



THE VALUES AND ATTITUDES

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED
SCIENCES STUDENTS 2022



SAMOK

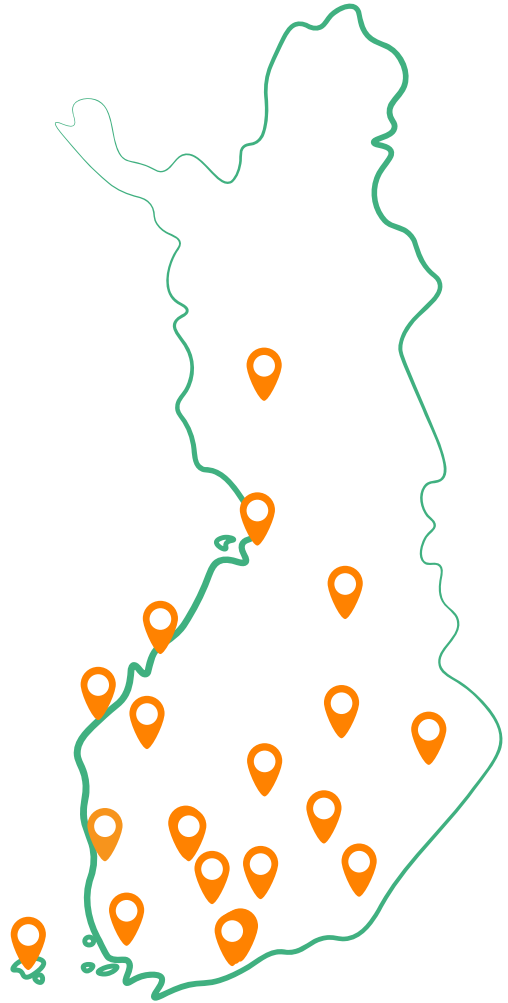
The education at universities of applied sciences is work-oriented and practical

Universities of applied sciences educate approximately half of university graduates in Finland, and they are responsible for the skills of many important professions. As an example, approximately 80 percent of people with a university degree working in social services and health care have been educated at a university of applied sciences. In addition to education, the universities of applied sciences also produce applied research in collaboration with the world of work.

Universities of applied sciences offer degrees in many large and well-known fields, such as engineering, business administration and nursing, but degrees are also offered in some smaller and less well-known fields, such as the clothing trade and sign language interpreting. Degree programmes at universities of applied sciences take 3.5–4.5 years to complete. The programmes have been designed to meet the needs of the world of work, and the practical approach can be seen in things like the internships that are included in all degree programmes.

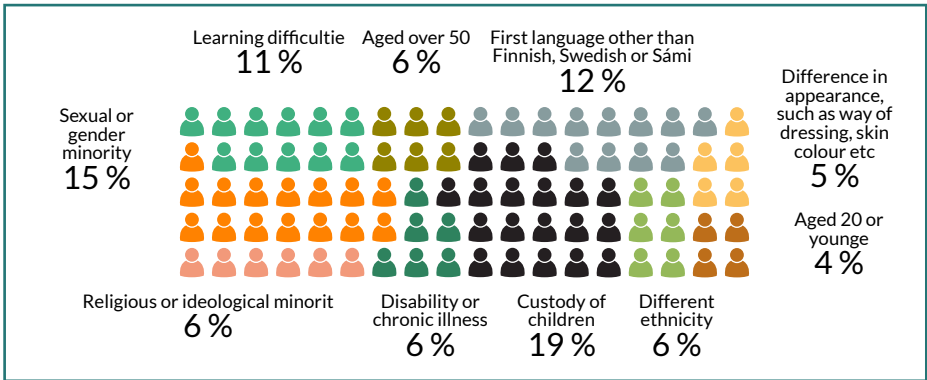
The applied research and development work of the universities of applied sciences serves the teaching and supports the development, businesses and working life in the local area. The research and development work carried out by universities of applied sciences is applied research, which is based on practical experience and on consolidating the latest scientific data with strong skills.

Finland has a total of 24 universities of applied sciences, at least one in every region. The universities of applied sciences are generally run as legal persons in the form of limited companies, and the majority of them offer education in several different fields. Every year, the universities of applied sciences have approximately 135,000 students registered as present and working towards a degree, while approximately 24,000 students graduate each year.

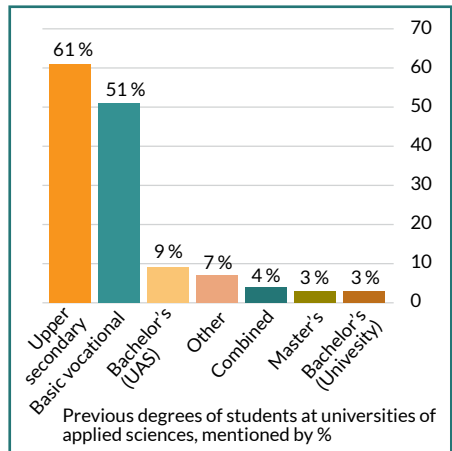


The many faces of the students at universities of applied sciences

The image of a typical student at a university of applied sciences is usually a young woman studying for a degree in social services and healthcare, or a man studying for a technology degree. Both of these fields are very gendered, and they represent the largest fields offered by universities of applied sciences. Even though the image people have of students at universities of applied sciences divides the typical students by gender, in reality the students working towards a degree at a university of applied sciences are a diverse group. Some do not identify with either gender, as two in one hundred of the university of applied sciences students who took part in the 2022 Student Barometer identify as non-binary. One in nine respondents are part of a sexual or gender minority. Based on how they identify, students at universities of applied sciences are also part of other minorities based on their beliefs, appearance, disability, chronic illness, ethnicity, or learning difficulties. In addition, four percent also feel that they are part of some other, unspecified minority. This kind of minority might be one based on things like characteristics or temperament that differs from the majority.



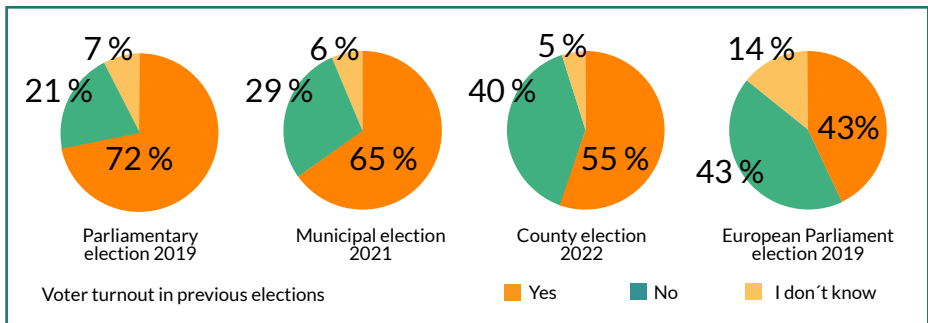
The students are also a diverse group when it comes to age and first language. The youngest are in their twenties and have come straight from secondary education, while the oldest are over 50 and are taking part in further training or changing careers. This kind of range includes a myriad of different life experiences and paths which add to the student diversity. The varied life experiences are also reflected in the students' previous degrees. Their earlier degree or degrees influence how they experience their studies and what they want to get out of them. The spectrum of previous studies and the age structure show that universities of applied sciences are an important channel for lifelong learning. This diversity is also reflected in the university of applied sciences students' social values and attitudes.



A clear majority of students at universities of applied sciences think they will vote in the next election even though half state they are not very interested in politics

Just under half of the respondents (48 %) are very or quite interested in politics, while 16 percent are not interested at all. Women are interested in politics less often than men, and the younger age groups contain a few more people who are not interested in politics at all. There are also more people who are not at all or only a little interested in politics among Swedish-speaking respondents and respondents who feel like they are part of a minority. On the other hand no statistically significant differences in the interest in politics was observed when comparing people living in different areas.

Four out of five respondents (81%) think they are likely to vote in the next election in which they are eligible and almost two out of three were very sure. For these respondents, the next election will be the parliamentary election in 2023, and the share of respondents who think it is likely that they will vote is larger than the share who voted in previous elections. Two out of three respondents voted in the 2019 parliamentary election, and almost as many voted in the municipal election in June 2021. Nearly half of the respondents voted in the county election in January 2022. The eagerness to vote was the lowest in the European Parliament election: four in ten respondents voted in the European Parliament election.

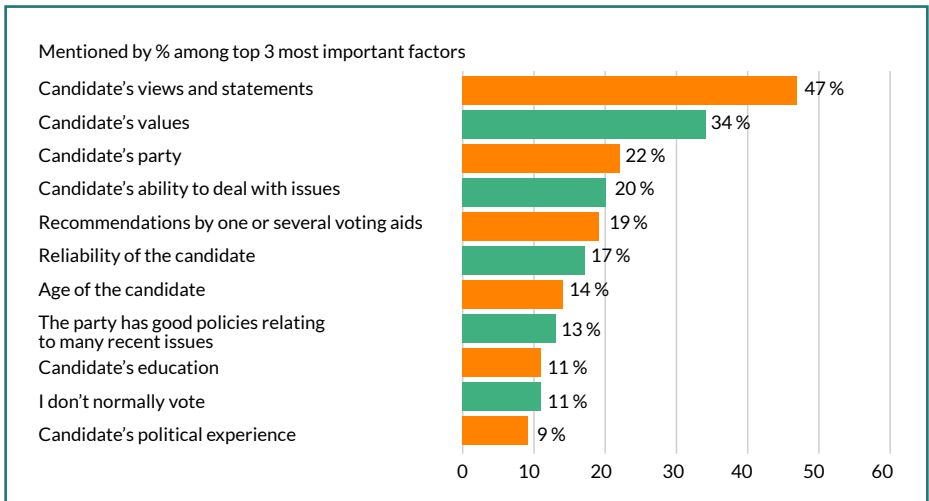


One in ten respondents think that it is at least fairly unlikely that they will vote in the next election, and the view of 10 percent of respondents is still fairly neutral (values 4–6 on a scale of 0–10). An interest in politics clearly reflects the likelihood of voting: only less than half of those who are not interested in politics at all think it is likely that they will vote. Choosing among the available options, nearly half (48 %) gave a lack of strong opinions about politics as a reason for not voting. The second most common reason is a lack of time to look into issues (41 %), and just over one in five (27 %) do not believe that voting will impact things.

The choice of candidate emphasises values, one fifth gives importance to the recommendations of voting aids

Students at universities of applied sciences mainly choose their candidates based on the candidate's views and values. The candidate's party and the values of the party are also important reasons that are mentioned the most. The views of family and friends, the candidate's style, public persona, their election campaign with its adverts and exposure or openness about their campaign finance are not seen as having an influence on the voting decision, with only 1% citing any of these as one of the top three factors. In terms of the political party, the success of the election campaign (0,2%) or how well the party chair has done their job (1%) are the least important reasons to choose a candidate.

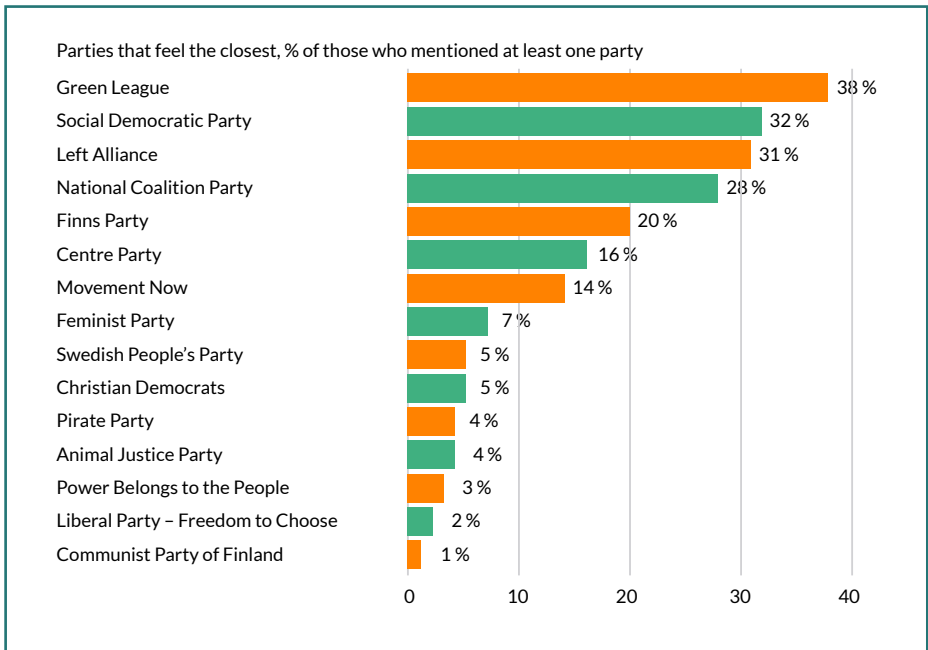
In the most important reason one can discern some differences in emphasis between different kinds of respondents. Those who are not interested in politics give the least importance to the candidate's views and statements, their party, and the values of the party. The statements and also gender of a candidate are slightly more important to women than to men. For younger age groups, the age of the candidate is a more important factor than it is for older age groups. On the other hand, the importance of the candidate's ability to deal with issues increases with age.



In addition, among the three most important factors, 6% mentioned gender of the candidate, the party usually keeps its election promises or The party has competent people to implement the politics carried out in this country. For 5% of respondents, the candidate's place of residence or the party's actions during the past election parliamentary term were important. For 4%, the fact that the party promotes the interests of the profession in which the respondent belongs or the candidate's chances of being elected were important. 3% responded to the candidate's public image or the candidate's public speaking and presentation skills.

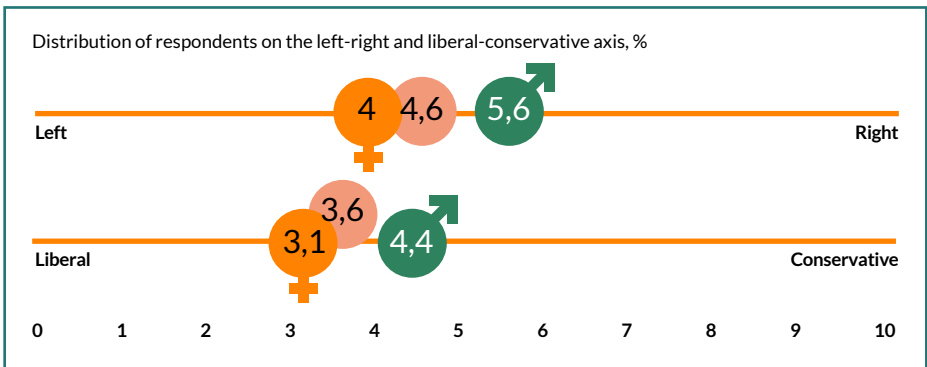
Students at universities of applied sciences feel closest to the Green League, SDP, the Left Alliance and the National Coalition

When students were asked to name the 1–3 parties they feel the closest to, the parties that stood out were the Green League, SDP, the Left Alliance and the National Coalition Party. Out of all of those who answered the question, 13 percent did not feel close to any party, and 15 percent could not or would not answer the question. Women found the question more challenging than men, and they were more likely to choose the option I can't or don't want to answer. Compared to the results of the 2019 Values and attitudes survey, one can observe that a considerably higher number of students at universities of applied sciences choose the Social Democratic Party SDP when asked to choose the three parties they feel the closest to than when asked to only choose one. The way the question is asked does not seem to impact the support for the Green League: when choosing only one party, the Green League's share was 35 percent in 2019 and 38 percent now.



The youngest age groups and women have the most liberal values

Politically, students at universities of applied sciences lean a little more to the left than to the right, and they are clearly liberal. A difference can be seen between genders on the left-right axis, but it is not as noticeable on the liberal-conservative axis. The majority of women place themselves to the left, while a third of men place themselves to the right. Women are also a bit more liberal than men, and one in four identify as conservative. Age also impacts students' political leanings. Younger respondents are more likely to see themselves on the left, while a larger share of the older age groups is on the right. The share of students who identify as conservative also increases slightly with age. The differences were statistically significant.

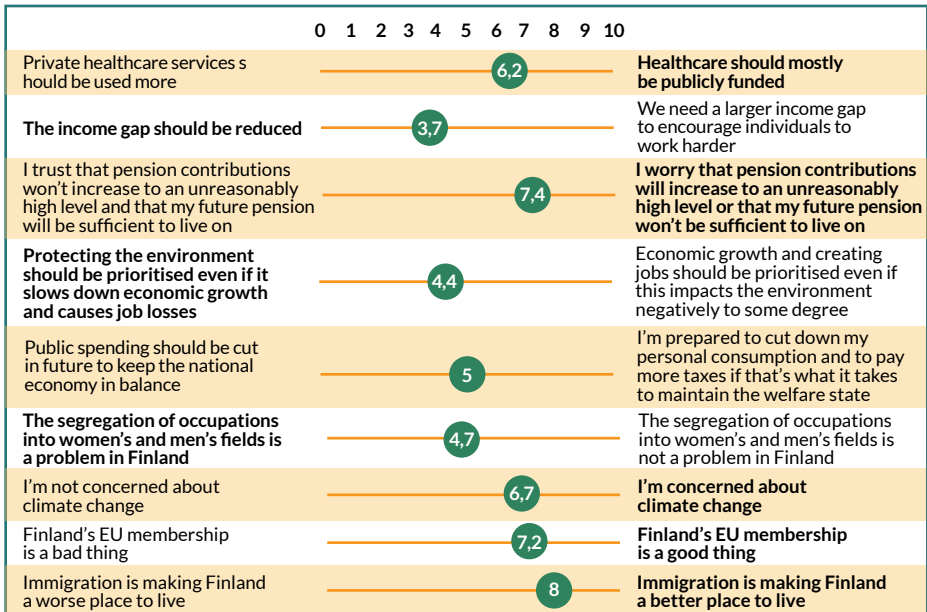


An important point to note is that many respondents did not find it easy to place themselves on the left-right and/or liberal-conservative axes. Just over one in five (23 %) of respondents did not place themselves on the left-right axis, and one in four did not place themselves on the liberal-conservative axis. This probably says something about changes taking place in the field of politics, and the traditional groupings do not seem to work completely among students at universities of applied sciences. This is why these scales were used separately in this study, rather than together. This is why, as in 2019, this report did not present a four-point scale and the scales were used separately.

Immigration and the EU are generally seen as good things, increased pension contributions and the purchasing power of one's own pension cause the most worry

As a whole, students at universities of applied sciences are still pro-EU and pro-immigration. The main worry concerns future pension contributions and whether their own pension will be sufficient. The proportion of respondents who is worried about climate change is higher than the proportion who is not worried about it. Likewise the number of people who feel it is important to reduce income disparity is slightly higher than the number of those who want to increase it. Most people would also like healthcare services to mostly remain publicly funded, rather than increasing the use of private healthcare. Cuts to expenditure and tax increases, as well as the segregation of working life are questions where the average result is neutral.

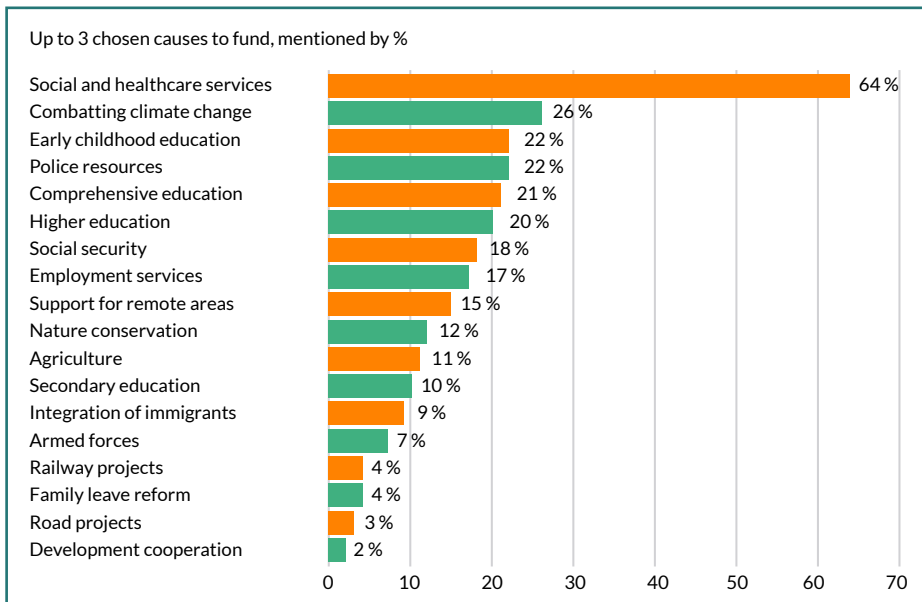
There are noticeable differences in opinion between those placing themselves on the left and the right, as well as between liberals and conservatives, and they only share a worry about pensions. Some of the things that separate liberals and people on the left from conservatives and people on the right are a more positive attitude towards immigration, and a greater concern about climate change, the environment and the segregation of working life. The personal political values of students at universities of applied sciences have a large impact on each person's views on social issues.



Students at universities of applied sciences would like more investment into social and healthcare services, into combatting climate change, and for different levels of education

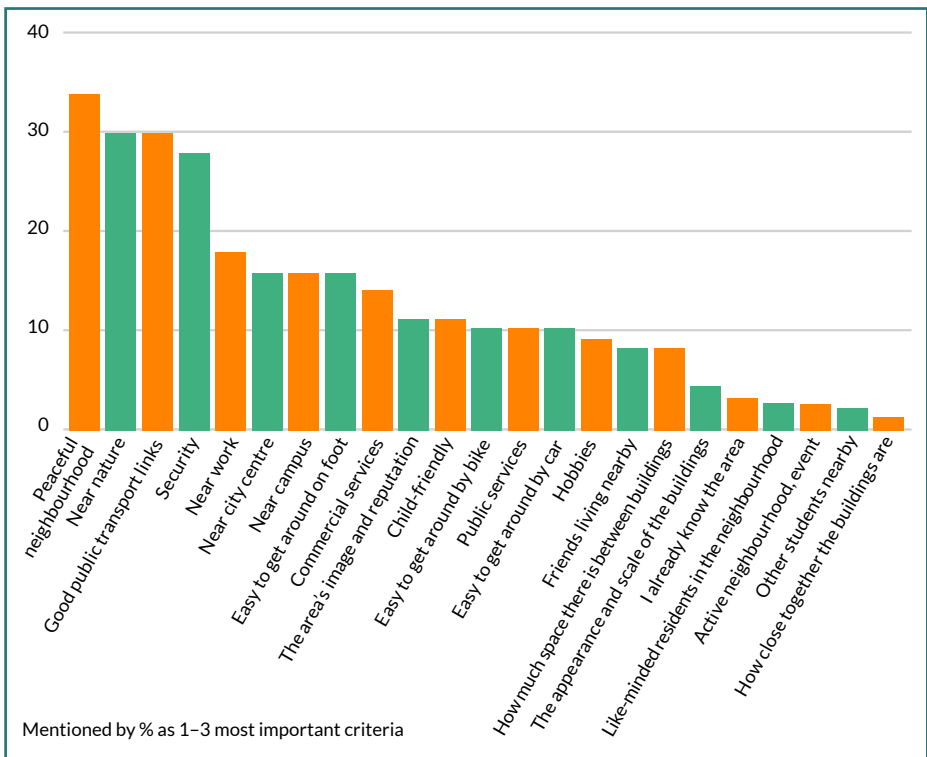
If students at universities of applied sciences had 100 million euros to spend out of the government budget, what kind of public services, benefits or systems would they want to improve? A clear majority of respondents (64%) would allocate the money to social and healthcare services. After that, the students would allocate the money more evenly to different causes. A quarter of them would spend money on combatting climate change, and one in five would spend the money on improving police resources, early childhood education, comprehensive education and higher education. This means that secondary education is the only education sector that is not prioritised as much as the others in the imaginary budget of students at universities of applied sciences. Only a few would spend money on development cooperation, road projects, railway projects or reforming the parental leave system.

In the preferences for handing out money one can see similar differences on the left-right and liberal-conservative axes as in the views on social issues. Nearly half of those who placed themselves to the left mentioned combatting climate change, and the third most mentioned area was social security. Those who identify as liberals were also more likely than others to invest in combatting climate change and in social security. Conservatives and those to the right, on the other hand, would invest more than others in police resources and the armed forces. The general lines are similar to those in the 2019 study, even though the questions were framed slightly differently.



Students appreciate a calm residential environment near nature and with good public transport links

The criteria affecting the choice of a new residential area for students at universities of applied sciences are varied, but if they were to move, they would want to live somewhere peaceful and safe that is close to nature and has good public transport links. The least important factors are how close together the buildings are, whether other students live nearby, how active the neighbourhood is and whether there are events, and having like-minded residents in the neighbourhood. Children divided the respondents, and nearly half of those who had dependent children thought that one of the most important criteria when moving to a new area is that it is child friendly.



Wishes about the size of the home was connected to the students' current situation and form of housing. The option that suited most people in terms of their current situation was a one-bedroom home (31 %), but two-bedroom homes (18 %), studios of more than 27 square metres (16 %) and homes with three or more bedrooms (16 %) also got an even level of support. Those with dependent children were more likely than others to want homes with three or more bedrooms and two-bedroom homes. Students saw their current home as being relatively suitable, and the next most popular alternative that suited their current situation was mainly a home with one more bedroom than their current home, or a studio for those who lived in a shared property.



National Union of Students in Finnish
Universities of Applied Sciences



OTUS

The Values and Attitudes of the University of Applied Sciences Students 2022 study offers an updated overview of the social values and attitudes of students at universities of applied sciences.

It creates an image of the prevailing attitudes among the students, but also shows how diverse a group they are. The study provides information on how this group votes, what parties they support and what kind of values they represent. The study also gives insight into the types of homes students at universities of applied sciences tend to live in. This study has been carried out on behalf of the Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences SAMOK by the Research Foundation for Studies and Education Otus as part of the Student Barometer 2022 data collection. The data collection was carried out in February and March 2022, and 1,855 students at universities of applied sciences took part. Material weighted by education level, gender and first language was used in the study.