

# Finnish Union of University Professors' Objectives for the Government Programme 2023–2027



PROFESSORILIITTO  
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## KNOWLEDGE is not A MATTER OF OPINION

Science, art and education are prerequisites for free and participatory democracy as well as the foundation for well-being and international competitiveness. They are also an integral part of societal resilience and security of supply in terms of information. A competent and educated society remains functional, even under exceptional circumstances, because it is able to be flexible and find new thinking models and solutions.

### I Science policy for Finland

#### II Internationally competitive working conditions for universities and research institutes

#### III A more participatory and functional university community

##### I Science policy for Finland

- **A vision of a science policy that extends beyond Government terms shall be created for Finland**

Finland needs a consistent and ambitious long-term science policy since the success of society depends upon the international competitiveness of its scientific research and education. If the possibilities for research are not at least as good in Finland as they are in competitor countries, our finest will go elsewhere and Finland will wither intellectually and economically. The vision for the science policy requires the backing of the professoriate and other teaching and research personnel as well as of all political parties, business life and other key interest groups concerning the science policy.

- **The role of parliamentary preparation in science policy shall be strengthened**

A long-term science policy must be prepared meticulously. The parliamentary RDI working group should be permanently involved in drafting and monitoring the science policy. The working group's mission shall be to prepare the vision and concrete objectives of the science policy. The vision and goals must be formulated on the parliamentary level together with the scientific and research community in order to ensure that the commitment to them will endure beyond the Government term. The vision must be stated in the science policy report.

- **The realisation of the science policy shall be monitored on the parliamentary level**

The realisation of the vision prepared by the parliamentary RDI working group should be monitored by a parliamentary monitoring group as well as by the Research and Innovation Council. The professoriate should have stronger representation on the Research and Innovation Council and in the preparatory groups.

##### II Internationally competitive working conditions for universities and research institutes

- **Long-term RDI funding shall be safeguarded**

Finland's economy is declining because public RDI investments are lagging behind those of competitor countries. Clear methods must be defined to increase public RDI investments and to raise the level of the RDI investments of the public sector and companies to a combined four per cent of the GDP by 2030. The RDI funding for the public sector, research institutes and universities must be increased by at least six per cent every year until 2030.

- **The level of university funding shall be raised to that of competitor countries and focus shall be shifted to free research**

In Finland, the amount of university funding has

fallen behind that of reference countries. The measures stated in the multi-term RDI road map, which was approved on the parliamentary level, must be implemented immediately. University teaching is based on research, and as the level of research increases, so does the level of education. As far as funding is concerned, the focus must be shifted from funding based on the number of degrees awarded and project-specific funding to free research funding. The amount of research funding based on the discretion of research institutions should also be increased.

Only freely distributed research funding can ensure that universities can quickly raise their profile within their specific fields and that Finland will become a pioneer in research and teaching. Future innovations will emerge from unexpected directions and collaboration between disciplines. Freely distributed research funding also promotes the international mobility and co-operation of researchers as well as business co-operation and the impact of research.

- **The copyrights of researchers shall be safeguarded and researchers shall be encouraged to utilise them**

There is no free society without the freedom of research and higher education. The right of researchers to decide on the publication of their research and utilisation of the results is the foundation of high-quality and responsible research. The copyrights of researchers safeguard the freedom of science, facilitate innovations and contribute to the assurance of Finland's competitiveness. The copyrights of researchers should not be limited by the Copyright Act or otherwise. The availability and commercial utilisation of works, data and study materials can be improved by allowing researchers to freely use their copyrights as they see fit.

- **The level and duration of the funding for the Academy of Finland, the Strategic Research Council and Business Finland shall be guaranteed**

The Academy of Finland grants funding on the basis of the stringent competition and independent, international assessment. The Strategic Research Council funds socially relevant research that seeks to find concrete solutions to major challenges that require multidisciplinary co-operation. For its part, the funding granted by Business Finland facilitates co-operation between universities, research institutes and companies. Competition is extremely tough for EU research funding as well as for other foreign funding.

There is no need for new public funding instruments; instead, funding should be allocated through existing, quality-assured channels. Spe-

cial attention should be paid to long-term research and education arrangements that support the science policy. At the same time, centrally-controlled funding distribution should be cut down.

- **The form of the RDI tax deduction model shall be expanded**

The right to the RDI tax deduction must be further expanded. The tax deduction models used by other countries should be reviewed, and the best of them should be utilised in Finland as well.

### III A more participatory and functional university community

- **Collegial decision making shall be strengthened**

Successful universities are autonomous everywhere in the world. In Finland, the autonomy or self-government of universities is guaranteed by the Constitution of Finland. Self-government refers to autonomy in research and higher education as well as to the fact that the power of decision at universities lies in the hands of the university community itself.

- **The university rules of procedure shall be approved by the collegium, prepared/proposed by the board and executed by the rectorate**

The rules of procedure of the universities must reinforce the freedom of science, art and higher education, university democracy and good management. The Universities Act must be changed to state that a multi-member administrative body (Collegium, Consistory or Academic Affairs Committee) representing the university community shall approve the university rules of procedure.

- **The university strategy, budget and operational and financial plans shall be approved by the Collegium**

The Universities Act must be amended so that the annual duties of the collegia (Collegium, Consistory, Academic Affairs Committee) include the approval of the university strategy, the budget as well as the operative and financial plans prepared by the board. This ensures the realisation of the autonomy of the university community.

- **The university board must have the backing of the collegium and the rectorate must have the backing of the board**

The Universities Act must be clarified in such a way that, in accordance with normal administrative practice, the university board must have the backing of the collegium and the rectorate must have the backing of the board.

Further information: [www.professoriliitto.fi](http://www.professoriliitto.fi)

