

OYY's Equality Guide for Subject and Interest Societies 2018

Table of Contents

1. What is Equality in OYY Based on?	3
2. Basic Terminology and Forms of Inappropriate Behaviour	4
Equality	4
Accessibility	5
Inappropriate Behaviour	5
Harassment	7
Bullying	7
Discrimination	8
3. Day-to-Day Actions and Equality	9
3.1. Mapping the Internal Situation of Your Society	9
3.2. Mapping Public Actions	9
3.3. Solutions for Equality Challenges	10
Special Attention to Communications	12
Special Attention to Events	13
4. Equality and Non-Discrimination in Studies	16
5. Inappropriate Behaviour: How to Interfere?	17
5.1. If you are being bullied or harassed:	18
5.2. If you see someone being harassed	19
5.3. If you act as a chair and you notice bullying within your society	19
5.3. Something to Think About: Does Your Society Accept Inappropriate and Irresponsible Behaviour?	20
5.4. Tools for Preventing Inappropriate Behaviour in Societies	22
6. CONTACTS	23

1. What is Equality in OYY Based on?

The demand for following the principles of equality and diversity is based on **multiple regulations**. According to section 6 of the Constitution of Finland, no one shall, without an acceptable reason, be treated differently than other persons on the ground of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, state of health, disability or other reason that concerns his or her person¹. The Non-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of nationality, activity in politics or labour unions, family relationships, and sexual orientation². The Act of Equality between Women and Men (609/1986) aims to promote equality between genders, prohibits gender based discrimination and e.g. sexual harassment³. The University of Oulu, the Student Union, and all persons and societies operating at the university must abide to the obligations of these laws.

Both the University⁴ and the Student Union⁵ have made new Equality and Diversity Plans to support equality and diversity work. All student guilds, subject and interest societies, as well as student representative groups under OYY play a significant role in making the university community more equal and diverse. In this guide aimed for organisations and societies, we offer information and practical tips for organising your activities.

This guide has two parts. The first part introduces procedures that enable diversity and equality in organisations, whereas, the second part talks about inappropriate behaviour and how to fight it. The quotes used in this guidebook have been taken from the OYY's equality and diversity survey of 2015.

Do any of these factors affect the way members of your society are treated?

- gender
- age
- origin
- nationality
- language
- religion or belief
- opinion
- political actions
- labour union activity
- familial relations
- health
- disability
- sexual orientation
- some other personal quality

¹ [Constitution of Finland](#)

² [Non-discrimination Act](#)

³ [Act of Equality Between Men and Women](#)

⁴ [UO Equality and Diversity Plan](#)

⁵ [OYY Equality and Diversity Plan \(in Finnish\)](#)

2. Basic Terminology and Forms of Inappropriate Behaviour

Next, we will go through some of the basic concepts regarding equality and diversity, and lack thereof. The most important thing is to recognise different forms of behaviour so that the harmful ones can be addressed. However, it does not matter if you fail to use the exact right terminology or if you get your words mixed up, since the most important thing is for you to recognise faults in the society and in your and other's actions.

What makes me me?	What makes me equal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• gender• age• family• sexual orientation• origins• language• nationality• religion and/or conviction• disability/ability• health• opinions• political action• labour union action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• democracy• transparent decision-making• good governance• inclusion• interaction• diversity• non-discrimination• equality between genders• actions towards diversity• accessibility• respecting others' privacy• respecting others and their opinions• positive attitude

Source: Vantaan kaupunki⁶

Equality

Equality can refer to equality between genders. Rights and duties should be the same for all genders, and everyone should have equal opportunity to participate. The treatment of students should not be guided by stereotyping. People of all genders should have the opportunity to participate in decision-making in student societies. Equality in a wider sense means that people are equal no matter what personal qualities they have, and that no one should be discriminated against. Everyone should have equal opportunities to, for example, get a university education, to get service and to participate in society activities.⁷

⁶[City of Vantaa Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan](#)

⁷[Ministry of Justice - Unit for Democracy, Language and Fundamental Rights: Equality](#)

Accessibility

Accessibility means that people's diversity and multiplicity is taken into account, for example, in architecture and interior design, in the availability of services, in spreading information and in providing possibilities of participation. In an accessible environment people are not defined by their ability. There are many kinds of accessibility.⁸

Physical accessibility relates to removing physical obstacles that hinder movement and to taking into account possible sensory disabilities⁹. For example, when you are choosing a venue for an event, take into account the following: Can people that have physical impairments, students with vision disability, or families with kids move freely in the space? Does the space cause discomfort for people that are hypersensitive to smells or sounds?¹⁰

Social accessibility on the other hand calls for an atmosphere where everyone can exist without fear of discrimination, belittlement, or bullying. Are your society's events like this?

Mental accessibility refers to one's personal qualities, and to what kinds of information and skills does one have to have to participate, and how other people treat them¹¹. Are people from all kinds of backgrounds accepted in your society? Do you also communicate in English?

Inappropriate Behaviour

If the above principles do not manifest themselves in practice, there is always a threat of inappropriate behaviour occurring. Inappropriate behaviour takes many forms. **The key is to acknowledge the victims experience.**

⁸ [Invalidiliitto: Accessibility \(in Finnish\)](#)

⁹ [Vates-säätiö: Fyysinen esteettömyys \(in Finnish\)](#)

¹⁰ [Vates-säätiö: Fyysinen esteettömyys \(in Finnish\)](#)

¹¹ [Vates-säätiö: Sosiaalinen ja psyykkinen esteettömyys \(in Finnish\)](#)

Forms of Inappropriate Behaviour towards another person:

- insulting comments
- ostracising someone: no-one talks to, listens to or says hello to a specific person, treating them like air
- spreading lies and rumours, talking behind one's back
- slander
- making fun of someone, making them a laughing stock
- withholding information
- blaming
- yelling, slagging off, and name-calling
- inappropriate and hurtful gestures and faces
- online bullying
- groundless critique and false accusations
- threatening behaviour
- needles reminding of past mistakes
- belittling

Source: Työterveyslaitos: Kiusaamisen ilmeneminen (n.d.)¹² ja Katkaise kiusaamisen kierre (2016)¹³

Inappropriate Behaviour within a Society:

- demanding excessive work
- setting unreasonable deadlines
- dismissing or disregarding opinion
- undue supervision of work and actions
- no notices of meetings, no information through e.g. email
- taking away tasks from the person without due cause
- giving tasks that are way too simple taking into account the difficulty level of the tasks the person has previously completed and their skill level
- ostracising from the community
- discrimination regarding e.g. access to trainings or benefits
- constant searching for mistakes in the victims work
- not providing training for new recruits and belittling them

Source: Työterveyslaitos: Kiusaamisen ilmeneminen (n.d.)¹⁴ ja Katkaise kiusaamisen kierre (2016)¹⁵

Inappropriate behaviour can also fill the criteria for harassment, bullying or discrimination.

¹² [Finnish Institute of Occupational Health \(FIOH\): Kiusaamisen ilmeneminen \(in Finnish\)](#)

¹³ [FIOH: Katkaise kiusaamisen kierre \(2016\) \(in Finnish\)](#)

¹⁴ [FIOH: Kiusaamisen ilmeneminen \(in Finnish\)](#)

¹⁵ [FIOH: Katkaise kiusaamisen kierre \(2016\) \(in Finnish\)](#)

Harassment

Harassment is a form of unwanted and uninvited behaviour, that, either intentionally or unintentionally, violates another's mental or bodily integrity or sense of worth and creates a threatening, hostile, belittling, humiliating or aggressive environment. The relationships between people and their previous shared and personal experiences factor into what constitutes harassment.

People who have been harassed tend to at first undermine their own feelings and try to convince themselves that what happened to them was nothing special. This impulse is natural, but people who have experienced harassment should try to have the courage to express their feelings, so that people can pay attention to the issue from then on. **Others need to intervene as soon as someone expresses that they have been harassed, and you must respect the person's lived experience of the events.**

Gender-based harassment is unwanted behaviour relating to a person's sex, gender identity or gender expression, that is not sexual.

Sexual harassment means all unwanted behaviour that is sexual -- be it verbal, nonverbal, or physical. For example, inappropriate gestures or suggestions fall under sexual harassment. Some people might find suggestive and racy jokes funny, but others might find them unpleasant and intrusive. According to the Non-discrimination Act, sexual and gender-based harassment are forms of discrimination.

Sexual assault on the other hand means invasive sexual touching that violates another person's sexual autonomy. It is a crime, and as such it is wise to make the difference between assault and harassment clear.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated, systematic, and ongoing inappropriate behaviour towards the victim¹⁶. It is a form of mental violence, that can include gestures and verbal, mental or physical aggressions, that are e.g. intentionally and methodically aimed at a specific person with the intent of causing harm and to make them feel bad¹⁷. Bullying can lead to serious

¹⁶ [FIOH: Työpaikkakiusaaminen \(in Finnish\)](#)

¹⁷ [Mehiläinen Ltd: Kiusaaminen ja henkinen väkivalta \(in Finnish\)](#)

psychological problems, and thus it must be addressed and stopped at as early stage as possible.

The Finnish Student Health Survey of 2016 studied amongst other things bullying in higher education institutions:

7,5% of students felt that, during their studies, they had been bullied either from time to time or often. The study revealed that the bullying was mainly unjust critique, belittling or embarrassing relating to studies, verbal attacks, mocking or criticizing of personal qualities, and deliberately harming friendships.

Of the personnel, 5,8% had experienced bullying. The bullying was mostly unjust critique, belittling or embarrassing relating to studies, which had been experienced by four out of five of those who reported having been bullied. There were some reports of mocking or criticizing of personal qualities as well as verbal attacks.¹⁸

If the bullying involves violence or it can be suspected, there is an especial need to take the matter seriously. The experiences violence can vary from mild violence to threats and to serious violations of a person's bodily integrity. Experiences of violence are always so serious, that in most cases require police intervention and emergency aid.

Discrimination

Discrimination means treating someone worse than others based on some personal quality¹⁹. It can be either direct or indirect. *Direct discrimination* means placing people into different positions based on some quality or perceived quality. For example, hiring a man for a job, even though a woman who also applied for the position was more qualified²⁰. Indirect discrimination means e.g. requiring the applicants to know a certain language even though the skill is irrelevant to the ability to do the job²¹.

¹⁸ [FHS: Finnish Student Health Survey 2016 \(in Finnish\)](#)

¹⁹ [Non-Discrimination Ombudsman: Discrimination](#)

²⁰ [What is Discrimination?](#)

²¹ [Non-Discrimination Ombudsman: Working life \(in Finnish\)](#)

3. Day-to-Day Actions and Equality

Often certain practices, that can potentially prevent the principles of equality and diversity from being practiced, become fixed in societies' activities. **Many of the factors that weaken equality and diversity are invisible, indirect, and something that we have become accustomed to, which is why we have to constantly and actively pay attention to the recognition and acknowledgement of the problem.** The worst mistake would be to erase the multiplicity of the diverse communities and to organise according to assumptions of normality. The next few subheadings introduce courses of action that promote equality and simultaneously prevent inappropriate behaviour in your society. First you should think about all aspects of your society's operation.

3.1. Mapping the Internal Situation of Your Society

You should start the mapping of the state of operations by pondering the internal workings of your society.

- Is it possible for new members to join your society?
- Have board members formed cliques?
- Does everyone have the opportunity to state their opinion, and have it treated with respect?
- Can you become a member of the board even if you are a member of some minority (for example international students)?
- Are all members equally encouraged to all different positions?
- Do some of the titles assume gender (for example chairman, isäntä, emäntä)?

3.2. Mapping Public Actions

After you have an understanding of your society's the internal situation, you can move on to evaluating your public actions. Use the following questions:

- What kind of people do you have as members? (e.g. gender, age, nationality). This information is the base on which equal and diverse community builds itself upon.
- How do you take the differences of your members into account in your activities? (see table, 1st page)
- Is it possible for all members to participate in your society's activities?
 - E.g. Are events mainly parties organised in the evening?

- Do all genders have equal opportunity to participate?
 - Are the society's sport activities always the same?
 - Do any international students or students with families participate in your activities?
 - What language do you use when informing about events or current news?
- Is it possible to experience the following in your society?
- “Usually Bachelor's or Master's degree students came to the university straight after upper secondary school or after only a couple of gap years. Older students [...] are often outsiders. [...] You feel like an outsider in the leisure events that the subject society organises, and I've had comments like that regarding my age. It's a shame, because I'd like to take part in some of the leisure activities, but evidently I do belong in the group.”*

3.3. Solutions for Equality Challenges

When you have mapped out your society's activities, it is time to start working on the points of improvement.

Declaration

Your organisation can make a declaration of equality, that will make clearly visible to the members of a society the society's values. A popular declaration of equality has been e.g. [Discrimination-free Zone](#) -declaration. It calls for resisting declaration, stepping in when it happens, and recognising that people are diverse and equal. A society can also come up with so-called *principles for a safe space*. It's good to mention your declaration or safe space principles repeatedly, for example already in the invite to an event or at the beginning of an event organized by your society or during any info regarding an event.

Surveys

Sometimes the best way to get started, is to ask your members directly about their views on the state of equality in your society. A survey can gather data and people's experiences, that might not tell the whole truth, but can help in developing things for the better. A short survey is easy to attach to any other survey about your society.

A Variety of Activities

It would be good for your society's active members to come together and think about the special characteristics of your society and to come up with clear rules about including everyone equally. The special characteristics of an organisation show the direction how equality and diversity in your society should be improved. There is no way for your society to please everyone, but as long as you provide a variety of activities, everyone can find something that interests them.

Breaking Gender Norms

There are some subject societies at the university that are branded by an unproportionate representation of one gender over the other, largely due to the gender distribution in the corresponding degree programme. One of the ways societies go against the principles of equality and non-discrimination can be encouraging traditional gender roles. You should think about what your society's actions look like from the points-of-view of all genders and if all genders have an equal opportunity to participate in all your society's activities.

"In technical student circles, your gender affects how people perceive you. Like, they get surprised if you get good grades."

"Multiple comments have been made regarding my degree programme and the fact that I am a woman, such as 'I guess there aren't that many women in your field' and 'you must be smart for a woman'".

Multidisciplinarity

Subject societies and student guilds aim to gather students of the same degree programme together and to create a good team spirit amongst them. Team spirit can also create "us against them" settings. We encourage the societies to communicate with each other and to also organize multidisciplinary events. This way preconceptions and stereotypes regarding specific degree programmes and the students in them can be broken.

"I wish that there weren't this 'we are better than you' attitude between different faculties/degree programmes, but instead that there were more events for everyone to come together."

“You run into interdisciplinary stereotypes when you do interdisciplinary activities and they certainly don’t all seem to be meant as jokes (for example, that humanists cannot count/do maths).”

Special Attention to Communications

You should take into account the student body’s diversity regarding e.g. gender, origin, language, sexual orientation, disabilities, and especially humour. Inside jokes do not have a place in social media, where misunderstandings are easily born.

Language

International students find it especially hard to integrate into subject societies. Erasing the language barrier is maybe one of the biggest challenges for OYY as well as for student societies. All societies should also communicate in English, so that students who do not speak Finnish could also take part in the activities. **OYY recommends that the societies name a specific person to be a contact person for international students whose job is to make sure that the society is open and accessible also for international students.** Some society boards already have international students, so it is possible to change traditions and the way things are done.

“Discrimination in a slightest level is felt when you don’t speak the local language. For an example in certain events held by guilds or some sort of associations, everything is promoted in Finnish and international students who don’t speak or understand the language feels left out and unwelcomed.”

“There are a lot of activities that are only in Finnish language so it’s hard to keep up with everything that’s going around you.”

Accessibility

You should pay special attention to accessibility when updating and making your website, so that everyone could access your website. For the visually impaired, clear colours and fonts might make a difference and you should also pay attention to how you format pdf-files. Some people rely completely on their hearing to use the internet, so they use screen reader apps. You can find tips for making your website accessible at <http://appro.mit.jyu.fi/www/luennot/luento10/> (in Finnish).

Special Attention to Events

An event that is well planned will take the diversity among students into account, is safe, and creates good memories for its participants²². You should take diversity into account in notifying people, choosing the venue, the programme, and food and drinks, so in almost everything.

Notifying others

- You should write the messages that go to mailing lists especially carefully. Think about how you characterize the event and all the things relating to it, so that the society comes off as equal, accessible and enabling participation.
- The bigger the event, the more likely it is to be relevant also to international students, so it needs to also be translated into English. If the event (for example a lecture) is completely in Finnish, you should include a short notice in English and mention the language the event will be held in.
- You should keep in mind that your notice can reach people, whom the notice was not originally meant to reach.
- If participants need to sign up before the event, ask them to list their special needs (such as accessibility, diet, need for an interpreter).
- Think how you advertise. An ad for a party should not cross the boundaries of good taste or hurt/discriminate against someone or any group of people, even in the guise of humour. Freedom of speech doesn't mean freedom to infringe on others' rights.

Accessibility

- Mention the venues accessibility/inaccessibility already in the event notification, especially if the venue is unknown to the participants.
- Accessibility means that you can access the venue in a wheelchair and that the venue accessible toilets.
- Induction loop
- In larger events/lectures there should be the opportunity to use an induction loop. Instruct the speakers to speak in to that specific mike, so that the loop and the acoustics can be used to their fullest potential.
- The signage guiding people to the right venue should be written in a clear dark font on light background.

²² [EHYT ry: Party Guide \(in Finnish\)](#)

Food and Drink

- Lists of ingredients should be readily available, and the courses should be clearly labelled (e.g. lactose free, gluten free).
- You should take into account at least lactose/dairy free and vegetarian diets. You should also pay attention to different ethnicity/religion related dietary preferences, when the need arises.
- You should serve other non-alcoholic drinks than tap water. Non-alcoholic drinks should be just as readily available as the alcoholic drinks, so that you don't have to look or ask for them separately. Tips for mocktail recipes you can find at www.yths.fi/filebank/2040-Holittomat_2000.pdf (in Finnish). Parties held in restaurants should also offer drink tickets for non-alcoholic drinks.

Programme

“Sitsit” (traditional Nordic-style seated student parties) involve a lot of elements that might make things less equal. *The Student Union of the University of Helsinki* has made a good guidebook for organizing non-discriminatory sitsit²³.

Here a couple of key points:

- The dress code should not include gendering, racist themes, or cultural appropriation (example of the Sami and other indigenous peoples). Cultural appropriation means a situation when a member of the dominant culture wears e.g. a headdress from an oppressed minority culture and thus contributes to the spreading and strengthening of stereotypes. You should think very carefully about what you are doing before wearing clothes/symbols from any religion, spirituality or cultural identity of a minority²⁴.
- When making the seating arrangement, you should take diversity into account and avoid gendering seats, and additionally you should think about where to place international students, so they have the opportunity to keep up with what is happening.
- It is a common practice at sitsit to sing songs, of which some have a very long tradition behind them. You should nonetheless leave out songs that are discriminatory, racist, or otherwise hurtful.

²³ HYY: Näin järjestät yhdenvertaiset sitsit

²⁴ Yle: Sulkapäähineen käyttö on kuuma aihe myös maailmalla.(2018) <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10184919>

- A part of the proceedings of sitsit is to get punishments if you break any of the rules that are set at the beginning. You should make sure that these punishments do not discriminate, humiliate, or repel the participants. You cannot, for example, deny someone who suffers from an intestinal illness access to the toilet, force an abstainer or someone who is trying to keep sober to drink, or force someone with stage fright to sing a solo.

Sauna

- You should make sure that there are always three turns for the sauna: a women's turn, a men's turn and a mixed sauna. All the turns should be equally long, and you should change their order from time to time.
- Make sure that at least one organiser stays with those who do not want to go to the sauna.

People in charge of the event

- The organisers are in charge of the event and play a key role in making sure that everyone has a good time and that they would gladly come to the event again.
- **At the beginning of the event, you should announce that harassment and discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated.** If someone acts inappropriately, step in immediately to intervene. For example, pressuring someone to drink, making chauvinistic jokes, and making unwanted improper advances on someone all count as inappropriate behaviour at parties.
- **For every big event, you should name a person to be in charge of equality,** who anyone can contact in such situations, and who is responsible for intervening in the situations. You should clearly announce who this person is to all the participants.
- See to it that everyone has the chance to participate and make their voice heard, and that no-one gets left outside of the group.

4. Equality and Non-Discrimination in Studies

A part of equality in studies is accessibility, that can be improved and arranged according to health-related reasons (e.g. sensory disability, learning disability, mental health issues), by e.g. giving more time to finish a test, the opportunity to take an oral test, or by arranging a distraction free space. If a student requires special arrangements, they should get in contact with the University's accessibility contact person. You can find more information about accessible studying and the contact information for the accessibility contact person at <http://www.oulu.fi/university/accessibility-studies>.

Students have a legal right to do their studies within the timeframe the Universities Act provides. Every student should have an assigned Tutor Teacher, and they should receive due guidance for doing their theses. Sometimes disagreements between students and teachers or tutors arise when credits and theses are evaluated and graded. A student, who is not happy with the grade they have received, has 14 days to make an appeal to the Board of Examiners.

You do not have to stand for unequal or discriminatory teaching or tutoring. However, if you are faced with such situations, here is what you should do:

1. Express to the person teaching you clearly and unambiguously, that you find their teaching unequal or discriminatory. Sending them a business-like email is also a good option.
2. In the case that the situation does not get better despite the notification, or you find the notion of personal contact too difficult, contact the OYY's Specialist in Academic Affairs (kopoasiantuntija@oyy.fi, tel 040 5257821)
3. Keep all the possible proof of discriminatory teaching. This will help you in the continued handling.

5. Inappropriate Behaviour: How to Interfere?

You should interfere in inappropriate behaviour as soon as possible. It is always easier to get to the bottom of issues soon after something has happened than after a long time has already passed or after the situation has escalated. **Failing to respond to the situation early might even lead to a negative change in the culture, when the unwanted, bad situation becomes the norm and socially acceptable in the community.** For example, when bullying is not immediately addressed, can bullying become seen as socially acceptable within the community.

Settling cases of bullying is important for the wellbeing of your whole society, since everyone suffers if the atmosphere in the community gets worse. **All members of the community can prevent and resist harassment and bullying by their own actions.** The easiest way to prevent harassment is to address the unpleasant situation quickly and to express your dissatisfaction.

According to the law, the university has to take measures when it is informed about someone being harassed. In Spring 2018 the University published a new action plan to fight harassment and bullying²⁵, that deals with on-campus bullying. According to the plan, in cases of bullying or harassment, one should always contact a Faculty Service Manager of Academic Affairs, who will get to the bottom of the issue. **The plan does not directly concern interest societies, since they do not operate under any specific faculty, and thus, in such cases, we encourage the students to contact the Student Union.**

It takes courage to interfere in inappropriate behaviour and thus it can be difficult. The victim might fear that the situation escalates, or that they will be labelled, or they are unsure of the processes of help that are available for them. This is why all societies should declare to be against harassment and bullying. The interfering process should always follow the following formula. It is based on a guide made by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health²⁶, which the societies can also utilize in their work.

²⁵ http://www.oulu.fi/external/hyvinvointi/Prevention_of_bullying_and_harassment_UniOulu_ENG_2018.pdf

²⁶ [FIOH: Katkaise kiusaamisen kierre \(2016\) \(in Finnish\)](#)

5.1. If you are being bullied or harassed:

1. Confront the person who is acting inappropriately about the bullying you are experiencing as soon as possible. Tell them what kind of behaviour you have found inappropriate, and how you feel. Have a conversation and ask them to stop. Sometimes there has just been a misunderstanding. Stick to talking about actions, not personal features.

2. If the inappropriate behaviour does not stop, tell your faculty's Service Manager of Academic Affairs, who acts as your faculty's harassment contact person, about it. If you find it difficult to confront the person who is acting inappropriately towards you, you can take up the issue with the Service Manager of Academic Affairs directly. Tell them about the situations where you have felt bullied.

If you are bullied within a student society you can talk about it to the society board's chairperson. Be firm and demand that they take action. Set a time when you will talk about the issue again. If you feel that the chair is behaving inappropriately, you can ask other members of the society's board to help.

If you need support in your experiences of harassment or bullying, or you need help solving the situation, you can contact the Student Union's harassment contact persons (hairinta@oyy.fi).

3. Keep a record of things that are happening and keep all evidence e.g. messages safe. Mark down when and where the harassment situations have occurred and keep a list of any witnesses. Writing things down will help you identify the continuity of the situation, and your notes act as evidence and memory support as you are recounting your experiences. Do not "fight fire with fire", but instead aim to act appropriately towards everyone in any situation.

5.2. If you see someone being harassed

1. Go to the person who is acting inappropriately, tell them that you think they are being a bully, and ask them to stop. You can do this together with another student who has also noticed the inappropriate behaviour.
2. Go to the victim and ask them, how you can help. You can e.g. support them in getting help from the administration.
3. Inform your faculty's Service Manager of Academic Affairs about the inappropriate conduct or bullying you have noticed. If the bullying is happening on campus, they have a responsibility to step in. You can also ask the Student Union to help by sending an email to hairinta@oyy.fi.

5.3. If you act as a chair and you notice bullying within your society

1. After you have received information about experienced or noticed inappropriate behaviour or bullying, take the issue seriously and start figuring out the situation at once. The situation can be such, that the parties involved cannot solve it amongst themselves, so offer your help. You should aim to go into the settling process with an open mind and without any preconceptions. Treat both parties equally and fairly. Do not be left alone with the issue but remember professional discretion. You can ask your faculty's Service Manager of Academic Affairs or the Student Union to help. You should delegate the responsibility to them especially when the harassment or bullying is too serious for you to handle.
2. If you receive information about bullying from an outside party, invite the person who is being bullied to come talk to you, tell them what you have heard, and ask, how they feel about the situation. You can also instruct them to contact your faculty's Service Manager of Academic Affairs or the Student Union.
3. Hear from the bullied and the bully separately first, before organising a joint conversation, in which you aim to find solutions for how to proceed in the future. It is important to listen to both sides' stories. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed, instruct the victim to contact the police.

4. If you cannot come to a mutual understanding or the inappropriate behaviour continues, you should contact the Service Manager of Academic Affairs or the Student Union if you have not yet done so.

5.3. Something to Think About: Does Your Society Accept Inappropriate and Irresponsible Behaviour?

A chair of a society has a special responsibility about the atmosphere of their society and the wellbeing of its members. The chair should interfere in inappropriate behaviour within their society. For example, if they or someone else notices bullying, they should bring up the topic in conversation with the people involved. Even though the conversation may feel awkward or unpleasant, it will usually clear the air. People do not always have a clear understanding of the effects of their actions so even small instances of realisation can make things a bit better. The university has zero tolerance for harassment and bullying. You cannot accept bad behaviour as just a part of someone's personality, or just because that someone holds a certain position in the society or is "irreplaceable". **If you do not interfere, you accept.** Think about your society's situation by answering the following questions.

- Does your organisation clearly communicate that inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated?
- Do you recognise the risk of bullying and do you focus on prevention?
- Does your organisation have a written action plan for harassment and bullying prevention, that everyone knows about and whose effectivity is monitored? (e.g. for events)
- In the beginning of your events, do you announce that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated?
- Is inappropriate behaviour in your events addressed when necessary?
- Do people who have been bullied and those who talk about bullying receive support and encouragement from your organisation?
- Is inappropriate behaviour questioned and prevented in your organisation?
- Do you talk about and properly and without delay deal with situations that have come to your knowledge?
- Is inappropriate behaviour tolerated because "that's just their personality", "they've had it rough", or the person has special talents or position?

- Has bad behaviour become the norm in your community?²⁷

²⁷ [FIOH: Katkaise kiusaamisen kierre \(2016\) \(in Finnish\)](#)

5.4. Tools for Preventing Inappropriate Behaviour in Societies

Chapter 3 handled tools for creating an atmosphere that prevents inappropriate behaviour in your society. In addition to those, a student society can support victims of bullying by spreading awareness about condemning bullying, influencing attitudes, and by intervening in bullying immediately. In this way you can start to make bullies wake up and smell the roses and to express that bullying is not acceptable behaviour in your society's culture. It is also possible to help those who are bullied by supporting their integration into the study community by acknowledging student diversity and offering peer support. Student tutors play an especially important role in doing such work. There are simple tricks you can use to develop your society's atmosphere into one that decreases the risk of inappropriate behaviour.

- Aim to create a tolerant and open atmosphere in your events
- Avoid the forming of cliques and inner circles and include everyone
- Name a person to be responsible for ensuring equality and non-discrimination, that anyone can contact if they face inappropriate behaviour, for your society, or at least for the bigger events you host
- Work to improve positive interactions and taking others into account by e.g. greeting everyone equally

Within your society:

- Help and instruct others
- give positive and constructive feedback
- Bring up the society's internal problems with anyone who can help make a difference, and deal with any problems that are uncovered
- Evaluate and change your actions, behaviour, and attitudes if it is needed
- Do your job and take responsibility for your actions²⁸

²⁸ [FIOH: Katkaise kiusaamisen kierre \(2016\)\(in Finnish\)](#)

6. CONTACTS

- Harassment at the university: contact your faculty's Service Manager of Academic Affairs.

Contact information for Service Managers of Academic Affairs by faculty (Autumn 2018):

Faculty of Education, Faculty of Humanities, and Oulu Business School: Merja Peurasaari merja.peurasaari@oulu.fi

Faculty of Technology, Faculty of Science: Tero Vedenjuoksu tero.vedenjuoksu@oulu.fi

Faculty of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering ITEE: Annu Perttunen annu.perttunen@oulu.fi

Faculty of medicine, Faculty of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine: Katja Pura katja.pura@oulu.fi

- You can also send your problems and development suggestions regarding equality or diversity to the secretary of the Equality and Diversity Committee
- Accessibility of studies opintopsykologi@oulu.fi
- Conversational therapy yliopistopastori@oulu.fi
- OYY's Specialist in Social Affairs can also help you with any issues discussed in this guide: sopoasiantuntija@oyy.fi tel 040 526 5821

Outside Help and Support

Support for mental health and life skills (in Finnish)

<http://www.oyy.fi/opiskelijalle/hyvinvointi-ja-arki/apua-mielenterveyden-vaikeuksiin>

∟

FSHS: <http://www.yths.fi/en>.

Oulu Crisis Centre: www.oulunkriisikeskus.fi/ (in Finnish)

Nyyti ry promotes and supports students' mental well being and life skills:

<https://www.nyyti.fi/en/>

If you suspect a crime, you can report it to the police:
https://www.poliisi.fi/crimes/report_of_an_offence

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

Laws, regulations and instructions

- » [The Constitution of Finland](#)
- » [Non-Discrimination Act](#)
- » [Act on Equality Between Women and Men](#)
- » [OYY:n tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelma](#) (in Finnish)
- » [University of Oulu Equality and Diversity Plan](#)
- » [Prevention of Bullying and Harassment at the University of Oulu](#)

Materials

- » The Ombudsman for Equality: <https://www.tasa-arvo.fi/web/EN/>
- » Information and material about equality and discrimination:
<https://yhdenvertaisuus.fi/en/frontpage>
- » Finnish Institute of Occupational Health: <https://www.ttl.fi/en/>