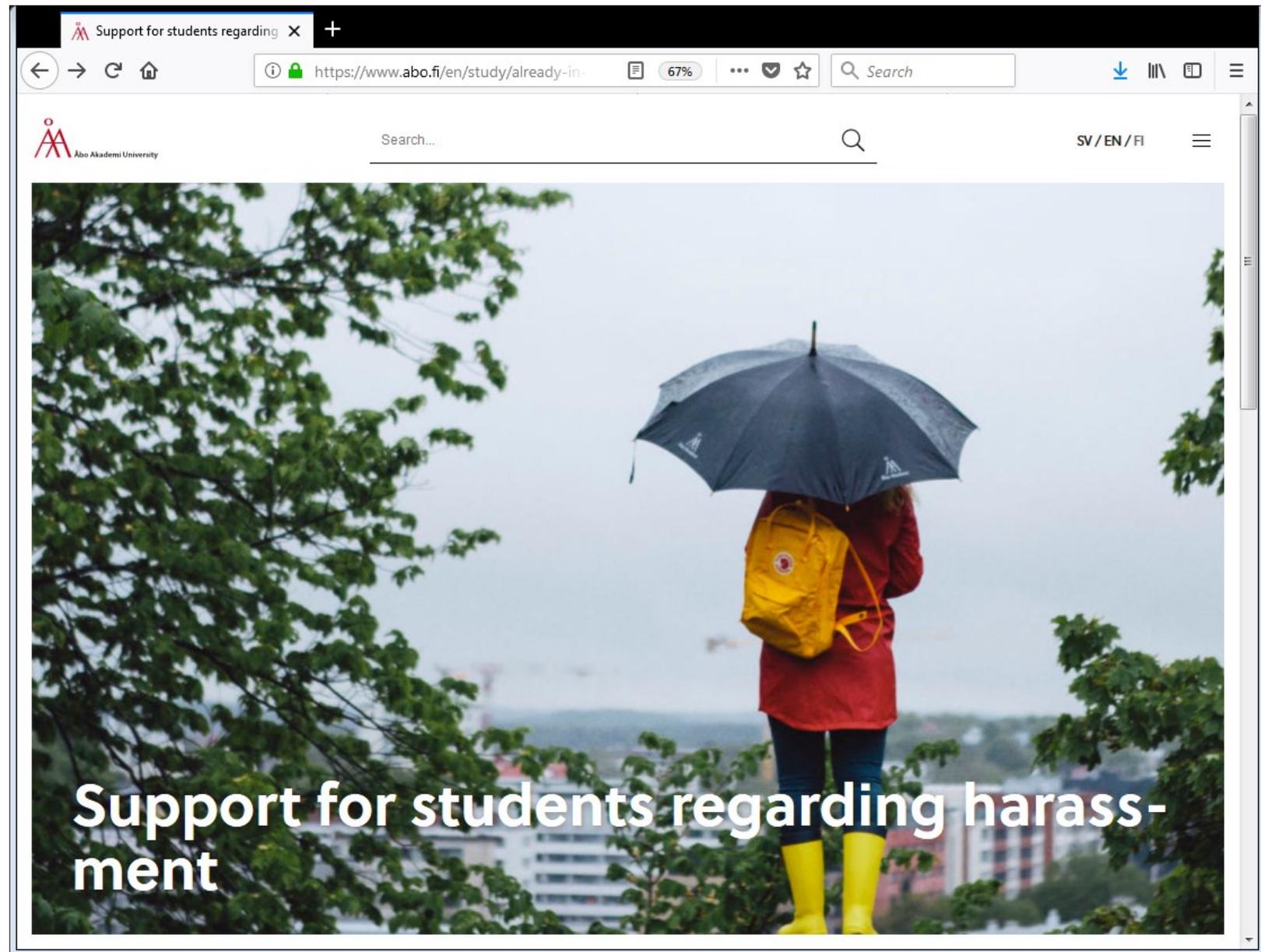




# Safe Space

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Contact person in case of harassment  
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# Introduction

- One community & one ÅAU where everyone are safe, heard and supported



## Session's topics

- Harassments & Discrimination definitions
- Examples of Harassments & Discrimination
- What to do & who can help
- Who's concern?
- Things to remember

## Aim & Purpose

- Help you be aware and recognize harassment, discrimination and violence when you witness or experience it.
- Prevent instances of harassment, discrimination and violence related to students.
- Empower students to react and speak up in situations of harassment, discrimination and violence.
- Create an atmosphere of respect and understanding that different peoples' experiences of harassments & discrimination can differ.



# Harassments & Discrimination definitions in Finnish law

## Law on Discrimination

8.1 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. Discrimination is prohibited, regardless of whether it is based on a fact or assumption concerning the person him/herself or another.

## Law on Harassment

14.1 The deliberate or de facto infringement of the dignity of a person is harassment, if the infringing behavior relates to a reason referred to in section 8(1), and as a result of the reason, a degrading or humiliating, intimidating, hostile or offensive environment towards the person is created by the behavior.

Non-discrimination Act <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2014/20141325>



# Definition at ÅAU

Harassment violates the individual's right to personal freedom and integrity, as well as creates a threatening, violent, humiliating or aggressive atmosphere.

Harassment can be defined as unwelcome, unwanted and one-sided physical or verbal behavior towards someone for whom the impact always is negative. **What is viewed as harassment, depends on the own perception of the one who is subjected to unwanted behavior.**

Bullying refers to repeated violation of a person, while harassment often refers to particular situations.

Åbo Akademi University does not accept any kind of harassment, discrimination or bullying within the university (or in situations related to the university like evening events, parties etc.) among anyone (student, staff, visitors, etc.) and strive to make the university environment a safe space for all.

# Examples of direct harassments

## Harassments can be expressed in the following ways (but not only)

- Sexually and racial etc. suggestive gestures or expressions
- Indecent talk, suggestive jokes, and unwelcome comments or questions concerning the body, race, gender, clothing or private life etc.
- Biased or inappropriate materials, messages or phone calls
- Unwanted physical contact
- Demands for sexual intercourse or other kinds of sexual activity
  
- Physical abuse
- Rape or attempted rape



# Examples of Indirect Harassment

- Hearing a comment not explicitly directed to you ex. racist or sexist jokes
- Saying bad things about someone in the room but in another language so it may not be directed at them but to degrade them
- Being part of the harassment or supporting it, but not being the main offender. Ex. letting friends' cat-call women on the streets or tell inappropriate jokes that you laugh along with
- Being silent when knowing about harassment.



# Harassment & discrimination – a personal experience

- **Microaggressions** refers to direct or indirect daily comments or behaviour towards a person, often from a marginalized group such as an ethnic minority or people with disabilities etc. The one acting this out may not even do it with the purpose of degrading someone yet still provoking this unintentionally.
- Which means:  
**Think!** Perhaps the person you direct your jokes, questions or comments at hears it every day and is tired of hearing it.

*“You have so exotic hair?”*

*“You people ...”*

*“That’s so gay.”*

*“You’re transgender? Wow, you don’t look like it at all!”*

*“No, where are you from originally?”*

[Microaggressions as annoying as mosquitos](#)



# What to do if you are witnessing harassments or discrimination?

- Assess the situation, assess your own safety and think about the best action to take.
- Think of context, who can help, severity of the harassments, do you know who oversees the event/happening etc.

# What to do if someone tells you they are being harassed or discriminated

- Listen & express empathy!
- Believe them, or, at least, do not question the story of the person who is telling it to you.
  - It is not up to you to judge whether what they have experienced is valid.
  - Direct them or go with them to the relevant points of contact.
  - Respect their decisions on what to do.
- Confidentiality. Being harassed is a very personal experience so respect the persons wishes regarding confidentiality.
- Take care of yourself. Being a support to someone or hearing their experience can be hard so make sure you find a suitable person who can support you if needed.



# What to do & who can help

If you are being harassed or discriminated:

Whichever response you have, understand that your response is almost always ok. You feeling safe is the number one priority.

Start thinking about what you would like to do and what options you have. If you choose to file a report, that is okay, and if you choose not to file a report, that is also okay.

Harassments & discrimination can be confusing, but if you are feeling that something – anything – that happened made you feel uncomfortable or uneasy trust your instincts and go and talk to someone. Could be a friend, staff at the ÅAU & Student Union (in particular the contact persons in cases of harassment), other (support) organisation and/or the police.



# Who's concern & responsibility?

# Everyone's



# Things to remember!

We are all here to make spaces that are safe, inclusive & respecting to everyone!

Don't accept harassment or discrimination towards you or others!

Take care of each other!

If you experience harassment or discrimination don't hesitate to be in contact with the Contact persons for students at ÅAU in cases of harassment. We are here to:

- Listen to you and offer you our support
- Explain which alternatives for taking the matters further there are
- The discussions with the contact persons are confidential and the contact persons do not take any action without your specific permission



# ÅA & Student Union Safety net - contact persons in case of harassments



## Åbo Akademi

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Coordinator Anita Sundman, [anita.sundman@abo.fi](mailto:anita.sundman@abo.fi),  
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## Kåren / Student Union

The Students Rights Expert: **Petra Lindblad**  
The Service Expert in Åbo: **Sandra Häggkvist**

E-mail: [trakasseri@studentkaren.fi](mailto:trakasseri@studentkaren.fi)

***“We are here for you”***

<https://www.abo.fi/en/study/already-in-2/student-wellbeing/harassment/>

