

KOTAMO

Equality, non-discrimination and diversity
among teaching and research staff in
higher education institutions

Key findings from the study

Building Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education: for Students, Staff, and Faculty
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Leena Alanko, Team Lead

Demos Helsinki

leena.alanko@demoshelsinki.fi



About the presentation

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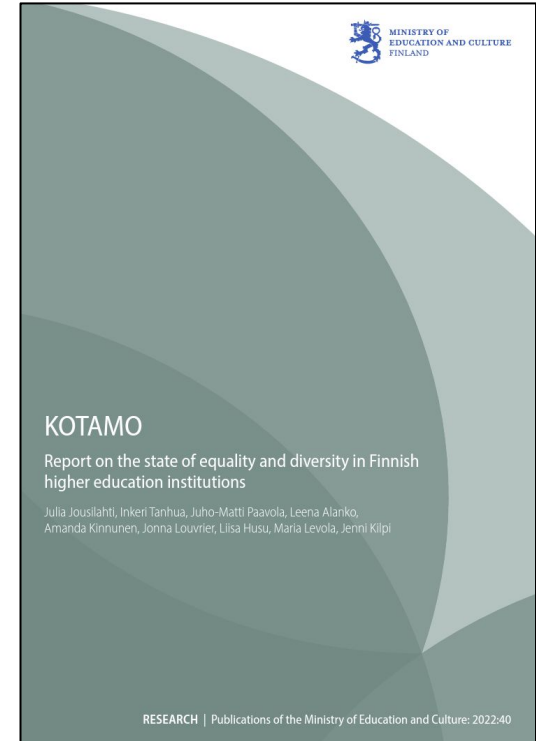
KOTAMO in brief

- The KOTAMO project examined the state of **equality, nondiscrimination and diversity among teaching and research staff in Finnish higher education institutions.**
- KOTAMO collected best practices adopted in reference countries (Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Spain) to promote gender equality, non-discrimination and diversity.
- The project offered recommendations for measures that can help promote equality, non-discrimination and diversity in higher education institutions.
- KOTAMO was by ordered by the Finnish Ministry for Culture and Education and carried out in 2021–2022.

KOTAMO in brief

This report is based on comprehensive material:

- **literature and statistics** supporting the assessment of equality, non-discrimination and diversity in Finnish higher education institutions
- **international examples** from literature and interviews
- an online **survey**
- individual and group **interviews**
- **co-creation workshop** results



Key concepts of the project

Gender equality refers to **equality between women and men**. It also covers **equality for gender minorities, and equality regardless of gender identity or gender expression**. The literature on academic careers deals with gender in social, cultural and physical terms.

In this report, **ethnic equality** is an umbrella term for a variety of discussions. Some of the **research literature uses the concept of ethnicity in general, while others focus on a subfield of it**, such as nationality, a foreign background, an immigrant background, language, religion or appearance (skin colour, cultural dress code).

In some research literature, the terms racism and racialisation are used. Racialisation means that some groups of people are treated differently because of their skin colour or presumed race/ethnicity.

KOTAMO consortium

- **Project group**
 - Demos Helsinki / Julia Jousilahti & Leena Alanko
 - Oxford Research / Amanda Kinnunen
 - Innolink / Juho-Matti Paavola
 - Includia Leadership / Jonna Louvrier
 - Equality Research Helsinki tmi / Inkeri Tanhua
 - Professor Liisa Husu
 - Kaskas Media / Liisa Mayow

- **Supporting advisory panel**
 - Anne-Maria Holli / professor, University of Helsinki
 - Johanna Kantola / professor, University of Tampere
 - Niklas Bruun / professor emeritus, Hanken
 - Oili-Helena Ylijoki /research director, TaSti
 - David Hoffman / docent, University of Jyväskylä

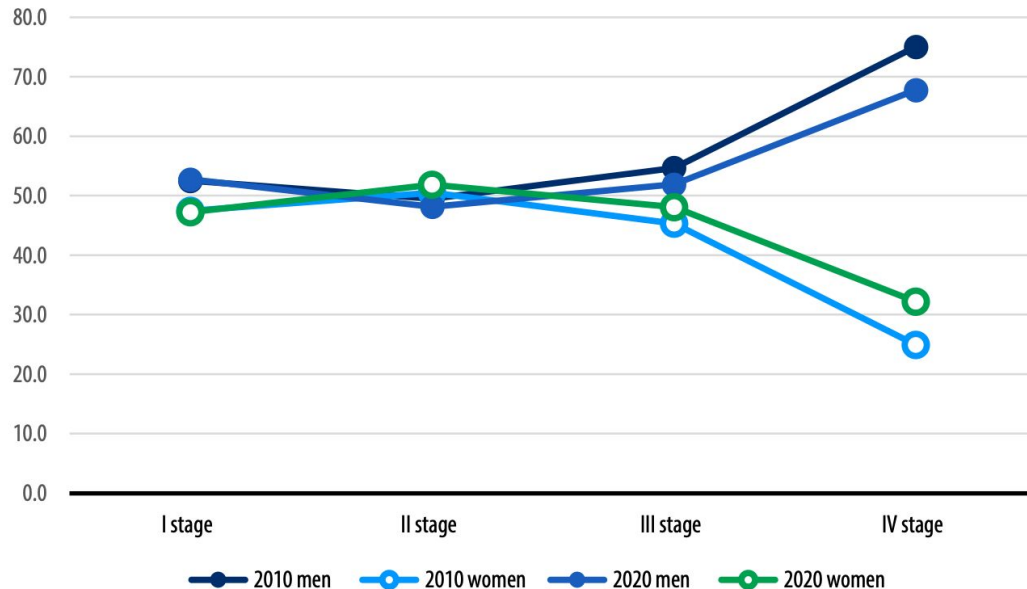
2. Key results of the KOTAMO report

Key themes explored

1. **Gender equality and career development** of teaching and research staff
2. **Ethnic equality in the career development** of teaching and research staff
3. **Gender and ethnic equality in recruitment** at different career stages
4. Experiences of equality and nondiscrimination **in the work community**
5. **Promotion** of gender equality and ethnic equality

1. Gender equality and career development of teaching and research staff

Figure 1: Gender distribution of university research and teaching staff at different career levels in 2010 and 2020, % of person-years. (Vipunen – opetushallinnon tietopalvelu: Korkeakoulujen henkilöstö).



- **In relative terms, women are significantly less likely than men to be at the top of the career ladder in universities.**
- In universities of applied sciences, all positions are on average female-majority.
- In both universities and universities of applied sciences, the number of women at the top career levels varies widely depending on the sector and the university.

1. Gender equality and career development of teaching and research staff

Table 2. The proportion of women among teaching and research staff of universities of applied sciences in 2020, % labour units. (Vipunen – Education Statistics Finland: University personnel.)

	Lecturer	Principal lecturer	Hourly-paid full-time teacher	RDI staff
All universities of applied sciences, total	62.9	51.6	57.8	50.9

- In universities of applied sciences, all positions are on average female-majority.
- In both universities and universities of applied sciences, the number of women at the top career levels varies widely depending on the sector and the university.

1. Gender equality and career development of teaching and research staff

Equality and non-discrimination plans are not well enough implemented in practice. Hidden discrimination and structural problems make it difficult for women to advance in their careers.

- The reasons for the problems women face in their academic careers include:
 - Various forms of hidden discrimination, e.g. "the accumulation of small things that don't happen."
 - Defining academic excellence narrowly in terms of publishing articles in specific journals, which puts pressure on women researchers, especially those with busy teaching schedules and young children.
 - Unconscious biases leading to unfair treatment.
- There is little research data on the gender bias of careers in universities and universities of applied sciences.

1. Gender equality and career development of teaching and research staff

For universities of applied sciences, we also looked at the pay gap between women and men and average salaries in different main disciplines.

- The average salary of a female teacher at a polytechnic is **€4 708**, compared to **€5 095** for a male teacher.
- A large part of the gender pay gap for lecturers can be explained by the pay gap between disciplines.
 - The average total salary for lecturers is **€5 389 for basic education in engineering** and **€4 669 for health and well-being** (a difference of €8 640 per year).
- Gender pay gaps can also be found within some sectors. In the male-dominated field of engineering, the average total salary for female lecturers is **€5 164**, compared to **€5 448** for male lecturers.

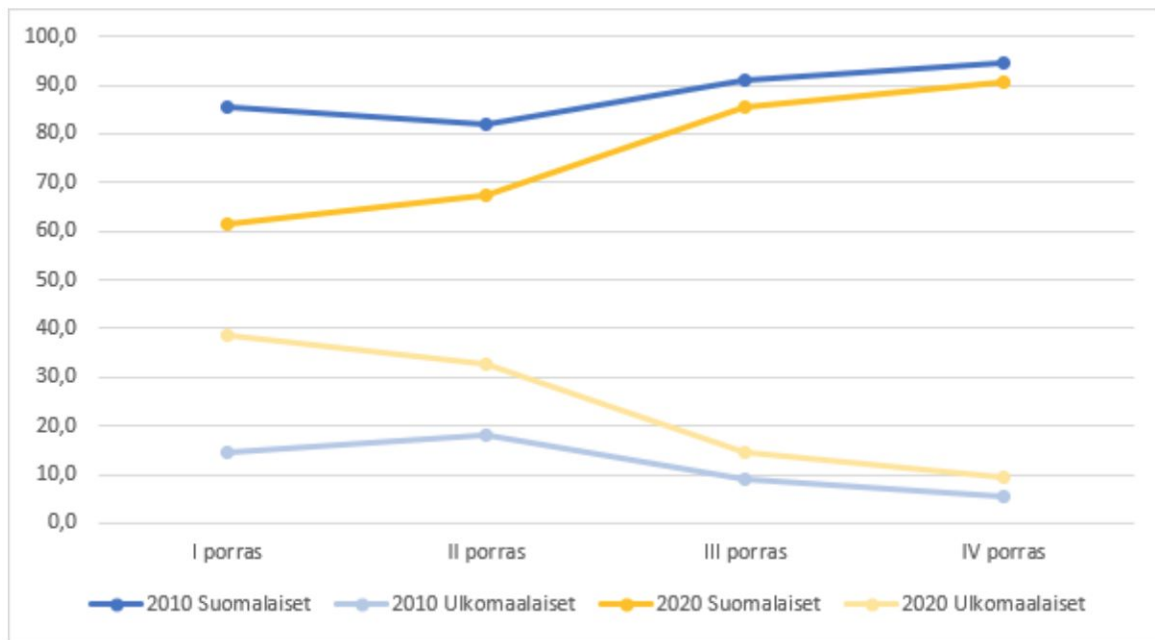
2. Ethnic equality in the career development of teaching and research staff

Compared to Norway and Sweden, **Finnish universities have fewer international staff members**. At the professorial level, international staff accounted for 10 per cent of staff in Finland, 24 per cent in Sweden and 30 per cent in Norway in 2018.

Overall, **universities of applied sciences have very few non-Finnish nationals** – only around 2% – among their teaching and research staff.

2. Ethnic equality in the career development of teaching and research staff

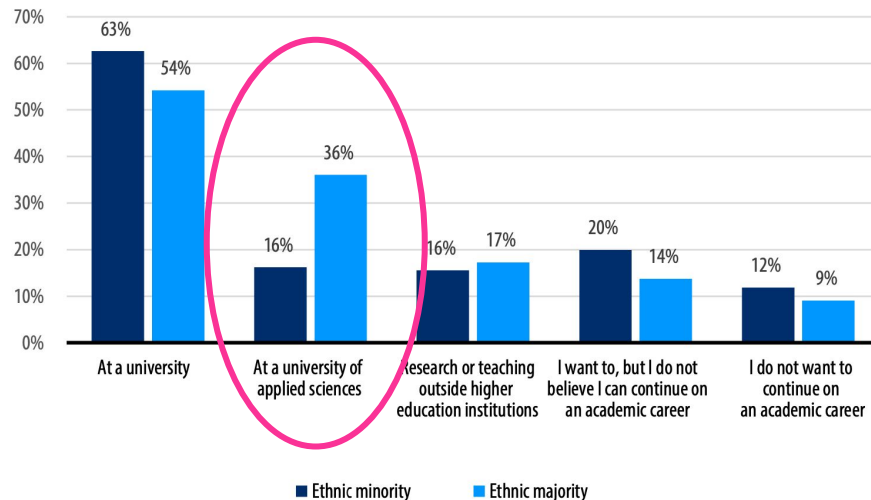
Figure 2. Proportion of Finnish citizens and other nationalities among academic research and teaching staff at different career levels in 2010 and 2020, percentage of labour units. (Vipunen – Education Statistics Finland: University personnel.)



- Ethnic scissors appear to clip research careers.
- In universities, non-Finnish nationals account for **38.5%** of doctoral students, but for only **9.4%** at the professorial level.

2. Ethnic equality in the career development of teaching and research staff

Figure 4. Continuation of an academic career, by ethnic background (“Do you want to continue your academic career in research or teaching duties?”)



- In universities of applied sciences, ethnic minority respondents were almost **twice as likely as ethnic Finns** to feel that they would not be able to pursue an academic career even if they wanted to.
- In universities of applied sciences, ethnic minorities perceived the **working environment and well-being at work** as the main reasons for not pursuing an academic career. At university, opportunities for advancement emerged as a more important factor for ethnic minority respondents than for ethnic Finns.

2. Ethnic equality in the career development of teaching and research staff

Respondents belonging to ethnic minorities experience their opportunities for career advancement as being much worse than ethnic Finns.

- **The lack of proficiency in Finnish** was found to both hamper advancement to top duties and exclude people from typical communities.
- Studies based on interviews with migrant scholars portray Finnish higher education institutions as work communities that migrant scholars find **difficult to access**.
- Many of the interviewees considered their opportunities at Finnish universities to be very limited: **more than one third of respondents from ethnic minorities do not want to or do not believe they can continue an academic career**, compared to less than one quarter of Finnish respondents.
- **Little research has been carried out** on the realisation of equality in Finnish higher education institutions, and hardly any on racism and racialisation.

3. Gender and ethnic equality in recruitment at different career stages

Men are overrepresented in the professorships filled through an invitation and in the recruitment groups.

- In 2019, women accounted for more than half (57.3%) of the applicants for permanent professorial positions, **but for significantly less than half (35.3%) of those selected** (Pekkola et al. 2020.)
 - Men are favoured especially when professorships are filled through an invitation procedure (Pekkola et al. 2020.)
- The proportion of **non-Finnish nationals was by and large greater among applicants than those selected.** In 2020 university recruitments, 78,9 of those applied were of foreign nationality, but only 21,7 of those accepted. (Source: Education Statistics Finland – Vipunen).
- **Citizens of countries other than Finland account for a notably smaller proportion** of applicants to universities of applied sciences than to universities.
- **Men and ethnic Finns were involved in recruitment decisions** more often than women and ethnic minority representatives.

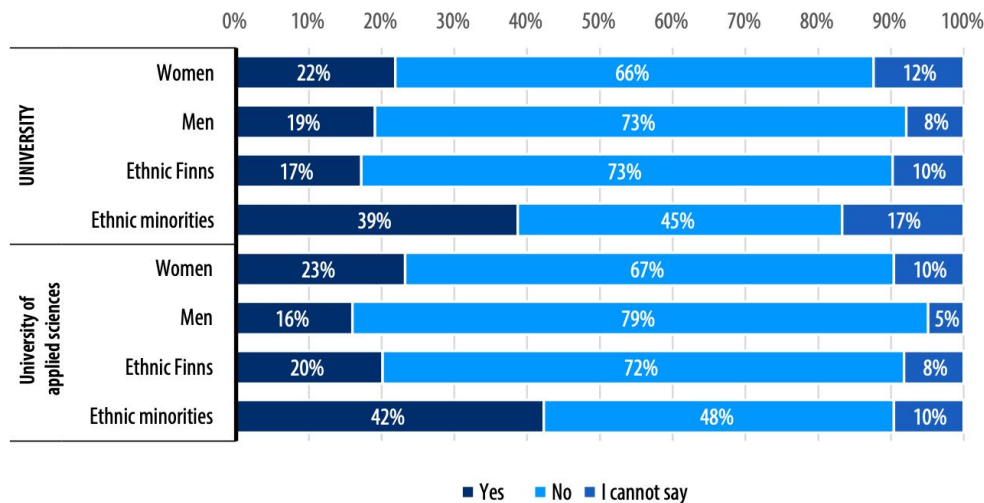
3. Gender and ethnic equality in recruitment at different career stages

Women and representatives of ethnic minorities consider recruitment processes to be less equal.

- Women considered increasing the diversity of staff to be a considerably more important recruitment criterion than men.
- Respondents from ethnic minorities found the processes to be **opaque and had observed favouritism and outright discrimination** more frequently than ethnic Finns in both universities of applied sciences and universities.
- Compared to men, **women did not experience the recruitment practices of higher education institutions to be as consistent** and rated them clearly less supportive of gender equality, non-discrimination and diversity.

4. Experiences of equality and non-discrimination in the work community

Figure 7. The proportions of respondents who had experienced discrimination, by gender and ethnic background.



- Over 20% of the respondents said they have **experienced discrimination** in the last two years.
- **Women** in both universities of applied sciences and universities reported having **experienced discrimination** slightly more often than men.
- **Nearly half of the ethnic minority respondents** in both universities and universities of applied sciences reported having **experienced discrimination**. This is nearly **twice** that reported for ethnic Finnish respondents.
- The gender differences and differences between ethnic groups were nearly the same size **regardless of the field of science**.

4. Experiences of equality and non-discrimination in the work community

A considerable amount of discrimination is left unrevealed and reporting about discrimination does not lead to any measures.

- Two thirds of those who experienced discrimination **did not report it to anyone**.
- Reporting or addressing discrimination leads only rarely to concrete measures.
 - Over 55% said the discrimination they had experienced had not been addressed despite the reporting.
 - A quarter said that the reported discrimination was addressed but the result was not good in their opinion.
- **Men** report discrimination **less frequently** than women.
- However, the male respondents who had experienced discrimination rarely reported it to anyone and if they did, the matter was **not addressed as frequently as discrimination reported by women**.
- The **discrimination of ethnic minority respondents was addressed less frequently**, especially in universities, even though they **reported their experiences equally as frequently** as ethnic Finnish respondents.

4. Experiences of equality and non-discrimination in the work community

Overall, experiences of harassment were quite uncommon. Women and ethnic minorities experience more harassment.

- Being interrupted while speaking or being subjected to offensive comments, was the **most commonly experienced form of harassment**. Less than one tenth of the respondents had experienced **direct threats or physical harassment** in the past two years.
- Respondents belonging to the most discriminated groups – that is, women and especially ethnic minorities – were **not as clear about the measures to take if they observed harassment** in the work community. They also experienced notably more often than men and ethnic Finns that **reporting discrimination or harassment could cause problems for themselves**.
- The survey respondents had met with **more discrimination, insults and threats within their higher education community**.
- Ethnic minorities experience **less belonging to a work community** on all work levels.

5. Promotion of gender and ethnic equality

There is variation in the promotion of gender equality between universities. Men, those in the ethnic majority and those with higher status perceive the measures as better than others.

- **Legislation** requiring the promotion of gender equality, as well as higher education and science policies have influenced the equality work in higher education institutions.
- The survey on the promotion of gender and ethnic equality **painted a varying image:**
 - Male and ethnic Finnish respondents found the current measures to function better than female and ethnic minority representatives.
 - Respondents in a higher position also considered the current measures to function better than did respondents lower in the hierarchy.
- Some of the respondents found that the definition of equality was too narrow in higher education institutions and the survey. Age, disability, social class and sexual orientation were mentioned as aspects that do not receive proper attention.

Recommendations of the KOTAMO report

Recommendations of the KOTAMO report

The KOTAMO project has drawn up 14 recommendations for higher education institutions, research funders and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Recommendations were made in particular on the following topics:

- Implementation and evaluation of equality and nondiscrimination plans
- Improving the transparency of recruitment
- Tackling implicit discrimination and fixing the uninclusive work culture
- Increasing research on equality and diversity in higher education

Selected recommendations

Recommendation 3: The Ministry of Education and Culture will study the possibility of establishing an accreditation scheme promoting equality

- The Ministry of Education and Culture will support the equality work of higher education institutions by determining, in cooperation with higher education institutions, how the **Athena SWAN accreditation** would work in Finland.
 - Case: Athena SWAN Charter is an accreditation scheme for promoting equality in higher education institutions and research institutes. It is a three-tier scheme, in which higher education institutions are granted an award depending on how ambitious their equality plans and measures have been and how successfully they have implemented them.

Selected recommendations

Recommendation 5: Higher education institutions will determine how information about the equality experienced by the staff can be made part of the leadership's performance-related pay.

- Higher education institutions will systematically collect information about the staff's experiences about equality and diversity and will determine how these indicators can be made part of the performance evaluation and performance related pay of the leadership and supervisors of higher education institutions.

Selected recommendations

Recommendation 6: Higher education institutions will regularly organise gender equality and non-discrimination training for their staff and will require this competence from individuals who participate in recruitment and work in leadership positions.

- Higher education institutions will integrate gender equality and nondiscrimination training into their orientation, staff and leadership training.
- Higher education institutions will require those participating in recruitment to complete training dealing with gender equality, non-discrimination and diversity in recruitment processes before participating in recruitment.
- After the transition period, higher education institutions will make gender equality and non-discrimination competence a mandatory competence requirement for people recruited for leadership positions and a merit for people hired for other duties.

Selected recommendations

Recommendation 7: Higher education institutions will provide information about their gender equality and non-discrimination plans and their implementation more efficiently and visibly.

- Higher education institutions will annually monitor the implementation of their gender equality and non-discrimination plans and communicate the results to staff, students and funders.
 - The results will be discussed at special events with the staff and they will be published openly on the higher education institution's website.
- Higher education institutions will include in their equality plans measures for preventing harassment and inappropriate treatment, as well as guidelines for victims of harassment or inappropriate treatment.
 - Harassment and inappropriate treatment in social media will also be addressed in the guidelines.

Selected recommendations

Recommendation 8: Higher education institutions will draw up daily rules for an inclusive work culture. The rules will be actively communicated within higher education institutions, and staff will receive training in an inclusive work culture.

- Finnish higher education institutions will cooperate with their staff to compile principles and practical measures for supporting an inclusive work culture in higher education institutions.
- These principles and measures will be actively communicated in the day-to-day operations of higher education institutions.
- The daily rules (in three languages) of an inclusive work culture include practices related to both formal and informal situations, such as instructions on language use and how to intervene in inappropriate treatment.
- Higher education institutions offer their staff training to help them identify implicit discrimination and intervene in inappropriate behaviour.

Selected recommendations

Recommendation 13: Research funders will allocate some of the funding to the development of an inclusive work environment for research groups.

- In the application budget, Finnish research funders will require other expenses to include funding for measures that support the work community's inclusive work culture.
 - Such measures can include training on unconscious biases and prejudices, elimination and prevention of implicit discrimination, as well as intervention in inappropriate behaviour.

Report available online (FIN/ENG):

<https://okm.fi/en/project-kotamo>

Thank you & let's stay in touch!

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Leena Alanko, Team Lead

Demos Helsinki

leena.alanko@demoshelsinki.fi

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