

# **Rauma Adult Education Center's Equality and Equity Plan 2024-2026**

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the equality and non-discrimination plan is to engage staff, students and teachers in promoting equality and non-discrimination. In an equal working and learning environment, everyone has the opportunity to work and study without discrimination on the grounds of gender or other life-related grounds.

The Act on Equality between Women and Men obliges education providers and educational institutions to draw up an equality plan also for Basic education in the arts and liberal adult education. The Equality Act requires educational institutions to have a plan for the necessary measures to promote equality and to carry out systematic equality work.

The purpose of the plan is to promote gender equality in the educational institution and in society in general. It aims to prevent any discrimination based on sex, age, origin, language, religion, belief, opinion, sexual orientation, health or disability. According to the Constitution, equality means not only equality before the law, but also the prohibition of discrimination. One of the purposes of the plan is also to prevent harassment and sexual harassment on the grounds of sex.

The equality and non-discrimination plan aims to create the conditions for a comfortable and safe learning environment. It is essential that everyone in the institution, especially the management and staff, commits to this policy, which guides practice. It is important that students are able to identify and address discrimination and discriminatory attitudes.

## 2. Legislation

### 2.1. Equality Act

The Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/86, amended by Act 232/2005) was amended in 2005 to include a provision on equality planning in educational institutions. This provision requires educational institutions to draw up an annual equality plan in cooperation with staff and student representatives with a view to developing the institution's activities (Section 5a of the Gender Equality Act). The Act also aims to prevent discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression. Instead of an annual review, the plan can be drawn up for a maximum of three years at a time.

The Gender Equality Act requires that the equality plan includes an inventory of the equality situation in the educational institution and any problems that may arise. The mapping must pay particular attention to the implementation of equality in student selection, teaching, assessment of academic performance and measures to prevent and eliminate sexual and gender-based harassment.

5 § (19.1.2023/101)

#### **Implementation of equality in education, training and early childhood education and care**

Public authorities and education providers and other bodies providing education or training shall ensure that girls and boys, women and men have equal opportunities for education and professional development and that teaching, research and learning materials support the purpose of this Act. Early childhood education and care providers and service providers shall ensure that girls and boys have equal access to early childhood education and that early childhood education and care supports the purpose of this Act. Equality shall be promoted in education, teaching and early childhood education, taking into account the age and development of children.

5 a § (30.12.2014/1329)

#### **Measures to promote equality in educational institutions**

The education provider is responsible for drawing up an annual equality plan for each educational institution in cooperation with the staff and pupils or students. The plan may be integrated into the curriculum or other plans of the educational institution. Instead of an annual plan, the plan may be drawn up for a maximum of three years at a time.

The equality plan should include:

- 1) a report on the institution's equality situation
- 2) the measures necessary to promote equality
- 3) an evaluation of the implementation of the measures contained in the previous equality plan;  
and

the results of the measures implemented under the equality policy

Particular attention should be paid to the selection of pupils or students, the organisation of teaching, learning differences and assessment of academic performance, and the prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based harassment.

At least once every three years, the Rauma Adult Education Center draws up an equality plan. The plan is drawn up together with staff and student representatives.

## 2.2. Non-Discrimination Act

Equality means that all people are equal regardless of their sex, age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion or belief, opinion, disability, health, sexual orientation or any other personal factor.

The purpose of the Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014, 1192/2022) is to promote equality and prevent discrimination and to enhance the legal protection of those who are victims of discrimination. According to Section 6(2) of the Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014), an education provider must have a plan for the necessary measures to promote equality after assessing the implementation of equality in its activities. In addition, according to Section 6(3) of the Act, students and their representatives must be given the opportunity to be consulted on the promotion measures.

14 § (20.12.2022/1192)

## Harassment

Conduct which intentionally or actually offends the dignity of a person or a group of people is harassment if the offensive conduct is related to a cause referred to in Section 8 (1) and the conduct creates an atmosphere which is degrading or humiliating of a person or a group of people or threatening, hostile or offensive towards them because of the said cause.

Conduct by an early childhood education and care provider or a service provider or an education and training provider shall be deemed to constitute discrimination if the early childhood education and care provider, service provider or education and training provider, after being informed that a child, pupil or student has been subjected to such conduct on its premises, school or educational establishment or elsewhere at an event or activity organised by the early childhood education and care provider, service provider or education organiser, fails to take the measures available to it to eliminate the harassment referred to in paragraph 1.

At Rauma Adult Education Center, the equality promotion plan shall be combined with the operational equality plan. The plan shall be drawn up every three years and shall include an opportunity for pupils and their guardians and students or their representatives to be consulted on the promotion measures.

Particular attention should be paid to the selection of pupils or students, the organisation of teaching, learning differences and assessment of academic performance, and the prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based harassment.

At least once every three years, the Rauma Adult Education Center draws up an equality plan. The plan is drawn up together with staff and student representatives.

### 3. Mapping equality and equity

The Gender Equality Act requires that an equality plan for the development of the institution's activities includes an assessment of the implementation of the measures contained in the previous equality plan. According to the Equality Act, the educational institution must assess the implementation of equality in its own activities, on the basis of which it must take the necessary measures to promote the implementation of equality.

At Rauma Adult Education Center, members of the educational community participate in equality and equality work and their implementation is monitored through feedback and evaluation surveys. The objectives are recorded in the institution's equality and non-discrimination plan. The purpose of the mapping exercise is to assess the equality and non-discrimination situation in the institution, to identify any problems that require action and to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken.

Based on a survey of pupils and students in the academic year 2022-2023, the equality and non-discrimination situation at Rauma Adult Education Center is perceived as good. In the open comments, there were a few mentions where it was hoped that the interaction, activities and communication within the groups would be constructive and balanced in all situations, including among the students. A training session for staff and classroom teachers in the autumn semester 2023 has focused on verbal and non-verbal interaction between teacher and students and on building positive encounters in teaching and learning situations. The main responsibility for creating a good atmosphere for interaction in the learning environment always lies with the teacher, but the group members also contribute to the group dynamics and the atmosphere/learning experience. The courses offered by the Rauma Adult Education Centre have been designed to be as varied as possible and reasonably priced to ensure that they are accessible to different client groups. In addition, applications have been made to the Finnish National Board of Education for study voucher grants, which have been used to provide financial support for the participation of specific groups by reducing the course fees. Accessibility principles have been taken into account in the design and implementation of the teaching facilities on the Karin kampus, which will be completed in autumn 2024.

## 4. Priorities of the equality and non-discrimination plan

### 4.1. Student selection

There is no special application procedure for enrolment at the Rauma Adult Education Centre, but the available places in the annual liberal adult education are filled in the order of enrolment, according to the number of students per course. The enrolment system used by the Adult Education Centre lists the enrolments in chronological order, down to the second. Students are able to enroll in the Adult Education Center's courses electronically via the online enrolment website, by calling the Adult Education office or by visiting the Adult Education office on site.

Pupils of the Rauma Adult Education Center's visual arts, crafts and theatre schools are admitted on an equal basis in accordance with the principles of admission laid down in the Basic Arts Education Act (633/1998) and the curricula approved by the Education Committee.

### 4.2. Teaching arrangements

In teaching and other activities, pupils and students are treated equally, taking into account their individual starting points. Equality and equity of courses for all students is ensured.

The Rauma Adult Education Center does not have a national curriculum, with the exception of the general syllabus for basic education in the arts, where local curricula have been drawn up for crafts, visual arts and theatre arts. The Rauma Adult Education Center ensures that students are not placed in unequal positions and that pupils in basic arts education receive instruction in accordance with the curriculum. For example, the equipment and facilities used in lessons must not cause inequality, but everyone must have access to shared equipment and facilities on a rotating basis.

The Rauma Adult Education Centre does not have a proper guidance service, but the guidance given to students and course participants ensures that all students are guided equally, taking into account the needs of different types of students.

### 4.3. Assessment of coursework

The Adult Education Centre of Rauma does not evaluate the academic performance of students, except for basic education in the arts. Assessment is always carried out in a way that respects the principles of equality and equity. There is a uniform culture of assessment in basic art education, based on the objectives of the curriculum and the assessment criteria of the general syllabus of basic art education. Assessments are carried out on the basis of uniform criteria, without being influenced by the personal characteristics of the pupil.

### 4.4. Discrimination, sexual harassment and harassment on grounds of gender

According to Section 8b of the Gender Equality Act, an educational institution must consider it prohibited discrimination if a person is placed in a less favourable position on the basis of sex in the selection of students, in the provision of teaching, in the assessment of academic performance

or in other activities of the educational institution, or otherwise treated in a manner referred to in Section 7 of the Act.

Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of a verbal, non-verbal or physical nature of a sexual nature which violates the mental or physical integrity of a person by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or harassing environment. Under the Equality Act, which came into force on 1 June 2023, harassment can be directed not only at an individual but also at a group of people. If an education provider fails in its duty to take action to eliminate harassment, the education provider is guilty of discrimination.

Rauma Adult Education Center follows the City of Rauma's Safer Space Policy, which requires everyone to behave in a manner that is appropriate and respectful of diversity, different backgrounds, experiences and ideas. Everyone's privacy and personal physical and mental space is respected.

We treat each other as equals and consider each other's perspectives, thoughts and opinions and, when we disagree, express our ideas in a constructive way. Any behaviour that suggests discrimination, sexual harassment or gender-based harassment is prohibited. Every member of staff has a duty to intervene if they observe harassment or other inappropriate behaviour among students or pupils. If a member of staff observes harassment by a member of staff, they should contact their supervisor. Creating a positive and open atmosphere in the institution and the workplace also helps to prevent potential harassment.

Bullying or other inappropriate behaviour will always be dealt with at the earliest possible stage. Teachers in groups that meet regularly get to know their students and are trained to detect changes in the behaviour of the group members. The tendency to come forward with concerns is kept low in all groups, especially in groups for children and young people.

#### **4.5. Non-discrimination**

According to Section 8 of the Non-Discrimination Act, no one may be discriminated against on the grounds of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relations, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal grounds. Discrimination is prohibited, regardless of whether it is based on a fact or assumption about the person or someone else. In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination within the meaning of the law includes harassment, denial of reasonable accommodation and instructions or orders to discriminate.

Rauma Adult Education Center treats everyone equally and does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender, gender identity or gender expression.



## 5. Measures to promote equality and equity

The equality and equity plan will be discussed with the main staff of the Rauma Adult Education Centre. As the Rauma Adult Education Center has around 11 000 students each year and more than 4600 different people as students, it is not possible to go through the plan with the entire student body. The plan has been presented and discussed at an open discussion event in January 2024. Feedback and general student feedback surveys are also used when selecting development targets. Ideas from teachers and other staff at the institution, as well as areas for improvement, will also be taken into account in the triennial updates of the plan.

**Non-discrimination:** All reports and suspicions of discrimination are taken seriously.

**Gender sensitivity:** In teaching and other activities, attention will be paid to avoid the unjustified use of gender-specific terminology or distinctions. Special attention is paid to gender diversity and to treating everyone primarily as individuals, not as members of one gender or another.

**Equality:** attention is paid to the fact that everyone who visits the Rauma Adult Education Center is treated equally and is not affected by different starting points or personality traits. Everyone is treated as an individual.

**Tackling hate speech:** No hate speech will be tolerated. Awareness of hate speech among students can be raised through lessons on the subject. For example, materials such as those on the website [eivihapuheelle.fi](http://eivihapuheelle.fi) can be used.

**Choice of teaching materials:** in the choice of teaching materials and other pedagogical choices made by the Adult Education Centre, attention will be paid to ensuring that the material and the ways of working are equal and do not emphasise normative, gendered or stereotypical content.

**Accessibility:** The Rauma Adult Education Centre aims to keep its facilities as accessible as possible for all users. It should be noted, however, that the College's teaching takes place in around 50 different locations throughout our area of activity each year, so unfortunately it is practically impossible for all locations to be fully accessible. We are aware of this and will do our utmost to promote the principle of accessibility.

**Financial equality:** as a rule, liberal adult education is paid for, i.e. the funding is partly based on course fees collected from students. The course fee for each course is the same for all, which means that financial equality and equity are achieved from this point of view. The Adult Education Centre tries to keep course fees as reasonable as possible in order to allow equal participation in the courses. The Adult Education Centre aims to ensure that the financial situation of the student or their family does not affect their studies or their social situation at the institution. It is possible to apply for a grant for course fees from the Rauma Adult Education Center Students' Association.

For the period 2024-2026, the promotion of non-discrimination will be a particular focus of development. Rauma Adult Education Center commits itself to the principle of non-discrimination by declaring itself a non-discrimination-free area, which means opposing and addressing discrimination and recognising the equality of all people. The whole Adult Education Center, from students to staff, recognises and accepts people's differences as part of the community and is committed to reducing inequalities and promoting and maintaining equality. The

second development is to prepare an accessibility mapping of the teaching facilities at the Karin campus, which will open in autumn 2024.

## **6. Measures in case of possible breaches of equality and discrimination**

Any cases of gender inequality or discrimination will be reported to the principal or other full-time staff member of the Rauma Adult Education Center, who will take immediate action to investigate and remedy the situation. The report will be accompanied by the completion of a separate inappropriate treatment form. The Principal will deal with the report and contact the parties concerned. Data protection and confidentiality obligations will be respected in the processing and storage of the report form.

All staff are obliged to take immediate action against any language or behaviour that is abusive, discriminatory or insulting.

## **7. Information on the equality and non-discrimination plan**

The Equality and Equity Plan will be communicated to staff, students and pupils after its adoption and will be available on the Rauma Adult Education Center's website.

The Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan will be in force from 1 February 2024 and will be evaluated through discussions and a survey of pupils, students and staff. The implementation of the equality and equity plan will be monitored and reviewed as necessary or every three years.