

The background of the slide features a detailed illustration of a tree with a textured, bark-like surface. A large, stylized handprint is superimposed on the trunk of the tree, with the fingers pointing upwards. The handprint is rendered in a light, sketchy style, contrasting with the more detailed drawing of the tree. The overall color palette is muted, consisting of various shades of grey, brown, and beige.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
*Ministère de l'Éducation*

**Proposal for the new Universities Act**

## The proposal will change...

- Autonomy will strengthen: universities will have an independent legal status
- Universities will take the place of the State as employers: civil-service employment relationships will become contractual employment relationships
- Community relations will strengthen: half of the university board members (including the chairman) will be persons “external” to the university community (professors, other personnel, students) defined in the act
- Greater latitude with finances: donations, income from capital and business activities
- New universities: Aalto university (HUT, HSE, TaiK), University of Eastern Finland (universities of Kuopio & Joensuu) and the new Turku University (University of Turku, TSE)
- Performance agreement procedure will be lighter
- Charging tuition fees on a trial basis for separate master’s programmes from students from outside the EU/EEA

## The proposal will not change...

- The freedom of research, art and education
- Self-government and academic decision-making
- Research and higher education remain as the main tasks of the universities
- The State will guarantee core funding, taking into account the development of costs
- Education leading to a degree will continue to be free of charge

## Legal capacity (section 5) the core to the reforms

- Universities as independent legal personalities
- Full financial responsibility
- Universities may conduct business activities that support the performance of their main tasks: research and education
- Universities may operate as a corporation under public law or as a foundation under private law (e.g., the Aalto university)

## Tuition fees (section 10) on a trial basis

- Education leading to a university degree will continue to be free of charge (section 8)
- However, it will be possible to charge tuition fees to students from outside EU/EEA countries taking part in separate master's programmes (section 10)
- Arrangements for tuition fees should include a scholarship scheme
- The aim is to strengthen the internationalisation of universities
- The criteria for master's programmes must be satisfied
- Concerns separate master's programmes
- Piloting in place until the end of 2014

## Tasks of the university board (section 14)

The new legal status emphasises the importance of strategic management. The university board will, inter alia (section 14):

- decide on the objectives, the strategy and the steering of the activities and finances
- decide on the plan of action budget
- prepare the financial statements
- be responsible for the management and use of assets
- be responsible for the accounting and controls
- appoint the Rector (section 18)

## Composition of the board (section 15)

- Composition will be in line with the new strategic responsibility: the aim is to strengthen community relations, opportunities to influence and financial competence
- A minimum of 6, maximum of 14 members
- University community represented: professors, other staff and students
- Half, including the chair, members external to the university community, but appointed by the university's collegial body
- Clarification of powers: Rector, Vice-Rector, heads of Faculties or other units/institutes under the authority of the board, the members of the university's collegial body and the discharge agents cannot be members of the board
- Members can be released from their tasks if they are unable to undertake them, commit activities that damage the interests of the university or for some other significant reason (section 16)

## Rector (section 17)

- Manages the operations of the university
- Is responsible for the accounting
- Is responsible for preparing the matters to be discussed by the board
- Is responsible for implementing the board's decisions
- Must enjoy the confidence of the board

## Collegial body of the university (section 22)

- A maximum of 50 members in accordance with the traditional tripartite system
- Appoints the members of the university board external to the university community
- Decides on the number of board members and the length of the term of office
- Appoints the university's auditors
- Decides on bringing possible action for damages against the university's board, members of the board or Rector

## Personnel (sections 28-39)

- Personnel structure remains unchanged: professors, other research and teaching staff, other personnel
- Recruitment/giving notice centralised with the Rector or for him to delegate
- Appointment of professors through open application (main rule) or by invitation
- System of external examination remains unchanged
- Qualification requirements of other staff within the authority of the universities
- Universities take the place of the State as employers: civil-service employment relationships become contractual employment relationships
- Due to the statutory public task of the universities, language proficiency requirements will continue to be regulated by a Government statute

## Student selection (section 32) and eligibility for application (section 33)

- Main selections are carried out through a joint application process
- The university is responsible for selections
- National Board of Education maintains the student selection register
- Applicants can be divided into subgroups on the basis of their educational background
- One student place per term (previously one per academic year, section 34)

## Students' union (section 42)

- A statutory, self-governing corporation under public law
- Students full members of the university, not customers of the university
- Selection of student representatives for governing bodies its special task
- Finnish Student Health Service (FSHS)
- Automatic membership (students' union part of the university's self-government)

## Steering and funding (sections 44-48)

- Performance agreement procedure will be lighter
- The State will guarantee core funding, taking into account the development of costs
- External financing will not decrease State funding
- The Ministry of Education can finance joint operations of all the universities (e.g., information networks)
- Annual reporting
- Monthly payments

## Finances (section 56-61)

- Universities' own capital made up of basic capital, other equity and revaluation reserves. (section 56)
- The return on basic capital is available for the university's use
- The government may also make financial investments for the universities
- Accounting obligation in line with the Accounting Act
- The accounting of financial activities must be separate from the basic functions under public law
- Auditors must be approved by the Central Chamber of Commerce
- The authorised agents appointed by the university's collegial body verifies the financial statements and makes the decision on granting discharge

## Timetable

- Circulation of the draft act for opinions: 15 August 2008
- Deadline for opinions: 15 October 2008
- Parliamentary proceedings in spring 2009
- The aim is for the law to come into force on 1 August 2009
- Organisation in line with the new act in autumn 2009
- Start of activities on 1 January 2010