

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND FOR 2025–2028

1. Common objectives of higher education institutions

The Ministry of Education and Culture and the University of Eastern Finland have agreed, pursuant to section 48, subsection 1 of the Universities Act (558/2009), on the objectives for the operation of the University. The objectives set in this Agreement are derived from the Government Programme, the implementation of the Act on Research and Development Funding, the vision for higher education and research 2030, and the strategy of the higher education institution concerned.

Through its activities, the higher education institution shall promote the following objectives based on the Government Programme and on the relevant ministry-specific and sector-specific strategies:

The level and impact of Finnish science and Finnish research, development and innovation shall be raised. Universities shall increase their provision of doctoral education and reform it to make the completion times of degrees shorter, improve the quality of the education provided and ensure that the world of work will benefit from the knowledge and skills of doctoral graduates earlier than at present. Higher education institutions shall step up their collaboration with domestic and international institutions through research, development and innovation ecosystems.

The number of young adults with higher education degrees shall be raised towards the target of 50% by 2030 and, in the longer term, up to the level of top OECD countries. At the same time, Finnish higher education institutions shall ensure the quality of the higher education provided. The opportunities for continuous learning shall be strengthened by reforming the provision of higher education institutions and by expanding their funding base. The number of international degree students and researchers shall be raised, while improving their chances to find employment in Finland after graduation.

Higher education institutions shall profile themselves and sharpen their strengths in the field of education and in their research, development and innovation activities.

By their activities, higher education institutions shall contribute to solving societal challenges and promote sustainable development and the twin transitions.

Higher education institutions shall be well managed; they shall invest in employee and student wellbeing and ensure staff competence development in a systematic way.

2. Profile and strengths of the University

The University of Eastern Finland is profiled as a multidisciplinary and student-oriented university. Its interdisciplinary and dynamic research communities have the capacity to respond to global and national challenges. High-quality research and education at the University contribute to a global and responsible future while strengthening the regional vitality of Eastern Finland in particular. By 2030, major thematic ecosystems will have sprung up around the University's research operations, creating new business activity and new jobs in Finland, especially in Eastern Finland.

The University of Eastern Finland pledges to respond to identified global challenges in its profile areas: 1) ageing, lifestyles and health, 2) cultural encounters, mobility and borders, 3) diversification in learning, and interaction, and 4) environmental change and sustainable use of natural resources.

Elements such as access to education, the university students and their wellbeing, as well as learning processes of high pedagogical quality are at the core of all activities, which in turn contributes to pedagogical wellbeing. Education at the University will be developed in a multidisciplinary and challenge-oriented manner based on the latest research data, relevance to the world of work and the needs of society at large. Continuous learning will be enabled through a wide range of diverse educational and training opportunities.

The University looks to reinforce its business cooperation and partnerships in all its areas of operation. The University shall promote education and culture by providing research-based knowledge, to be used for the benefit of all. This will be done through open and inclusive science and teaching and through the ecosystems of impact which have emerged around the research activities.

The University will be further developed as a community fostering open culture of collaboration. Its decision-making processes are transparent, participatory and justified. The achievement of strategic objectives is advocated by an appropriate allocation of human resources and through the University's leadership path. There is a clear, goal-oriented and encouraging career model for teachers and researchers. The University will be further developed to ensure that all members of its community see it as a responsible and safe working and study environment, respectful of everyone. The realisation of diversity and equality is at the core of the University's quality management efforts.

The University of Eastern Finland will be carbon neutral by 2030.

3. Strategic objectives of the University and its targets for the number of degrees to be completed in 2025–2028

3.1 Strategic objectives of the University

Attractive, international and scientifically high-quality research environments

The University of Eastern Finland aims to be globally known for its interdisciplinary research communities and for its open and responsible science. It develops and profiles its research activities through interdisciplinary research communities. The role of research in high-profile areas will be strengthened within national and international networks. The University advocates the strengthening and renewal of research in its high-profile areas and bolsters its mix of research infrastructures. It also lends support to researchers' capabilities for leading research projects and for acquiring high-quality funding. The operation and joint use of research infrastructures will be further developed with RDI actors. The University will continue to build up ecosystems of impact in collaboration with its partners. In the digitalisation of research, the focus will be on data management and usability measures as part of a wider national trend and on making use of high-performance computing and artificial intelligence in research.

Better postgraduate education and more diversified doctoral careers

Postgraduate education will be overhauled, sustained by a more robust career scheme for researchers. The University will step up the guidance resources and career guidance of doctoral education. It is possible to submit the thesis for preliminary examination within three years when working on it full time. For those doctoral students who aspire to pursue an academic career, the post-doctoral transition phase, which partly overlaps with the preliminary examination phase and succeeds the public examination, will be included as part of the doctoral education path. A training path for doctoral researchers aiming for a non-academic career will be established through special positions as professors of practice and through joint doctoral researcher positions shared with research institutes. Researcher training will provide the capabilities needed in research management and in ensuring the wider impact of research, including the commercialisation of research findings.

Flexible study and career paths, and educational cooperation

To raise the overall level of education, the University has increased its intake in a wide range of study programmes on a permanent basis. Where necessary, additional study places will be allocated to meet educational and training needs in society at large. Flexible study paths provide various routes for pursuing studies as a degree student and smooth transitions during studies (including pathways for transition). The University will further increase its intake through the open pathway, encouraging young people to find their way into the university through open university education.

The right to choose minor studies freely ensures that students can flexibly build up their degrees following their individual preferences, combining knowledge and skills from different fields. Teaching methods, student

wellbeing and study paths will be enhanced through better learning analytics and better options. To prevent needless accumulation of academic studies, the University enables its graduates to supplement their competence with the right to pursue studies as an alumnus during two years after graduation and by an extensive provision of continuous learning opportunities. The University participates in the implementation of the digitalisation vision for higher education institutions in accordance with a joint roadmap.

The University aims to keep at over 90 percent the share of students who reported that their study experience was a positive one in the national bachelor's feedback survey (grade 3 or over in funding model responses).

Making education more international

The share of education and training given in English will be increased at all levels. The University aims to increase the numbers of foreign students and their access to employment in Eastern Finland after graduation. The University will ensure that graduates are well-prepared to operate in a changing and increasingly global world of work. As the share of programmes and courses taught in English is raised, a larger number of native Finnish students will also be better prepared to work in international tasks. The University promotes broad-based student and traineeship mobility observing different student profiles. Multilingual pedagogy and pedagogical integration will be enhanced to facilitate student integration and promote their access to employment. The University will intensify its well-targeted marketing activities and step up its advisory and guidance services. To enhance the international dimension of education, the University works through the European YUFE alliance (Young Universities for the Future of Europe). All English-language degree programmes will contain studies in the Finnish language and culture. The University will increase the number of compulsory courses in Finnish as a second or a foreign language ('S2 courses'). The aim is that when tuition fees at full cost will be introduced, the very quality and attractiveness of the education provided will ensure an increase in the number of students liable to pay tuition fees.

The University of Eastern Finland, Karelia University of Applied Sciences and Savonia University of Applied Sciences will develop, in collaboration with campus towns and local business and industry, services in support of the integration and access to employment of students with foreign background.

Boosting the regional vitality of Eastern Finland through cooperation and partnerships

Business cooperation and partnerships will be stepped up to improve the synergies between teaching, research and RDI activities. The University of Eastern Finland will enhance the operating model of partnerships and reinforce competence within the organisation. Creating the conditions for viability and economic growth in Eastern Finland is at the core of the University's cooperation with its partners.

The University promotes partnerships in the healthcare and social welfare sectors in Eastern Finland. The University of Eastern Finland and the University of Jyväskylä will continue their cooperation to boost educational and research profiles and synergies between the two universities in the healthcare and social welfare sectors. In the field of core studies, complementary study modules, cross-institutional studies and shared study paths will be created. The efforts to raise the quality of doctoral education will draw on the mutually complementary research competence and joint postgraduate studies of both universities, with a particular focus on the effectiveness of healthcare and social welfare and relevance to the world of work. Through stronger practical cooperation, the University of Eastern Finland, Savonia University of Applied Sciences and Karelia University of Applied Sciences will give a boost to skills and economic viability in Eastern Finland in particular. Their cooperation has the following objectives: promoting education-based and work-based migration; dividing the tasks in the creation of shared study paths; increasing the relevance of studies with regard to the world of work; and stepping up the commercialisation of research and encouraging student entrepreneurship.

Indicators for monitoring in 2025–2028

	Outturn in 2023	Estimate for 2025	Objective 2026	Objective 2027	Objective 2028
Percentage of research funding subject to competition, out of total funding	16.3	17.0	17.5	18.0	18.5
Business funding for R&D activities, EUR million	3.2	4.0	4.5	5.0	6.0
Percentage of doctoral graduates employed outside the academia	45	48	50	55	60
Credits for studies of Finnish as a second or a foreign language	1,570	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,400
Percentage of graduated foreign students who find employment in Finland	50.3 (2022)	52	55	60	65
Percentage of graduates completing their studies in the normative time, Bachelor's/Master's	58.5 / 45.2	60 / 48	65 / 50	70 / 55	70 / 60
Number of credits completed under teaching cooperation	8,757	10,000	12,000	14,000	16,000

3.2 Targets for number of degrees to be completed

Targets	Between 2025 and 2028, on average	In 2035
Master's degrees	2,115	2,465
Education	300	
Social sciences and humanities	550	
Business, administration and law	330	
Natural sciences, agriculture and forestry	285	
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); engineering, manufacturing and construction	170	
Medicine and dentistry	210	
Health and wellbeing, and services	270	
Targets per university		
Doctorates	210	
Bachelor's degrees	1,600	1,970

The following are some of the measures that the University will employ to respond to the shortage of experts:

The educational objectives of teacher education at the University of Eastern Finland for 2025–2028 per year: teachers in early childhood education and care 140, special needs teachers in early childhood education and care 40, classroom teachers 140, special class teachers and special needs teachers 115.

The maximum intake in initial medical education programmes at the University has been augmented on a permanent basis from the 2023 level by at least 10 available student places starting in 2024. Following this increase, the number of available student places in Medicine is at least 174 each year. Funding for the transition period during the expansion of medical education was agreed upon with the University in 2024.

The University will keep the intake in Dentistry, Logopedics and Psychology at the 2022 level as a minimum. In the field of social sciences, the University will direct its educational provision more clearly towards training that qualifies for social work.

For students trained abroad for a profession which is regulated in Finland, the University provides courses for complementing their competence so that it will meet the requirements of the competent Finnish authorities.

The University promotes the implementation of the National STEM Strategy and Action Plan.

4. Funding

To enable the University of Eastern Finland to execute the duties referred to in the Universities Act, the Ministry of Education and Culture shall, under the Universities Act (558/2009), Section 49, the Government Decree on Universities (770/2009) and the Decree of Ministry of Education and Culture on imputation criteria for core funding for universities (170/2024), grant to it core funding amounting to a total of EUR 193,025,000 from budget item 29.40.50, as follows:

EUR 149,665,000 in core funding, determined by using imputed criteria.

The following have been considered as the University's national missions: Orthodox theology; research in and teaching and revitalisation of the Karelian language; and the teacher training school. The core funding amounts to an annual total of EUR 9,572,000 (funding level for 2025) based on the national missions in 2025–2028.

The University will receive strategy-based funding for a total of EUR 16,500,000 in 2025 and EUR 16,500,000 per year in 2026–2028.

For the development measures defined in the University strategy and specified in section 3 of this Agreement, strategy-based funding will be allocated as follows:

- Attractive, international and scientifically high-quality research environments, including mapping research data management options in interaction with universities: EUR 8,600,000/year (2025–2028)
- Better postgraduate education and more diversified doctoral careers: EUR 1,500,000/year (2025–2028)
- International dimension of education: EUR 1,500,000/year (2025–2028)
- Boosting the regional vitality of Eastern Finland through cooperation and partnerships: EUR 4,000,000/year (2025–2028)
- Ensuring a high-quality introduction of the educational responsibility for the degree in Logopedics, launched in autumn 2021, during the agreement period 2021–2024, as agreed, EUR 500,000/year (2025–2028)
- Student and staff wellbeing, including physical activity and additional financial support EUR 400,000/year (2025–2028)

In 2025, central government funding for the University shall include an additional EUR 14,983,000 for the value-added tax included in the cost incurred by the universities for providing educational services referred to in sections 39 and 40 of the Value Added Tax Act (1501/1993) and in procurements and facility rent relating to research other than commercial research.

In 2025, central government funding for the University shall also include discretionary funding under the Universities Act, amounting to EUR 2,305,000 for the national co-financing of EU-funded research and development projects.

The funding granted is not to be used to support business operations (economic activity). (Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2016/C 262/01)).

5. Monitoring

The Ministry shall monitor the activities, liquidity and solvency of higher education institutions through financial statements, statistical monitoring and mid-term reviews during the agreement period. The University

shall report on its activities in its financial statements and in the related annual report, and annually, in an agreed manner, on the implementation of the key measures relating to the objectives of this agreement and the strategy of the University. The level of strategy-based funding may be reviewed if the objectives fail to be achieved as agreed in this Agreement.

Signed

Sirkku Linna

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Lea Rynnänen-Karjalainen

Chair of Board, University of Eastern Finland

Jorma Karhu

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Tapio Määttä

Rector (as of 1 January 2025)