave may al-

low you to prolong your study right. Note that you can not receive both financial aid for students and sick allowance at the same time.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION

FSHS TURKU

Kirkkotie 13
20540 Turku

Acute treatment need assessments and appointments: +358 46 710 1050.

After office hours and during weekend contact your own health care station or the emergency service at the Turku University Hospital: 02 313 8800

FSHS VASA

Hovioikeudenpuistikko 15 C
65100 Vasa (entrance from Hartmanin kuja)

Telephone: 046 710 1097

In the evenings and during weekends, contact your health care station or the emergency services at Vasa Central Hospital: 06 213 1310

www.yths.fi/en

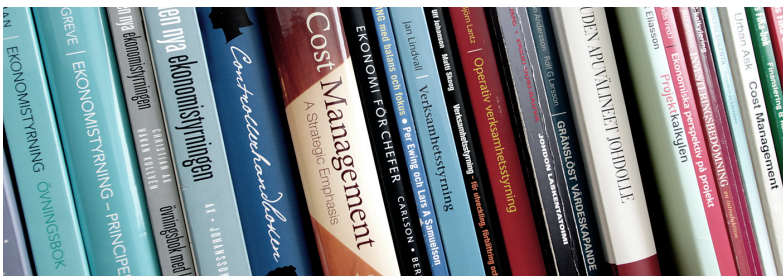
It is possible to study a little during sick leave. You can study up to 40% of studying full-time. At a university this means approximately 24 credits per academic year, 12 credits per semester and 3 credits per month.

Read more at the website of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland(Kela): <http://www.kela.fi/web/en/sickness>

STUDENT HEALTH CARE SERVICES

As a student and member of the Student union, you have the right to use Finnish Student Health Services FSHS. You have paid for the services at the same time as you paid your student union membership fee and you have to have paid your membership fee before you use the FSHS services. You can use the services anywhere in Finland where there is a FSHS service point.

If you receive improper treatment or e.g. do not receive adequate service in English, contact the student union, patient ombudsmen at FSHS or give feedback on FSHS website. On the FSHS you can even book and cancel appointments via SelfService and search for information at the health database.



GUIDANCE IN STUDIES

According to the Act on Universities a student always has a right to receive guidance in their studies.

STUDENT'S RIGHT TO GET GUIDANCE WITHOUT DISTURBANCE

Sometimes there are situations in which a student feels uncomfortable not being able to talk without disturbance when receiving guidance e.g. from one's thesis supervisor or study advisor. Only marks and theses are public information in education. In accordance with the Act on Governance's principle in order for a public institution to work efficiently you have to have the right to speak without disturbance about your studies, both about planning the studies as well as taking a specific course. Especially questions concerning your health and protection of your integrity should be taken into account. You can ask to move the discussion to another space where you feel more comfortable when receiving guidance.



HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE FACULTY PERSONNEL?

The easiest way to get in touch with the faculty personnel at ÅAU is via email and this way also if you wish to book a meeting. The “People search” feature on ÅAU’s website directs you to contact information of all the ÅAU personnel. You can either call or knock on their door if they happen to be in their office. If it is question of a lecturer from outside of ÅAU, contact someone at the subject in order to get in touch with the person.

One tip from the faculty personnel is that to always include any earlier correspondence when you email them so they will know faster what you have discussed earlier on the matter.

Usually it is best to ask right away if there wonder about something, e.g. during or after a lecture. To ask face-to-face is usually the fastest way to find things out.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

PERSONNEL'S DUTY TO NOT SPREAD INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENTS OR NOT TO SHOW COURSE ASSIGNMENTS WITHOUT A PERMISSION

Student's personal information, in accordance with EU's Data Protection Regulation(GDPR) which came into effect in May 2017, can only be registered in a registry where it is clearly described and from which students easily can find the information on which information is saved and for how long. Contents of a course assignments should not either be spread without a permission from the student.

”WHEN NOTHING ELSE HELPS”

With forms for students on ÅAU's website you can request a corrections with the form Lodging appeals. In the form there are clear instructions on how to fill in the form and what you should do before filling it in.

SUSPECTED CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

In every case where someone is suspected och cheating or to have copied material without giving its source are investigated by the university. The scientific writing process is a central part of the education and no one should be seen guilty without the course of events that led to the suspicion being investigated.

IMPROPER BEHAVIOUR, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Always report if another student or a member of the personnel behaves in a way that can be defined as bullying or as any type of harassment. If you are uncertain, contact us to discuss the matter.

ÅAU:S CONTACT PERSONS FOR STUDENTS

Coordinator Ole Karlsson (+358 40 8486219) and coordinator Rebecca Karlsson (+358 46 9216099) at Research and Education Services.

THE STUDENT UNION'S CONTACT PERSONS

The Academic Affairs Specialist Petra Lindblad and The Communications Officer Matias Dahlbäck, and you can reach them via trakasseriombud@abo.fi.

You can discuss any type of problem or incidents confidentially with ÅAS student union staff and harassment ombudsmen. It is always your decision whether or not the staff at the student union contact ÅAU's protection of students' rights and you decide how the matter are to be dealt with.

ÅAU:S COMMITTEE OF EQUALITY

If you wish to send anonymous and confidential feedback give ideas, complain about any irregularity for the committee for equality at ÅAU you can use the feedback form at <http://www.abo.fi/student/dokument>. N.B, the committee

only meets a few times per year so on this form you should send more general concerns. If you need immediate help, contact someone else.

On questions concerning problem situations can be sent to kvalitet@abo.fi to the ÅAU's quality coordinator who will see to your matter.

ARE THE RULES THE SAME FOR ALL THE SUBJECT AND STUDY LOCATIONS?

Yes, the rules are the same for the whole ÅAU. The faculties may have different working cultures but the rules are the same for the whole university.

STUDY RIGHT

A student has the right to carry out their studies for a bachelor's or master's degree in the way that is described in the Degree Statute and in the curriculum.

SAFE AND HEALTHY STUDY MILIEU

You have the right to a safe and healthy study milieu. This means that the university has an obligation to safeguard the best possible milieu for your studies. You have the right to receive guidance and systematic support to better your study skills. Remember that you also have an obligation not to disturb your fellow students. A safe study milieu is free of discrimination and harassment.

According to ÅAU's Plan for Equality for years 2015-2017 the goal for ÅAU's work for promoting equality is a diverse working milieu without discrimination. If you feel that you have been exposed to or have suffered for improper treatment, harassment or discrimination, contact the student union's harassment ombudsmen or ÅAU's coordinator for quality at kvalitet@abo.fi. You also have an obligation to make sure that everyone else has a safe working milieu, i.e. not to discriminate or harass anyone.

A study on the study milieu is done annually at the ÅAU. In the questionnaire you have an opportunity to bring up possible issues or inadequacies in the study milieu. The Finnish Student Health Services FSHS have the task of working for the best possible study milieu and to follow students' wellbeing and safety in the university facilities.

If you notice that someone is behaving improperly in ÅAU's facilities or bothers others, contact the office caretaker of the building during regular office hours and in the evening with the security company. The telephone number is found in Securitas stickers which can be found on the walls. In threatening situations you should of course call the police.

ACCESSIBILITY IN THE STUDIES

You have a right to easily accessible teaching and study spaces and possible special arrangements at ÅAU.

Contact the office caretaker of that building if you have any inadequacies in the university facilities. Always let the university know if you find any inadequacies in the physical, mental och social accessibility.

If you have any type of disability which you want to be taken into account in your studies, contact the study advisor. If you have dyslexia but do not have a certificate of this, contact the study psychologist.

If you need any special arrangements for lectures or examinations, contact the office caretaker, the course teacher or the head of the subject.

Read more about accessibility at ÅAU' Action Plan for Accessibility. Document is unfortunately found only in Swedish. ÅAU's webpage on accessibility can be found here: <http://www.abo.fi/personal/tillganglighet>