Accessible studies at the University of Jyväskylä

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Vice Rector's decision

7 February 2025

Accessible studies at the University of Jyväskylä

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1. Application of the decision concerning accessible studies

In this decision, accessibility refers to arranging the physical, psychological, social and digital environment so that everyone, regardless of their characteristics, can participate equally with others. Accessibility and availability concern all students and staff at the University, but they are especially important to those members of the university community who have impairments or learning difficulties, who are aging or who belong to cultural or linguistic minorities. (Adapted with minor modifications from the publication Esteetön opiskelu yliopistoissa, Elina Laaksonen, Opetusministeriön julkaisuja 2005:6).

This decision applies to all application procedures related to the completion of a degree, as well as to degree-oriented education provided at the University of Jyväskylä.

Where applicable, the decision also concerns students engaged in non-degree studies as well as international exchange students coming to the University of Jyväskylä under mobility agreements. In addition, the Open University must comply with the principles of accessible studies in its operations as far as possible.

The principles stated in this decision support students, teachers and other university staff in implementing accessibility. The principles address:

- the accessibility of environments and practices,
- personalised arrangements, and
- the responsibilities of different parties.

2. Implementation of the principles of accessible studies

The purpose of the principles of accessible studies is to ensure that all practices and activities at the University comply with both the stipulations and the spirit of the EU Accessibility Directive (2016/2102) and the Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014).

Students have the right to expect that University staff will strive to make the social, psychological, and physical learning environment as accessible as possible. Communications and materials related to student admission, teaching and learning, or employment must also be accessible. To promote accessibility, the Design-for-All principle should be followed. Accordingly, when planning new solutions and procurements (e.g., curricula, teaching materials, staff competence, information systems, devices, facilities), strategies and measures that enhance the usability, accessibility and availability of environments, products and services for all users should be adopted. In order to implement accessibility in practice, students may receive recommendations for personalised arrangements as needed. When striving for accessible studies, it is essential that the student's right to high-quality education is upheld.

3. Responsibilities for accessible study provision and personalised arrangements

Meeting the objectives of these guidelines requires the entire university community, both staff and students, to be committed to promoting the accessibility of study arrangements.

Unit heads are responsible for ensuring that the principles of these guidelines are followed in their units to guarantee equal opportunities.

Students are responsible for notifying the University of any potential obstacles and applying for personalised arrangements when needed.

University units must ensure that sufficient information is provided to staff and students about the accessibility of operational environments, information and learning materials, teaching and study arrangements, as well as any related challenges and possible personalised arrangements.

The divisions of University Services are responsible for their respective areas of planning, communications, training, making recommendations, and providing specialist support needed for the implementation of availability and accessibility.

Accessibility-related information and communication from the University of Jyväskylä are collected to the Accessible University webpage. The page includes instructions and information sources for the implementation of the principles of accessible studies.

4. Arrangements related to student admission

It is the applicant's responsibility to request personalised arrangements for student admission where needed. Arrangements related to student admission are described in a separate document: *General policies for student admission to degree*

programmes at the University of Jyväskylä from 2025 onwards.

5. Study-related personalised arrangements

It is the student's responsibility to apply for a recommendation for personalised arrangements related to teaching and learning when needed. Discussions regarding these arrangements are confidential.

The student applies for a recommendation for personalised arrangements from student welfare specialists and provides supporting documentation, such as a medical certificate or another expert statement.

When negotiating personalised arrangements, other justified reasons must also be considered in addition to impairments or health problems affecting the student's functional capacity.

Student welfare specialists, together with the student, prepare a recommendation for personalised arrangements. The recommendation is signed by a student welfare specialist. The recommendation is in force for the duration of the student's studies at the University of Jyväskylä or for a fixed period.

Where needed, the units' accessibility contact persons support both students and teaching staff in communicating about and implementing personalised arrangements. To facilitate interaction with students, teaching staff are obliged to familiarise themselves with relevant material related to accessibility.

6. Accessible learning environments

The University and its units ensure that all students have the opportunity to use the University's physical environments as well as digital services for studying, learning, and participation.

6.1 Social environment

By setting an example and promoting staff development, the heads of units promote equal opportunities and an inclusive atmosphere that values diversity within the university community.

University Services ensures that accessibility is taken into account in the University's strategic planning.

6.2 Physical environment

University Services is responsible for ensuring that its staff have the necessary competence to implement accessibility in facilities under construction and already in use.

Each user of the facilities is responsible for organising teaching and events in environments that are as accessible as possible and for reporting any development needs to Facility Services.

If the implementation of accessibility in a pivotal environment or activity proves insurmountable for technical or financial reasons, an accessible alternative that ensures educational quality will be provided.

The University is responsible for equipping the facilities it rents with the most common aids needed for general use (including induction loops and furniture).

6.3 Digital services

The EU Accessibility Directive (2016/2102) as well as the Act on the Provision of Digital Services require that everyone must have equal opportunities to use digital services in the following areas:
- Procurement, maintenance, support and user training for information systems, computer software and terminals
- Structure, content clarity, and format of webpages and documents used for teaching, learning, communication and administration
- Alternatives and flexibility in teaching and learning
- Development of staff competence, and
- Cooperation between the University's various units and stakeholders to ensure sufficient expertise

It is especially important to ensure that materials essential for teaching and learning, and intended for repeated use, are accessible.

Division of responsibilities for the implementation of accessible studies	
University	The University and its units are responsible for ensuring that all students have access to the University's physical environments and digital services for studying, learning, and participation.
	The University takes accessibility into account in its strategic planning.
	Together with its units, it ensures that staff and students are receive sufficient information to implement accessibility. It equips its rented facilities with commonly required aids for general use (including induction loops and appropriate furniture).
	In the utilisation of digital services, the University considers the needs of different users, legislative requirements, generally approved accessibility requirements, as well as usability recommendations and standards.
Units providing education	Units design and implement curricula and teaching programmes to guarantee equal opportunities for all to participate and demonstrate their competencies and capabilities.
	They ensure that communication and learning materials related to teaching are accessible and, where necessary, tailored to individual needs.
	Collaborate with Student and Academic Services to draw up a list of feasible personalised arrangements within the framework of curricular competence objectives. Personal recommendations do not override assessment based on competence objectives.
University Services	University Services is responsible for contributing to the planning, communication, training, drafting of recommendations, and expert support necessary for implementing accessibility and availability.
	University Services prepares admission tests and issues recommendations for personalised study arrangements to faculties, and, where necessary, supports faculties in implementing these arrangements. (Student and Academic Services and student welfare specialists are involved in recommendations for personalised arrangements.)

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	Appoints the University's accessibility contact persons. (Student and Academic Services)
	Is responsible for ensuring, for its part, that all students have access to the University's physical environments and digital services for studying, learning, and participation. Is responsible for the competence of its staff in implementing accessibility in facilities under construction and already in
Deans, Heads of Departments, and Directors of Independent Institutes, Directors of University Services	Through their own example and staff development efforts, they promote equal opportunities and an atmosphere that is receptive to diversity within the university community. They are responsible for ensuring that their units comply with the principles of these guidelines in order to promote equal opportunities.
Student	Reports potential obstacles and applies for a recommendation for personalised arrangements from student welfare specialists.

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