



OPETUSMINISTERIÖ

Undervisningsministeriet

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ministère de l'Éducation

Photo: Mary-Ann Lindholm



More information:

Anita Lehtikoinen
+ 358 (0) 9 1607 7353
anita.lehtikoinen@minedu.fi

Eerikki Nurmi
+ 358 (0) 9 1607 7077
eerikki.nurmi@minedu.fi

www.minedu.fi → in English → Education → University education
→ University reform

Ministry of Education, Department for Education and Science Policy
Division for Higher Education and Science
P.o.Box 29
FI-00023 GOVERNMENT
www.minedu.fi

University reform

The Finnish Universities Act is under reform. The draft law will make the universities independent legal personalities, either as public corporations or as foundations under private law. The universities' public function as institutions for research and higher education remains unchanged.

The reform will facilitate operation in an international environment. Universities will, for example, have more latitude in the management of their finances and they will be able to pursue independent human resources policies.

The draft law has been prepared in close cooperation with the universities. The aim is for the law to come into force on 1 August 2009 making it possible for the universities to start their activities 1 January 2010 accordingly.

Universities to become independent legal personalities

The autonomy of universities will enlarge further

The universities will be separated from the State and they will have the choice of becoming either corporations subject to public law or foundations subject to private law. Thus, the reform will give universities more power by reducing the steering of universities by state administration. The universities will therefore no longer be developed as part of state administration, but in terms of their main mission: education and research.

Universities will take the place of the State as employers

University staff will no longer be employed by the State. Civil-service employment relationships will become contractual employment relationships, and universities will negotiate in collective bargaining. The universities will be able to pursue independent human resources policies, improve their attractiveness as an employer and in this way strengthen their competitive advantage in order to recruit the best personnel.

The composition of the university boards will change in line with the strategic management responsibility

The new independent legal status will make the universities fully responsible for their finances, which highlights the importance of strategic management. The aim is to enhance the community relations, influence and financial competence of the boards of the universities operating as public corporations. After the reform, the composition of the boards will continue to include the representation of the university community (professors, other personnel and students). In addition to these, half of the members will be persons external to the university community appointed by the university collegiate. The board will appoint the Rector, who must enjoy the confidence of the board.

Universities will have more latitude in the management of their finances

The universities will be better placed to make the best use of their income from capital and to supplement their financing with donations and business activities. This will facilitate the targeting of research and education resources and allow the universities to develop stronger profiles on the basis of their strengths. This will improve their capacity for operating in the international environment. The government may also make financial investments for the universities. The capitalisation of the universities will safeguard their financial standing, solvency and creditworthiness.

The reform preserves basic academic values

Freedom of research, art and education will be guaranteed

As a fundamental value, the academic freedom of research, art and education in universities will be preserved. Autonomy in academic decision-making is left unchanged.

Universities continue to be institutions for research and higher education

The universities' public function will not change with the change of their legal status. Any business activities undertaken by the universities must support their main mission.

The State will continue to guarantee core funding, taking into consideration the development of costs

Due to their public function, the State will retain main responsibility in funding universities. Possible external additional funding has no effect on the funding guaranteed by the State.

Education leading to a degree will still be provided free of charge

There should be no financial obstacles to studying. The legislative reforms will, however, promote the internationalisation of the universities by allowing, on a trial basis, the possibility to charge tuition fees to students outside EU/EEA countries taking part in separate master's programmes, provided that the arrangements include a scholarship programme.

Timetable

- Circulation of the draft act for opinions: Deadline for opinions: 15 October 2008
- The bill will come before Parliament 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