

Guidelines for Gender Equality, Equal
Treatment, Inclusion and Accessibility at
ÅAU
– Employer
2026–2028

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1. Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to promote gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility at Åbo Akademi University (ÅAU), in accordance with the University's values and strategic objectives. The guidelines constitute a steering document intended to guide work across the entire organisation and to be integrated into annual operational planning.

The objective is to create a safe, inclusive and fair working environment in which all employees and students are given equal opportunities to participate, develop and thrive – regardless of gender, age, language, ethnic background, functional variation or any other ground for discrimination*. This requires the organisation to carry out systematic and continuous work with active measures to prevent discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities.

The focus areas have been identified through an analysis of the current situation. The material is based on previous gender equality, equal treatment and accessibility plans, personnel statistics from previous years, annual reports, and results from various staff surveys – including the work atmosphere survey conducted in 2023. The Equality Committee invited staff to an open workshop in order to provide opportunities for participation. The analysis has provided a clear picture of development needs and of the objectives that are most urgent.

The guidelines cover the following sub-areas that are significant for gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility:

- decision-making and leadership culture
- forms of employment and personnel structure
- pay setting
- work–life balance
- work ability, need for support and health
- an accessible working environment
- safety, respect, equal treatment and inclusion
- integration of gender equality and equal treatment in education and research

2. Core principles and values

ÅAU shall be a university where everyone is provided with equivalent opportunities to participate, develop and contribute. The work and study environment shall be characterised by openness, respect and participation, where gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility are self-evident and integrated parts of everyday activities.

ÅAU shall actively prevent discrimination and promote an inclusive culture. Information, training and meetings should be made available in both Swedish and English whenever possible. The study and work environment shall be designed with a long-term focus on safety, equality and inclusion.

* Grounds for discrimination according to the Non-Discrimination Act: age, origin (e.g. ethnic origin), nationality/citizenship, language, religion or belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, health status, disability, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic relating to the individual as a person (e.g. place of residence, social status).

ÅAU shall preserve and develop academic traditions and connect them with contemporary society in order to make them more inclusive. ÅAU shall also create space for staff and students to interpret and further develop these traditions together.

ÅAU strives to offer equal opportunities regardless of nationality, language or background and actively works to create an inclusive environment. Diversity shall be regarded as a strength and as a basis for learning in which everyone can participate and develop. In 2023, ÅAU had staff from 59 different nationalities, with a particularly high proportion of international staff in teaching and research.

Support services and staff training are offered in Swedish and English to support inclusion, as well as language training in Swedish. ÅAU strives for broad representation in all roles and forums.

The language used affects how people are perceived and how others are treated. Therefore, ÅAU should actively review and revise language use in, for example, teaching materials, websites and internal documents to ensure linguistic equality. In February 2024, the Equality Committee issued a recommendation on gender-neutral information.

Integration of gender equality, equal treatment and inclusion in education and research

Leaders and teachers shall actively promote a fair and inclusive working environment. Every unit at ÅAU shall work to realise these objectives by integrating the value base contained in ÅAU's strategy (knowledge, community, enablement, sustainability) into its activities and by applying inclusive leadership.

Gender equality, equal treatment and inclusion shall be integrated into all education and research at ÅAU. This means that teaching is planned and implemented to ensure that all students are treated fairly and have equivalent opportunities to participate, develop and be assessed. This is done in accordance with ÅAU's Guidelines for Gender Equality, Equal Treatment, Inclusion and Accessibility. The aim is to ensure a non-discriminatory and inclusive study environment. Gender perspectives and critical examination of norms should be included in learning outcomes where relevant. Broad representation should be used in literature and examples, as well as varied forms of assessment. Reflection on bias awareness and space for gender awareness should be incorporated into assignments.

In research, this means that projects are designed, implemented and reported in a manner that takes gender, diversity and potential equal-treatment effects into account where relevant. ÅAU shall be a research environment that actively promotes equal opportunities, avoids discrimination, and applies transparent and fair processes in recruitment, supervision and merit assessment.

3. Legal basis

The guidelines and action plans for Gender Equality, Equal Treatment, Inclusion and Accessibility at ÅAU are based on several key laws that oblige employers to actively promote fairness and prevent discrimination:

The Gender Equality Act (609/1986) requires employers to promote gender equality between women and men, prevent gender discrimination and create equal opportunities in working life – including recruitment, salary setting and career development. The Act also covers gender identity and gender expression.

The Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014) prohibits discrimination on grounds such as age, origin, language, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Employers are required to promote equal treatment and prevent discrimination in all activities.

The Constitution of Finland (731/1999) establishes that no one shall be treated differently without an acceptable reason and that gender equality between women and men shall be promoted in society and working life.

The Universities Act (558/2009) guarantees students a safe and equal study environment.

The Employment Contracts Act (55/2001) requires fair treatment of employees and regulates parental leave and return to work.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (738/2002) obliges employers to prevent and address harassment, bullying and discrimination in the workplace.

The Criminal Code (39/1889) criminalises certain forms of harassment and discrimination, particularly in cases of repeated or online offences.

The Act on the Provision of Digital Services (306/2019) and the EU Accessibility Directive require digital services to be accessible to all, with clear requirements for accessibility statements and opportunities for user feedback.

Building legislation (132/1999 and 241/2017) requires Åbo Akademi, as an employer, to ensure that all work and study environments are physically accessible and usable for everyone, both in new construction and in permit-required renovations or alterations.

These obligations are supplemented by internal policy documents.

4. Definitions

Gender equality: Equal rights, opportunities and obligations for all, regardless of gender.

Equal treatment: Everyone shall be treated fairly and have the same opportunities, regardless of background.

Inclusion: Everyone has equal opportunities to participate, be respected and experience a sense of belonging regardless of differences.

Accessibility: Everyone shall be able to access services, environments and information – regardless of functional ability.

Discrimination: Unfair treatment of a person based on, for example, gender, age, ethnicity or disability.

Harassment: Intentional or actual violation of the dignity and integrity of a person or group of people, creating a threatening, hostile, degrading or humiliating atmosphere.

Improper conduct: When a person is treated in a disrespectful, demeaning or unjust manner.

5. Responsibilities and roles

To ensure effective work on gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility at ÅAU, responsibilities and roles are defined as follows:

Rector

- Approves the guidelines for gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility and ensures that they are aligned with ÅAU's other governing documents.
- Holds overall responsibility for ensuring that work on gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility is integrated throughout the organisation.

Equality Committee

- Initiates and continuously develops work on gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility at ÅAU.
- Provides information about gender equality work, initiatives and developments within ÅAU.
- Reviews and issues statements and recommendations at ÅAU from a gender equality perspective.
- Ensures that the organisation's Guidelines for Gender Equality, Equal Treatment, Inclusion and Accessibility are updated according to the established timetable.

Faculties and support functions

- Integrate the guidelines into their own governing documents and operational plans.
- Develop action plans that concretise how the values are implemented in practice.
- Ensure participation by involving staff and students.
- Follow up on action plans and report to management.

Managers and leaders

- Implement the guidelines in daily work and leadership.
- Are responsible for creating safe and inclusive working environments.

Personnel Services

- Provide guidance materials and training.
- Monitor statistics and indicators related to gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility.
- Support managers in recruitment, work environment management and competence development.
- Identify competence development needs in the area and initiate relevant objectives

All employees

- Are expected to contribute to an inclusive culture by following the guidelines and acting in accordance with ÅAU's values.
- Are encouraged to report obstacles to gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion or accessibility and to participate in development efforts.

6. Related governing and guidance documents

Gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility at ÅAU are also governed by a number of internal policy documents that are complemented by these overarching guidelines. These include governing documents for education and codes of conduct, instructions on ethics and good scientific practice, the language policy, and the Development Plan for the Working Community. Instructions for Staff and the Staff Regulations – including recruitment guidelines and principles for career structures such as tenure track – also play an important role, as do the national Guidelines for Responsible Conduct of Research (TENK) and international agreements on research assessment (COARA), the recruitment guide for managers, the occupational safety and health programme, conflict-of-interest guidelines, and cooperation agreements concerning work environment matters. ÅAU is furthermore certified under HRS4R and follows the Guidelines for Open Science.

In addition, the Whistleblower Directive applies, as well as the process for handling improper conduct, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment. All documents are available via ÅAU's intranet and external website.

7. Current state analysis

The mapping of the current situation regarding gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility at ÅAU, and the preparation of a new action plan, are based on ÅAU's previous Gender Equality, Equal Treatment and Accessibility plans, personnel statistics from earlier plans and annual reports, as well as results from various staff surveys, such as the work atmosphere survey conducted in 2023. Please familiarise yourself with the statistics presented in Appendix 1.

The analysed material is based on data from different sources and levels of detail and granularity. In the work atmosphere survey, each respondent defined their group affiliation themselves, meaning that information on gender, age and organisational unit is self-reported and that respondents had the option to refrain from stating their gender. Salary statistics and other information related to employment conditions have been obtained from internal systems, in which registered legal gender is reported.

7.1 Decision-making and leadership culture

The gender distribution within ÅAU's decision-making bodies is relatively balanced, although variations occur between different levels and bodies. Since some bodies are constituted through elections, representation cannot always be influenced without the use of quotas.

Examples of gender distribution:

- Board of Directors, internal members 1.1.2025–31.12.2027: 50% women

- Board of Directors, external members 1.1.2025–31.12.2025: 50% women
- University Collegium 1.1.2025–31.12.2027: 58% women
- Rector's Management Group 2026: women (30% in 2025)
- Research Ethics Committee 14.10.2025–1.7.2028: 71% women
- Academic leadership 2025: 25% women (Rector, Pro-Rector and Vice-Rector)
- Administrative leadership 2025: 55% women
- VÖS leadership 2025: 75% women
- Faculty Councils 1.8.2025–31.7.2028, Faculty of Science and Engineering (ordinary members): 40% women
- Faculty Councils 1.8.2025–31.7.2028, Faculty of Arts, Psychology and Theology (ordinary members): 33% women

Despite an apparently balanced gender distribution in faculty councils, the professorial category is in several cases dominated by men. Information on the representation of persons with a foreign background is not available, as data on gender, age or other background characteristics are not recorded; only names and the personnel group represented by the individual are registered (see Appendix 1: Table 1, Composition of the University Collegium over time, and Table 2, Composition of the Board of Directors over time).

In 2025, a clear distinction was introduced between academic and administrative leadership, resulting in a changed structure. The academic leadership consists of the Rectorate, comprising one woman and three men. Deans are now part of the administrative leadership. The latter otherwise consists of the CFO, directors of support functions, the Chief Legal Officer and the Chief Librarian, comprising seven women and five men.

The 2023 work atmosphere survey showed clear improvements in how staff perceive ÅAU's strategic leadership compared with 2021. Opportunities for dialogue, transparency in decision-making processes and influence had increased (see Appendix 1, Table 3, Strategic leadership). More recent data are not available, as no work atmosphere survey was conducted in 2025 due to organisational restructuring.

Managers, leaders and teachers have a particular responsibility to promote a safe, fair and inclusive working environment. ÅAU offers training under the theme of gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility to support them in their roles.

ÅAU strives, as far as possible, to ensure that all functions are represented by individuals with diverse backgrounds. Student representatives participate in the Board of Directors and working groups, contributing to an inclusive and engaged university environment.

Objectives

- to promote a working and study environment in which ÅAU strives for diversity in roles and representation
- to ensure that managers, leaders and teachers have relevant knowledge of gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility

- to ensure that ÅAU's decisions are made on transparent grounds, with due consideration of gender equality and non-discrimination, and justified where necessary

7.2 Forms of Employment and Staff Structure

At the organisational level, women constitute a majority of ÅAU's staff, with 58% women and 42% men in 2024. However, gender distribution varies clearly between units. The proportion of women was highest within ÅAB, CLL and the Language Centre, FPV and VÖS, where approximately three quarters of staff were women. Women were also in the majority within University Services and Central Administration as well as FHPT, while FNT was the most male-dominated unit, with approximately 37% women (see Appendix 1, Table 4, Average proportion of women in different units).

Variation between positions is considerable: the majority of professors and researchers are men, while university lecturers, university teachers and doctoral researchers are predominantly women. Women continue to constitute the majority among expert and support staff, particularly in administration and libraries, whereas men dominate in IT and property services. Compared with previous years, levels are relatively stable, and the overall picture shows that gender distribution varies clearly depending on position and field of activity (see Appendix 1, Table 5, Gender distribution within staff groups and job titles).

The age distribution shows a relatively even spread between the ages of 30 and 59. The largest age groups are 30–34 years and 55–59 years as well as 60 years and older, each accounting for approximately 13–14% of staff. The proportion of young employees under 25 years is low and has remained stable over time, while the proportion of older employees remains relatively high (see Appendix 1, Table 6, Development of age distribution 2017–2024).

Universities differ from many other workplaces in having a high proportion of fixed-term employment, particularly in research and project activities. Together with the chief shop stewards, ÅAU regularly monitors these appointments to ensure that fixed-term employment has a formal basis.

In 2024, 45% of positions were fixed-term (2023: 44%), a level that has remained stable since 2020. The majority concerned teaching and research staff (72%), often linked to the four career levels of academic research or to projects. Among experts and other support staff, project work and substitute appointments were the most common reasons for fixed-term employment. Women accounted for 59% of fixed-term positions in 2024 (2023: 59%). Women also constituted the majority among substitutes in 2024 (66%) (2023: 61%). Source: (Fixed-term employees during the period 1.1.2024–31.12.2024 according to the personnel administration system).

Part-time employment constitutes a smaller but significant part of the personnel structure, with higher prevalence in certain units where hourly teaching appointments are common. As with fixed-term employment, part-time work is more common among women, both among teaching and research staff and other personnel groups. The higher proportion of women in fixed-term and part-time employment may affect perceptions of security, continuity and career development (see Appendix 1, Table 7, Average part-time work in 2024).

At ÅAU, there are several different categories of researchers, such as grant-funded researchers, project researchers, fixed-term doctoral researchers and researchers, permanent researchers, and

affiliated researchers. Differences between these groups depend on employment status, funding source and academic level, which means that their rights and obligations vary. To avoid ambiguity, it is important that ÅAU clearly describes each category and clarifies the applicable rights and obligations. This promotes transparency and a shared understanding of the conditions within the organisation.

Objective

- to clarify information on support and resources for non-employed researchers and doctoral researchers

7.3 Salary setting

Salary setting at ÅAU follows the collective agreements for universities and is based on two components: a task-related salary based on the demands of the position, and an individual component based on work performance.

Pay differences have decreased over time. Nevertheless, women still have slightly lower average salaries in most staff groups. Differences are smallest among professors, lecturers and doctoral researchers and largest among researchers. In some groups, differences have increased since 2023: assistant staff, professors and IT staff.

Both women and men have experienced positive salary development with a uniform increase of approximately 2%, indicating a general pay adjustment. The average change in women's salaries relative to men's is +0.89%, indicating a slight improvement, although variations between groups are evident.

The most positive changes are seen among library staff and doctoral researchers. Female doctoral researchers as well as experts and other support staff have also reduced the gap compared with men. In libraries, this development may partly be linked to the fact that men more often hold lower-level positions within the unit.

Negative developments mainly appear within management (Rector's Management Group and University Services Management Group), IT staff and researchers. Minor deteriorations are also noted for assisting staff and professors. Within the IT group, the gap may partly be explained by the fact that all middle managers are men. For most groups, the difference between women's and men's average salaries remains relatively stable with only minor adjustments (see Appendix 1, Table 8, Salaries 2023-2024).

Objectives

- to work towards reducing any unjustified pay differentials related to task demand levels
- to provide managers with additional support in conducting pay evaluation discussions

7.4 Work–Life Balance

ÅAU strives to ensure that all employees can combine working life and private life in an equitable manner, regardless of life situation. Flexible working hours, remote work and various forms of leave are offered to facilitate balance and recovery. Managers are encouraged to raise these issues in performance and development discussions.

In 2024, a total of 126 individuals used some form of family leave, approximately 79% of whom were women. The distribution is as follows (see Appendix 1, Table 9, Family leaves during 1.1–31.12.2024):

- Pregnancy leave: 21 persons, 100% women
- Parental leave: 59 persons, 68% women
- Care leave: 16 persons, 94% women
- Partial family leave: 30 persons, 77% women

The 2023 work atmosphere survey shows that women within teaching and research staff as well as all managers, regardless of gender, report poorer work–life balance and more limited recovery opportunities compared with the university average. At the same time, perceived job satisfaction remains relatively high (see Appendix 1, Table 10, Resources in relation to work arrangements).

Objectives

- to ensure that the workplace promotes a reasonable and fair distribution of work
- to ensure that the workplace considers different life situations to facilitate the balance between work and private life, for example through clear processes for extending fixed-term employment in cases of family leave or long-term sick leave

7.5 Work Ability, Need for Support and Health

ÅAU works to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities in work and study, regardless of individual circumstances. Health status must not influence recruitment or lead to discrimination.

The 2023 work atmosphere survey shows a general improvement in employees perceived work ability (see Appendix 1, Table 11, Work ability, resources and demands). Managers and directors, however, perceive their work as mentally demanding, while other staff do not (see Appendix 1, Table 12, Work demands).

Grant-funded researchers report the highest mental strain. For permanent staff, particularly professors and university teachers, workload primarily relates to lack of time (see Appendix 1, Table 13, Workload – academic staff, different roles). Overall sickness absence is low, but women have more than double the number of sick days compared with men (see Appendix 1, Table 14, Sick leave days by gender 2023–2025 according to the personnel administration system). For academic staff, the comprehensive working time system may mean that sickness absence is not always recorded, suggesting that actual absence is likely higher than shown in the statistics.

Objective

- to offer methods that support work ability and to increase knowledge among employees and managers about factors that promote good work ability

7.6 An Accessible Work Environment

ÅAU works to create a physical and digital environment that is accessible to all. Campus facilities have gradually been adapted with features such as ramps, lifts, automatic doors and induction loops. Information about accessibility is available on both external and internal websites but is not comprehensive.

In the 2023 work atmosphere survey, 45% of respondents stated that they experience equal treatment regardless of disability. Nearly one third responded that they do not know whether the campus is accessible. This indicates a need for improved information on accessibility (see Appendix 1, Table 15, Equal treatment, gender equality and diversity, and participation).

Digitally, ÅAU's systems are reviewed and tested to comply with legal requirements on web accessibility. Any deficiencies are published in the accessibility statement. Instructions for accessible digital production are available, and feedback on digital accessibility can be provided via designated contact addresses.

Objective

- to improve information on the accessibility of buildings

7.7 Safety, Respect, Equal Treatment and Inclusion

According to the 2023 work atmosphere survey, experiences of how well gender equality, equal treatment and participation are realised at ÅAU vary. Individuals who report having been subjected to harassment or improper conduct and that the situation is ongoing appear as the most critical group (see Appendix 1, Table 16, Equal treatment, gender equality and diversity, and participation – respondents who report harassment or improper conduct). Those who chose not to state their gender and women give lower ratings for perceived gender equality and equal treatment than men (see Appendix 1, Table 17, Equal treatment, gender equality and diversity, and participation by gender).

Differences are also observed between groups of different nationalities in how issues of equal treatment are perceived. Persons with national backgrounds other than Finnish were more critical of the statement "At our university, staff are treated equally regardless of their ethnic background or origin" (see Appendix 1, Table 18, Equal treatment, gender equality and diversity, and participation by nationality).

The results show that experiences of gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility at ÅAU are generally positive, but that differences exist depending on gender, nationality and experience of improper conduct. This underscores the importance of continued efforts to ensure an equal and safe working environment for all.

Digital attacks and harassment are an increasing phenomenon that also affects our employees and can have serious consequences. It is therefore important to be able to recognise, manage and provide support in such situations.

Objectives

- to create an equal and safe working and study environment characterised by respect and inclusion and free from discrimination
- to ensure that ÅAU has clear and highly visible processes for addressing digital harassment, so that digital attacks are handled quickly and professionally and contribute to a safe working environment

8. Everyday practices for gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility

Work on gender equality, equal treatment and accessibility is in many ways already integrated into daily activities. The organisation follows established practices to ensure that these values are reflected in all processes and decisions.

Recruitment and representation

ÅAU applies equal treatment in recruitment by following the governing documents and policies that regulate this area. When appointing working groups, committees and commissions, ÅAU strives for gender balance in accordance with the 40/60 rule to ensure broad representation.

Transparency and fair conditions

Information on average salaries for equivalent work, disaggregated by gender (women and men), is available in the annual report and in the Guidelines for gender Equality, Equal Treatment, Inclusion and Accessibility. To maintain a fair and transparent pay structure, the salary evaluation group meets regularly to consider changes in task demand levels.

Regarding the monitoring of fixed-term employment, a model is in place whereby the chief shop stewards and the employer meet annually to review the justifications for fixed-term contracts, ensuring that each fixed-term appointment has a formal basis.

Flexibility and work-life balance

ÅAU offers flexible solutions to facilitate the combination of work and private life for all employees. These include opportunities for remote work, part-time work and partial sick leave. Information on the intranet encourages all parents and guardians to make use of family leave.

Rest rooms are available on campus, providing opportunities for rest when needed. Staff exercise programmes (CampusSport and ÅAU Sports) and shower facilities encourage physical activity. Many buildings, both in Turku and Vaasa, are equipped with changing tables, facilitating the combination of work and private life for parents of young children. Together, these objectives contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive working life.

Clear processes and accessible information

Processes for handling improper conduct, discrimination and harassment are currently clear and easily accessible on the intranet, and employees are aware of both the processes and where to seek support when needed. Work to strengthen accessibility continues as part of regular development activities. A particular focus is placed on ensuring that employees, students and visitors can easily find information on the location of rest rooms, changing tables, showers and changing rooms. Efforts to make this information more visible and accessible have been initiated but are not yet complete.

Language and culture

In 2024, the Equality Committee issued a recommendation on the use of gender-neutral language in all communication. By striving to provide information and communication in both Swedish and English in all matters, ÅAU promotes inclusion and accessibility. Gender equality, equal treatment

and accessibility perspectives are increasingly integrated into staff training for managers, leaders and teachers.

9. Implementation, follow-up and timeframe

The Guidelines for Equality, Equal Treatment, Inclusion and Accessibility shall be implemented systematically and integrated into ÅAU's regular governing documents and guidelines. Faculties and support functions are responsible for translating the objectives in the action plan into concrete objectives within their activities and operational plans for 2026–2028, and for following them up regularly. In connection with operational planning, the organisation may annually highlight objectives that should be prioritised over others. Work on concrete objectives may continue beyond 2028.

Not all objectives need to be implemented across all parts of the organisation. Instead, each faculty and support or administrative unit selects two to three objectives that are most relevant to its own activities and where the greatest need or development potential exists, unless otherwise instructed by the organisation.

Once operational plans have been approved, objectives related to gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility are reported to the Equality Committee. In connection with follow-up of operational plans, faculties and support functions report implemented objectives and challenges to the University management. Upon request, reports on implementation are submitted to the Equality Committee, which reviews progress and provides recommendations for further development.

HR Services regularly monitors key indicators, such as personnel statistics, pulse surveys, work atmosphere surveys and recruitment data, with particular focus on gender, type of employment and pay structure. Results are communicated openly within the organisation to increase transparency, accountability and participation. Where necessary, action plans shall be revised to address new needs and challenges.

10. Communication and training

Work on gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility shall be communicated clearly and continuously throughout the organisation. Information shall be easily accessible in both Swedish and English.

- The Equality Committee shall regularly inform about guidelines, objectives and ongoing objectives through internal channels such as the intranet and Staff News. Through communication efforts and thematic campaigns, the Committee promotes understanding of the importance of this work.
- Clear information shall be available on the intranet on how employees can report obstacles to gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion or accessibility, and how cases of discrimination or harassment are handled.

Training is a central part of implementing the guidelines. ÅAU shall provide regular training for managers, leaders, teachers and staff in support functions.

- Training shall cover legislation, ÅAU's guidelines, inclusive leadership, accessibility, and the prevention of discrimination and harassment.
- Newly recruited staff shall be introduced to ÅAU's values and guidelines as part of the induction programme.
- Training initiatives shall be followed up and continuously developed based on needs and evaluations.

The aim is to create a shared knowledge base and shared responsibility for promoting a working environment in which everyone is given equal opportunities to participate and develop.

11. Review and updating

According to Chapter 6a of the Act on gender equality between Women and Men (609/1986), employers with at least 30 employees are required to have a gender equality plan. The plan must include an assessment of gender equality within employment relationships, including a pay survey, as well as an action plan with concrete objectives to promote gender equality.

At ÅAU, the guidelines set out central principles and values for gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility work. Concrete objectives are formulated in an action plan and in the operational plans of individual units. The action plan related to gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion and accessibility is revised every two years in accordance with legal requirements. Objectives are, however, followed up and reported annually.

The Equality Committee is responsible for initiating and coordinating the review process in cooperation with HR Services, faculties and support units.

Appendix 1: Current state analysis – tables and charts

Table 1:

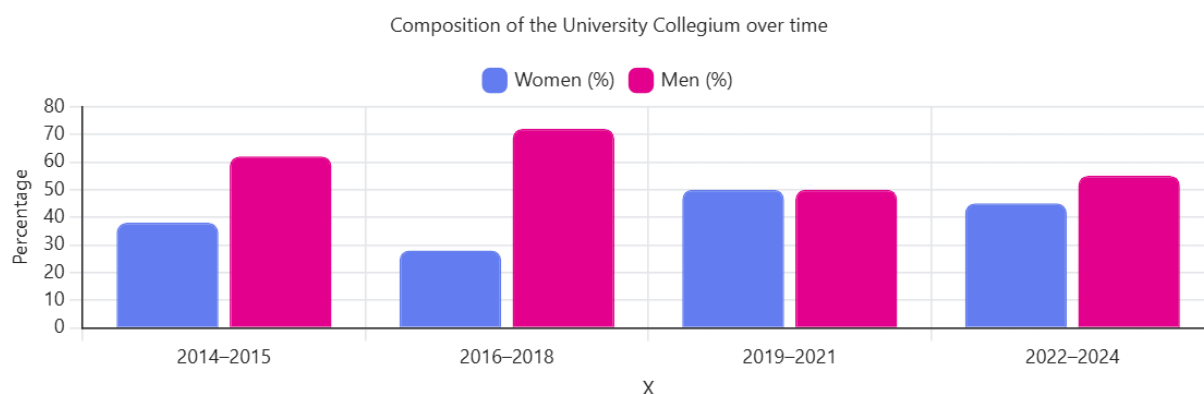


Table 2:

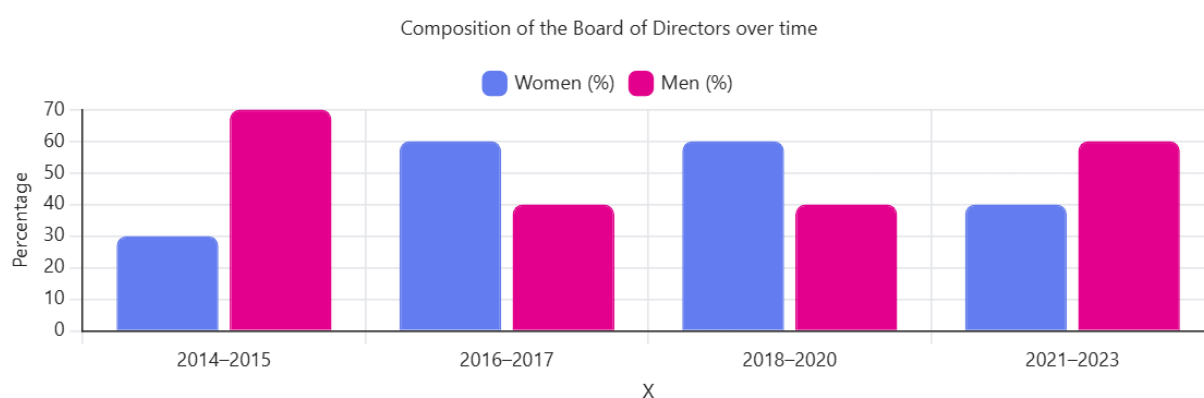
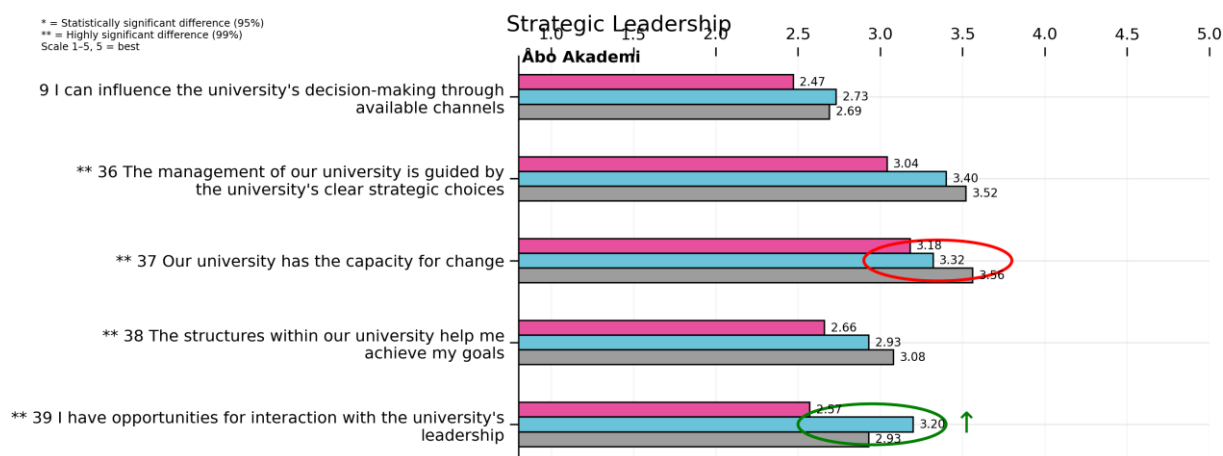


Table 3: Strategic leadership

Strategic Leadership



Work Atmosphere Survey 2021 Work Atmosphere Survey 2023 University Norm 2021

Table 4. Average proportion of women in different units

	2024		2023	
	Employed	Women (%)	Employed	Women (%)
ÅAUL, CLL and Language Centre	131	75 %	136	77 %
University Services and Central Administration	253	62 %	254	63 %
FHPT	151	62 %	136	62 %
FPV	151	76 %	153	75 %
VÖS	109	77 %	107	78 %
FSEJ	142	56 %	130	55 %
FNT	375	37 %	354	39 %
Total staff	1312	58 %	1 270	59 %

Table 5. Gender distribution within staff groups and job titles

	2024			2023		
	Number of employees	Men (%)	Women (%)	Number of employees	Men (%)	Women (%)
Research and teaching staff (by job title)	787	44 %	56 %	754	43 %	57 %
Professor	92	63 %	37 %	85	65 %	35 %
Senior lecturer (Akademilektor)	2	50 %	50 %	2	50 %	50 %
University lecturer	104	37 %	63 %	95	37 %	63 %
Senior university lecturer	59	56 %	44 %	65	57 %	43 %
Postdoctoral researcher	19	47 %	53 %	16	50 %	50 %
University teacher	66	20 %	80 %	77	19 %	81 %
Researcher, project researcher	91	58 %	42 %	83	53 %	47 %
Doctoral researcher	153	41 %	59 %	138	43 %	57 %
Other teaching and research staff***	201	38 %	62 %	193	36 %	64 %
Other expert and support staff (according to groups)	525	39 %	61 %	516	38 %	62 %
Assistant staff	117	59 %	41 %	111	58 %	42 %
Library staff	44	32 %	68 %	47	32 %	68 %
IT staff	45	87 %	13 %	45	84 %	16 %
Administrative staff (excl. Management, director, rector)	262	19 %	81 %	263	19 %	81 %
Administrative staff (Management, director, rector)	24	54 %	46 %	24	54 %	46 %
Facility services	16	81 %	19 %	15	87 %	13 %
Others, interns	17	35 %	65 %	11	36 %	64 %
Total staff	1312	42 %	58 %	1270	41 %	59 %

Table 6. Development of age distribution 2017–2024

Age group	Proportion 2024	Proportion 2023	Proportion 2020	Proportion 2017
-24	2 %	2 %	1 %	1 %
25-29	10 %	10 %	10 %	10 %
30-34	14 %	13 %	12 %	13 %
35-39	11 %	12 %	11 %	12 %
40-44	12 %	12 %	16 %	15 %
45-49	13 %	14 %	12 %	12 %
50-54	12 %	11 %	15 %	15 %
55-59	13 %	13 %	12 %	10 %
60-	13 %	13 %	12 %	12 %

Table 7. Average part-time work in 2024

	All (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
Part-time employments	16,5 %	28,7 %	71,3 %
Part-time employees, teaching staff	56 %	33,1 %	66,9 %
Part-time employees, other staff	44 %	23,2 %	76,8 %
Fixed-term employees, part- time	66,7 %	29,9 %	70,1 %
...off which parental leave (fixed term)	3,5 %	20 %	80 %
Permanent employees, part- time	33,3 %	26,4 %	73,6 %
...off which parental leave (permanent)	18,1 %	15,4 %	84,6 %
Age category 19–40	41,7 %	25,6 %	74,4 %
Age category 41–59	43,5 %	25,5 %	74,5 %
Age category 60–68	12,5 %	51,9 %	48,1 %
Age category 69->	2,3 %	20 %	80 %

Table 8. Salaries 2023-2024

	2024			2023			
Staff group	Women	Men	Women's share of men's salary	Women	Men	Women's salaries compared to men's (%) 2023	The change 2023-2024
Assistant staff	2949	3082	95,7 %	2987	3085	96,8 %	-1,1
Management*	8762	9190	95,3 %	8577	8763	97,9 %	-2,7
Library staff	3779	3175	119,0 %	3523	3207	109,9 %	8,3
Administrative staff	3833	3996	95,9 %	3692	3966	93,1 %	3
Professor	7406	7509	98,6 %	7184	7234	99,3 %	-0,7
Lector	4923	5013	98,2 %	4820	4923	97,9 %	0,3
Academy lecturer	4670	4918	94,9 %	4557	4854	93,9 %	1,1
Postdoctoral researcher	4079	4070	100,2 %	4001	4144	95,6 %	4,8
Research leader	**	**	**	5482	5747	95,4 %	
Doctoral researcher	2840	2859	99,3 %	2639	2715	97,2 %	2,2
Researcher	3670	4163	88,2 %	3577	3974	90,0 %	-2
IT-staff	3728	4043	92,2 %	3775	3984	94,8 %	-2,7
University teacher	3857	3910	98,6 %	3732	3821	97,7 %	0,9
Academy researcher	5131	5463	93,9 %	5091	5438	93,6 %	0,3
Full time teacher	4432	***		4284		-	
Facility services	***	3293					

* include the Rector's management team and the University Services management team

** under 7 persons

*** too few persons

Table 9. Family leaves during the period 1.1.-31.12.2024

	Number	Men (%)	Women (%)	Average length of days Men	Average length of days Women
Pregnancy leave	21	0 %	100 %	0	38
Parental leave	59	32 %	68 %	63	119
Care leave	16	6 %	94 %	201	114
Partial family leave	30	23 %	77 %	N/A	N/A

Table 10. Resources regarding work arrangements

(on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = poorest and 5 = best). UP = teaching and research staff.

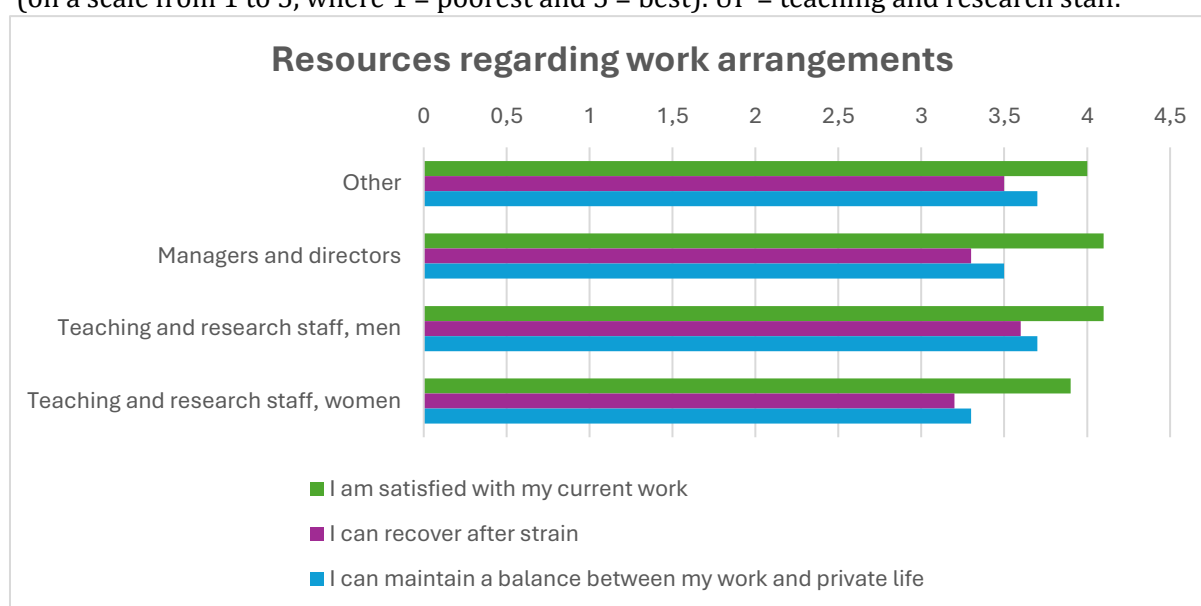


Table 11. Work ability, resources and demands
(on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = poorest and 5 = best).

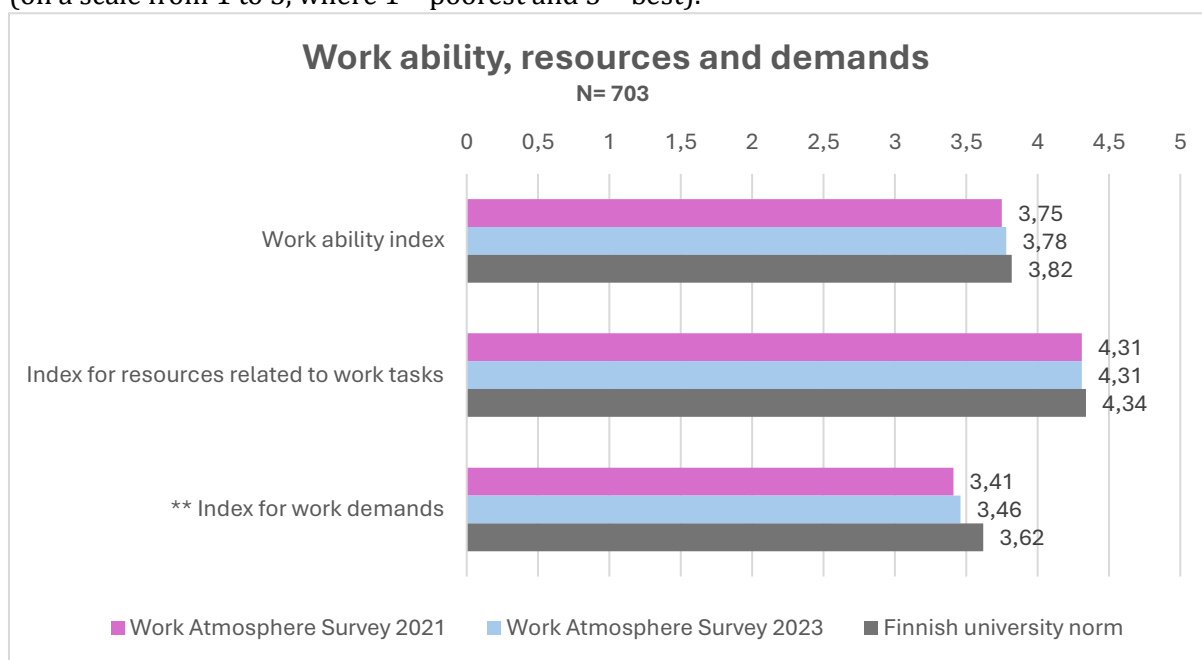


Table 12. Work Demands
(on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = poorest and 5 = best).

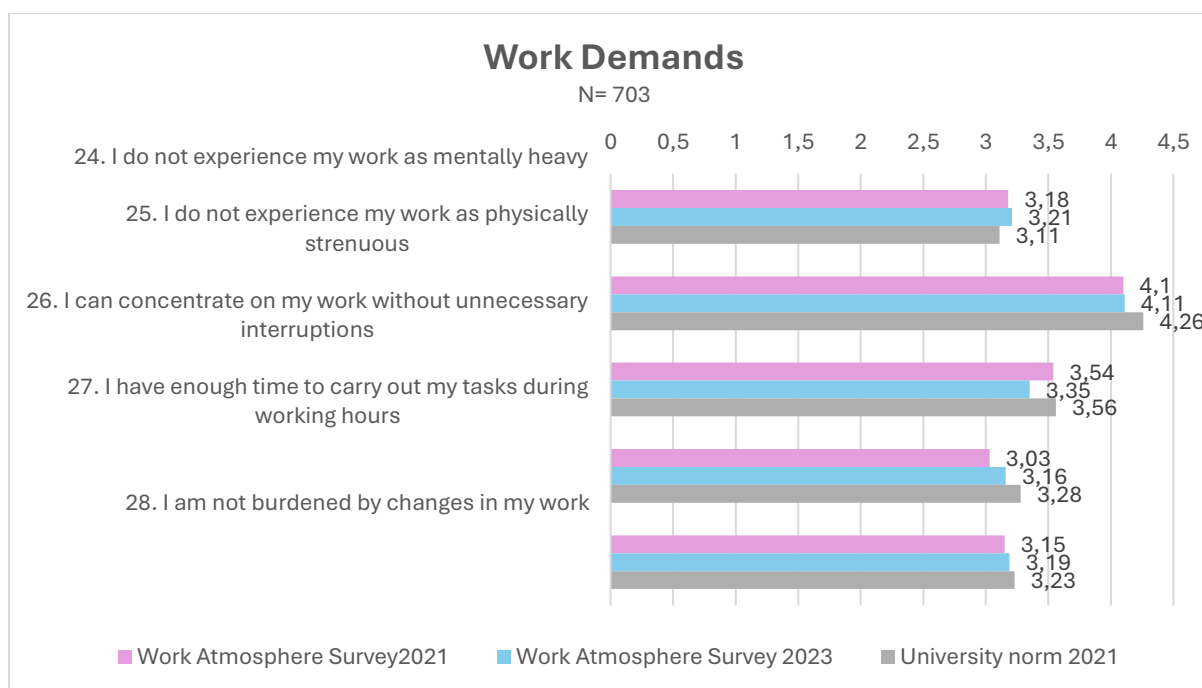
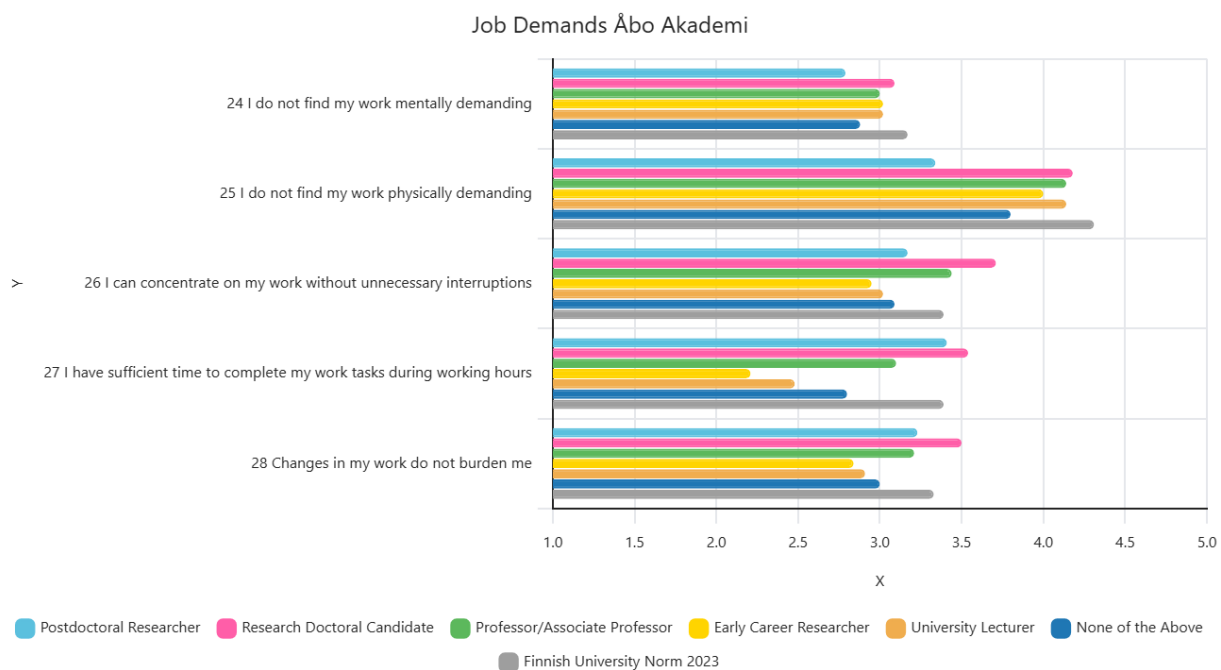


Table 13. Workload academic staff different roles

Scale 1-5, 5=best



Tabel 14: Sick leave days by gender 2023–2025 according to the personnel administration system

The first figure (top left) shows women's share of the total number of sickness absence days over a three-year period. It illustrates the proportion of recorded sickness absence attributable to women and men, respectively, providing an overall view of trends over time.

The figure next to it (top right) presents the average number of recorded sickness absence days per person in 2025, broken down by gender and staff category (UP, ÖP and VÖS). The chart enables comparisons of sickness absences both within and between the different groups.

The table below shows women's share of full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) within each staff category in 2025. This information is necessary to put the sickness absence figures into context by showing the proportion of women and men in the workforce within each category.

The figure in the lower right corner shows the proportion of employees who did not have a single sickness absence day during 2025. The purpose is to highlight that a very large share of employees across all staff categories did not take any sick leave at all, indicating generally good health and high attendance levels within the organization.

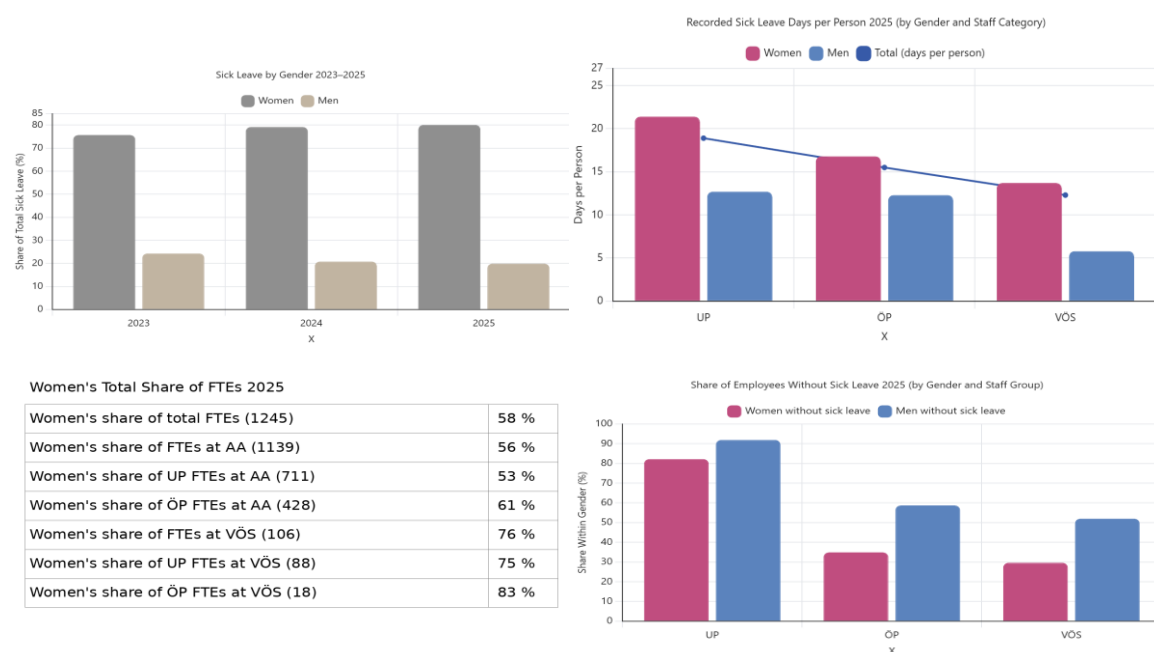


Table 15: Equal treatment, gender equality and diversity, and participation

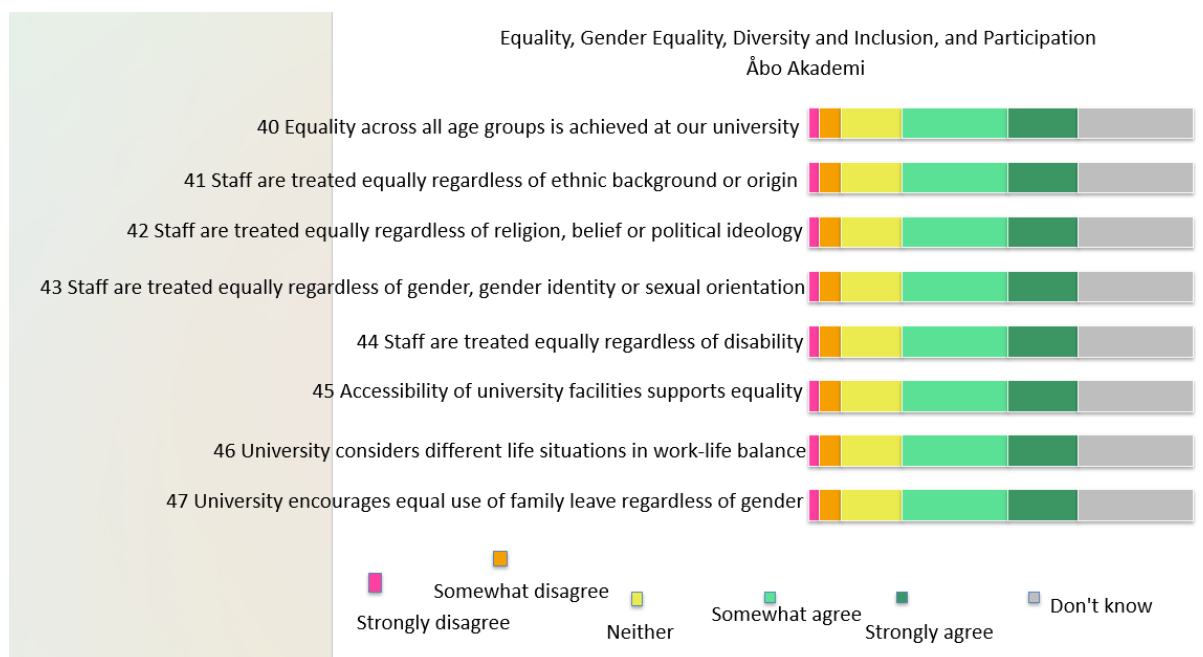


Table 16: Equal treatment, gender equality and diversity, and participation – respondents who report harassment or improper conduct



N: 703

Table 17: Equal treatment, gender equality and diversity, and participation by gender

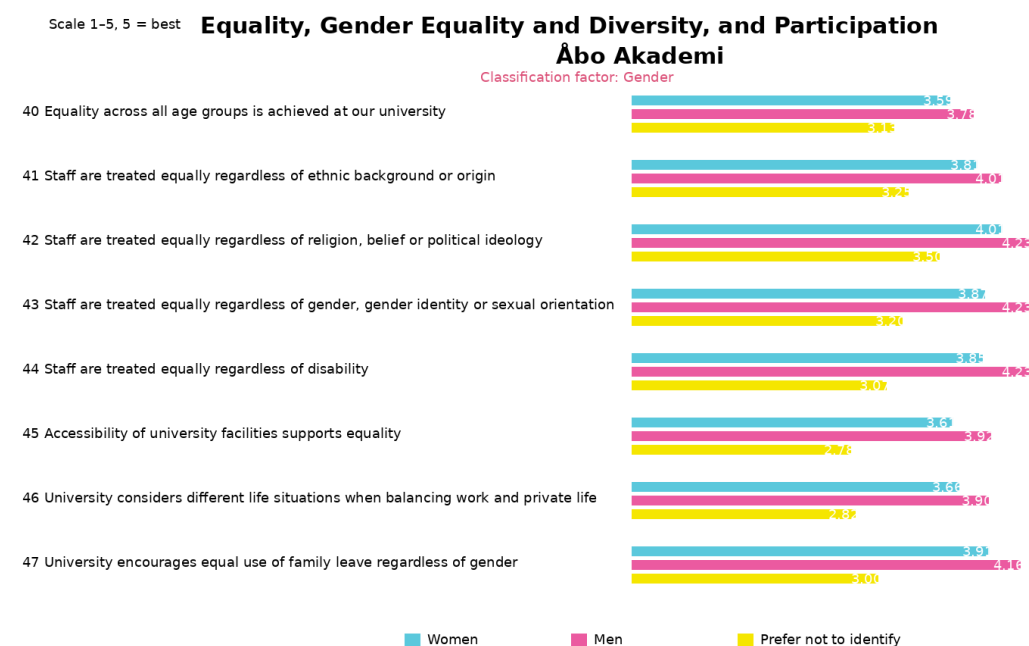
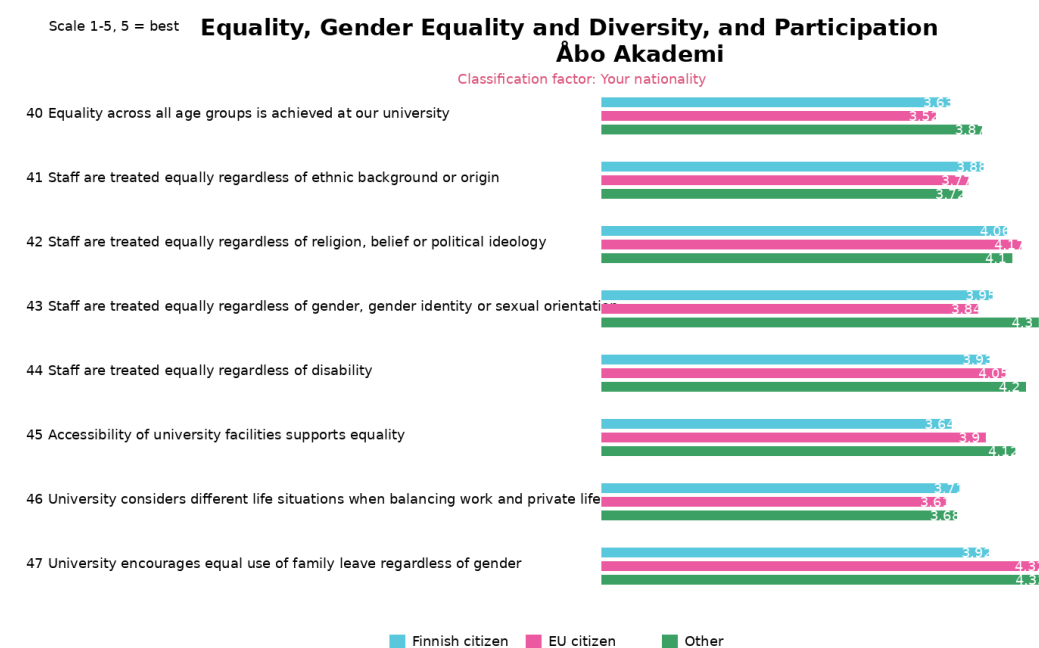


Table 18: Equal treatment, gender equality and diversity, and participation by nationality



Appendix 2: Evaluation of the previous action plan's implementation

The evaluation shows how well the measures in the previous plan were implemented. The effects are difficult to measure, as cultural change and a more balanced gender distribution occur gradually. Training and active efforts relating to gender equality, equal treatment, inclusion, and accessibility form an ongoing process, based on the assumption that targeted efforts yield results over time. The secretary has followed up on, communicated about, and evaluated the measures, which are summarized below.

Decision-making and leadership culture

The goal was to improve communication from management and increase transparency. To support this, the intranet page Management and Decision-Making was updated with information on governance bodies and decision-making processes; the Rector's lists of matters are available under Rector's Decisions, and individual decisions can be found in the DocSy tool. Transparency was strengthened through news updates on decisions and matters. Studio Campus was launched in spring 2023.

Recruitment and staff structure

The goal was to work towards a recruitment process that treats everyone equally, promote a more balanced gender distribution among university teachers, university lecturers, senior university lecturers, and professors—particularly in fields where women are underrepresented. Another goal was to increase staff diversity and create an inclusive work environment, as well as to offer equal opportunities for career advancement and active participation in the University's activities. By offering Swedish language courses to those whose mother tongue is not Swedish, the organization aimed to create conditions for career advancement and participation.

Training on gender-equal recruitment was provided (2022, 2024). A short guide and recurring training sessions are needed.

Employment conditions and pay

The goal was to analyze the reasons for the higher proportion of women in fixed-term and part-time positions, to work towards fair pay, clarify information on salary processes, and establish common principles for reward systems.

Fixed term/part-time employment: Reporting on gender and age distribution has begun, but manual processes make the work difficult. System development is needed to facilitate data extraction.

Salary setting: A review of job descriptions was conducted in spring 2024, and a comparison of requirement levels was planned for autumn 2024. The measure has been initiated, but the requirement levels were not compared. Due to limited resources and restructuring negotiations, the comparison will be carried out in spring 2026.

Information: Three information sessions on salary setting were held in October 2023; materials are available on the intranet. The measure has been completed, and the information is updated continuously.

Reward systems: Faculties are to map and report their systems; common principles are lacking. It turned out that no faculty currently has a reward system in use.

Work-life balance

The goal was to create conditions for a better balance between work and private life and to make it more attractive for men to take parental leave.

The measure related to work-life balance is linked to a broader discussion on workload, which should take place in consultation with top management. Workload is included in ÅAU's operational plan. The measure has been initiated but not completed.

The intranet page Leave and Absence contains information on parental leave, stating: *"We want to be a family-friendly employer and encourage all parents and guardians to take family leave—and naturally also to stay home when children up to 10 years old are ill."*

Discrimination, harassment, and hate speech

The goal was to create an inclusive and respectful environment, draw attention to the situation of minorities, clarify the handling of inappropriate behavior, and increase the visibility of equality and non-discrimination work.

Inclusive environment: Planned workshops were replaced by an online training on anti-racism (THL) in Moodle, which will be promoted starting in 2026.

Mapping: The 2023 work atmosphere survey included DEI questions; the results are used for improvement work.

Information: The intranet page on inappropriate treatment has been updated and the training program A Safe Workplace supports this measure.

Visibility: The Equality Committee provides information via the intranet, newsletters, and Yammer; a communication plan and a new page have been created.

Participation: Workshops were arranged in connection with the update of the new equality plan.

Lunch seminars: One of the Equality Committee's planned lunch seminars was held.

Work ability, support needs, and health

The goal was to create a workplace that considers work ability, support needs, and health, and provides clear information about the support measures and assistive devices available. Another objective was to analyse sickness absence by gender.

Support needs: The intranet contains information about ergonomic aids and screen glasses. The needs of people with hearing or visual impairments can be given further consideration in the planning of both facilities and operations.

Manager Compass: The tool for early support is ready, but a decision was made not to implement it.

Sickness absence: Reports were commissioned from occupational health services.

Physical accessibility: Information on rest rooms, prayer rooms, and childcare rooms is partly available on the intranet but can be improved. Work is ongoing.

Procurement: A checklist for digital systems was created; responsibility for physical accessibility rests with the property owners.

Digital accessibility: Digital accessibility is checked during procurement; accessibility statements are available.

Diversity: A planned project on anonymous recruitment was not implemented, as it is practically impossible to maintain anonymity in the recruitment of academic staff, since they submit publications for evaluation.

Advancement: Language courses in Swedish and Finnish were offered; mandatory courses for international staff are under consideration. A link to the forthcoming language regulations is needed.

Mentorship: A model for new managers was tested and evaluated; a handbook will be updated before it is implemented more widely.

Representation: Intranet information on committees and working groups is being updated. Work is ongoing.

Participation: A review of tools for simultaneous interpretation is ongoing.

Appendix 3: Action plan /staff

Not all actions need to be implemented within all parts of the organization. Instead, each faculty and support function selects two to three actions that are most relevant to their own operations and where there is the greatest need or development potential.

7.1 Decision-Making and Leadership Culture

Objectives	Actions	Responsible parties
To promote a work and study environment where ÅAU strives for diversity in roles and representation.	Aim to ensure that working groups, committees, commissions, elected bodies, as well as faculty and departmental councils, represent different genders, languages, experiences, and backgrounds. To support this, checklists will be created.	Faculties Departments Support and Administration Units Equality Committee
	Develop and update support and solutions that facilitate multilingual meetings and information sessions, for example through guides, templates, and technical functionalities.	Communication
To ensure that managers, leaders, and teachers possess relevant knowledge about gender equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, and accessibility.	As part of the introduction of new managers, leaders, and teachers, training in gender equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, and accessibility shall be included, providing practical tools for identifying and counteracting discrimination and for creating inclusive learning and working environments.	Faculties Departments Personnel Services Equality Committee
To ensure that ÅAU's decisions are made on transparent grounds where the relevance of gender equality and non-discrimination is considered and, when necessary, justified.	Incorporate formulations on gender equality and non-discrimination into ÅAU's governing documents where relevant, to ensure that these perspectives are taken into account in decision-making.	Faculties Departments Support and Administration Units Strategic Planning and Operations Management Equality Committee

7.2 Forms of Employment and Staff Structure

Objectives	Actions	Responsible parties
To clarify information about support and resources for non-employed researchers and doctoral researchers.	Publish an intranet page with information on support and resources for non-employed researchers and doctoral researchers.	Personnel Services Research Council Research Services Research School

7.3 Salary setting

Objectives	Actions	Responsible parties
To work to reduce any unreasonable pay disparities related to requirement levels.	Personnel Services will review all requirement levels to identify and address any unreasonable pay disparities.	Personnel Services
To provide managers with additional support in conducting salary evaluation discussions.	Create a checklist to complement salary evaluation discussions according to the university's salary evaluation system, aimed at identifying and counteracting unconscious bias related to gender, age, and background.	Personnel Services

7.4 Work-Life Balance

Objectives	Actions	Responsible parties
To ensure that the workplace promotes a reasonable and fair distribution of work.	Make invisible work tasks visible and document them in work plans and work towards a fair and collective distribution of these tasks.	Faculties Departments Personnel Services
To ensure that the workplace considers different life situations to facilitate the balance between work and private life, for example through clear processes for extending fixed-term employment in cases of family leave or long-term sick leave.	Include clear principles for extending fixed-term employment in cases of family leave and long-term sick leave in the personnel regulations.	Personnel Services

7.5 Work Ability, Need for Support, and Health

Objectives	Actions	Responsible parties
To offer methods that support work ability and to increase knowledge among co-workers and managers about factors that promote good work ability.	Implement a model for "Adapted Work", whereby work tasks are temporarily adjusted so that a co-worker can continue working despite illness or injury.	Personnel Services Faculties Departments Support and Administration Units
	Training sessions/workshops where co-workers and managers receive practical examples and tools to understand and strengthen factors that promote good work ability (at least twice per year).	Personnel Services
	Duties, powers and expectations are clearly defined in different roles, especially for managers, directors and academic staff with combined assignments.	Personnel Services Faculties Departments Support and Administration Units
	Investigate the possibility to persons responsible for service for different functions with a	Personnel Services and work group

	clear mandate to develop, coordinate and have overall responsibility for services, with the aim of creating more efficient and less burdensome support structures for the business.	
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7.6 An Accessible Work Environment

Objectives	Actions	Responsible parties
To improve information on the accessibility of buildings.	Accessibility statements will be prepared for the various campus facilities.	Campus Development

7.7 Safety, Respect, Equal Treatment and Inclusion

Objectives	Actions	Responsible parties
To create an equal and safe work and study environment, characterised by respect and inclusion and free from discrimination.	A mandatory self-study course on respect and inclusion (the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare offers an online course on anti-racism for professionals).	Managers and co-workers
To ensure that ÅAU has clear and visible processes for handling digital harassment, so that digital attacks are addressed quickly and professionally and contribute to a safe working environment.	Publish information about processes for harassment, threats, and online abuse on the intranet page about inappropriate treatment and harassment. Information about the page shall be provided during the introduction for new employees and during the introduction for new doctoral researchers.	Personnel Services Research Services