

# The Helsinki University Researchers' and Teachers' Association, HUART

## Action Plan for 2024

### Priorities for 2024:

#### *For all scientists and researchers*

- We will work to improve the status of all researchers, including researchers in other professional positions.
- We will defend the position of scientists in precarious employment.
- We will continue to work towards the recognition of grant researchers and junior researchers as full members of the university community.

#### *An active contributor to the university community*

- We also ensure that non-Finnish and non-Swedish-speaking staff can influence the university's decision-making.
- The principle of “all teaching and all research” must be implemented. All those in teaching-oriented positions must be guaranteed a sufficient proportion of their working time for research and periods of complete freedom from teaching. Hourly teaching should not be undertaken without financial remuneration.

#### *Visible support for members in their daily lives and careers*

- Science is a team effort. We are a community-based and active professional association, and we respond to the different support needs of our members by being a community of scientists at different career stages, with solidarity and accessibility.
- We involve our international members in our activities and aim to lower the threshold for all scientists to join us.
- We will increase our visibility and impact and increase our membership, unionisation rates and awareness of union activities and the key terms of collective agreements.
- HUART will create a model for student membership.
- Our slogan is "don't go it alone".

## **Defending and protecting the interests of scientists**

### *Improving the status of temporary, grant and junior researchers and unemployed researchers*

Many researchers are still employed on short, precarious contracts or on grants. This undermines the professionalism of early career researchers and the conditions for doing science and makes it difficult for them to develop their careers in a structured way.

HUART calls for unjustified temporary contracts to be made permanent and for fixed-term contracts to be concluded for at least the duration of known projects. References to the uncertainty or lack of funding are not acceptable justifications for fixed-term contracts. Temporary staff must be considered in the human resources planning of faculties and departments and their career development must be supported.

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code for the Recruitment of Researchers oblige employers and funders to recognise all researchers in research careers as professionals. They must be treated accordingly. This means, for example, that there must be proper conditions for doctoral research. Young early-stage researchers must be guaranteed funding for the entire duration of their doctoral research - typically 4-5 years (including postdoctoral positions, fellowships, and projects) - and sufficient quality supervision.

HUART insists that all members of the university community, regardless of their employment or affiliation, must be treated equally. Particular attention must be paid to the integration of scholarship holders into the university and the working community. For example, communication from departments must also be targeted at scholarship holders - not just those on contract. They must be provided with appropriate conditions for carrying out research - including working space, equipment, health and safety and other facilities. Practices must be uniform across all faculties. Research fellows should be involved in decisions that affect them, such as the design of facilities.

The right to family leave should be recognized throughout the university, regardless of the nature of the employment relationship. HYT's key demand is that all university staff are treated equally. HYT supports the practice whereby both parental and carer's leave extend the employment contract of a fixed-term researcher by the amount of leave taken.

HYT calls for better training for scientists. Employers must pay particular attention to the induction of newly arrived migrant workers. Induction must clearly explain the pay system, employee rights, staff organization relations and the role of the shop steward, as required by the collective agreement. To achieve this, HYT will participate in induction sessions for new employees and post-doctoral researchers and communicate with their organizers on issues related to the objectives. HYT will develop its openly available induction material, which will be distributed to new university staff and induction officers.

### ***Promoting a good culture of cooperation and university democracy***

HYT maintains a close dialogue with the management of the University of Helsinki and promotes good practices in human resources policy at the university. These objectives are implemented through regular meetings of the Chief Stewards with the University's HR management and meetings of HYT's management with the University's management. In its activities, HYT strives to maintain good working relations with the university's personnel administration and the rectorate. Members of HYT are involved on campus in health and safety committees and faculty councils. HYT is actively involved in shop steward activities together with other staff organizations. HYT encourages and supports its members to apply for membership of university decision-making bodies.

HYT is developing transparency in the university community and calls for greater access for trustees to information on fixed-term contracts. Salary information should also be available to the chief shop stewards. This information should be by title and statistical data by gender. HYT takes a critical view of the increase in local agreements unless staff representatives' access to shop stewardship is significantly improved.

The possibility for members of the university community to participate on an equal footing in university decision-making and its preparation must be strengthened. The principle of equal representation must be introduced in all collegiate decision-making bodies. The university community must also be genuinely involved in the planning and decision-making process, e.g. on

work-related changes. It is not enough to hold consultation or information meetings if the views of the community are not given weight in decision-making. HYT also seeks to improve the opportunities for non-Finnish and non-Swedish-speaking staff to influence the university's decision-making.

### ***"Everyone does research and everyone teaches" must not remain a dead letter***

HUART's aim is to limit the number of teaching hours for university lecturers and university teachers so that everyone has a realistic chance to do research. The University of Helsinki's stated principle is that "all teachers research and all researchers teach". This principle must not remain a dead letter, but also those working in teaching-oriented jobs must be given a genuine opportunity to carry out research. The opportunity to undertake research is not given if the employee is required to complete a maximum of 394 contact teaching hours per year, as referred to in the safeguard clause of the collective agreement.

HUART insists that as student numbers increase, the teaching workload should not increase but teaching resources should be increased. The workload caused by abnormal situations, such as the coronary pandemic, must also be considered and, if necessary, the implementation of work plans must be reviewed. Teachers' right to leave must be safeguarded, even if summer teaching is extended. HUART continues to insist that teachers have the right to choose the content, methods, and times of their teaching.

The collective agreement recommends that no more than 5% of the total working time of doctoral researchers, i.e., 81 hours per year, should be devoted to teaching. This time must include not only the teaching event but also the preparation of the teaching and the marking of the coursework. HYT demands that this interpretation be included in university documents and work plan guidelines. The teaching provided by the dissertation tutor should support the completion of the dissertation and be related to the research topics, as well as qualifying the junior researcher for an academic career.

### ***More impact and visibility***

The weight of a professional association follows the growth in membership and organization rates. HUART is working to increase its membership and organization rate at the university. This will allow us to better defend the interests and rights of all scientists and to improve working life at the university. To achieve this, HUART will improve its visibility and communication on union activities and advocacy at the university. We will do this through effective local advocacy and by responding to the diverse support needs of our members. HYT also lowers the threshold to get involved and learn about trade union activities through working groups and discussion and recreational events. All events organized by HUART consider membership recruitment and distribute the association's brochures and other information about HYT and the Union of Scientists.

HYT will explore the possibility of expanding student membership and will devise a model to involve students before they enter the workforce.

### ***Supporting members in their daily lives and careers***

HYT aims to be an accessible and supportive community of scientists. We consider the different backgrounds and career stages of our members and aim to meet their diverse support needs. HYT

organizes advocacy and recreational events. HYT maintains a science, education, and university policy debate, including by organizing events where members can discuss issues with the university's management.

HYT disseminates and produces information for advocacy purposes and publicizes the reports, guidelines and recommendations of the union and its working groups. HYT's communication team will continue to be active in line with the communication strategy. It will develop and produce content for the association's website and blog and will come up with new ways to communicate and keep in touch with members. The scientific work and further scientific training of members will be supported, for example by providing grants for research, travel, or other similar expenses.

HYT aims to be an accessible community. For example, HYT organizes events for international staff and aims to raise their awareness of issues such as trade union activities and unemployment benefits. The association's board has appointed an international affairs officer and an international affairs team. Events for international members are organized around once a semester, following the model started in 2016. Information is provided to Swedish and English-speaking members by publishing some of the material in these languages. International members will be offered opportunities to get involved, for example by communicating meetings and events in English.