

# Action plan 2024

Approved by the General Assembly.

## Introduction

The National Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences – SAMOK is the national advocacy organisation for all UAS students. In 2024, in accordance with the strategy adopted in 2021, the focus of SAMOK's operations is improving the quality and visibility of UAS education, including highlighting the role of UAS education in Finnish society widely in different channels. We influence the perceptions politicians and other public influencers of higher education and continue our work to change the Finnish title of a master's degree from a university of applied sciences to correspond to the equivalent degree from a university.

In terms of advocacy and engagement, 2024 is an important year. During the spring, we will carry out a campaign ahead of the European Parliament elections and prepare SAMOK's policy papers on housing, student admission and the Open University of Applied Sciences. The new political programme adopted in 2022 gives a strong foundation for the union's advocacy work together with the implementation plan of the political programme. The political programme and goals are actively promoted so that decision-makers have correct and up-to-date information on the needs of UAS students and student unions.

In 2024, a new strategy will be drawn up for the Union for the 2025–2028 term. The strategy work strongly involves student unions, the SAMOK staff and alumni. The strategy work will determine the direction of the Union for the coming years. Performance indicators and guidelines for the Union's operations will be updated to better meet current needs.

In 2024, the Union will continue to develop its services, events and communications to better serve the student unions. In all activities, the Union places emphasis on the use of Swedish and English to ensure that the Union is genuinely trilingual and an equal supporter of all student unions.

In financial development, the Union will focus on balancing its finances based on the medium-term financial plan and the fundraising action plan. The most important aspect of balancing finances is broadening the Union's funding base by means of various partnership agreements, for example. Financial issues will continue to play a significant role due to changes in membership numbers and student union funding.



## **SAMOK as a public influencer**

### **Description of continuous operation:**

SAMOK creates a strong foundation for its advocacy work through research, the use of background materials, and training and support provided to student unions. Efficient and seamless interaction with the universities of applied sciences guarantees a more impactful community that promotes the interests of UAS students. Decisions on SAMOK's initiatives and advocacy goals are always made by representatives elected by UAS students. They are based on observations and needs raised by students as well as research data. We will continue our advocacy work related to the social security reform, amendments to the Patient Insurance Act and the funding of student unions. SAMOK will participate in the discussion on the future of quality assurance in Finnish higher education institutions.

In our advocacy work, we use existing and new relationships with decision-makers at the Finnish and European level. SAMOK develops its alumni activities and networks to strengthen its advocacy work. At the European level, the union actively participates in decision-making and independent EU engagement in cooperation with stakeholders and through the umbrella organisation, European Students' Union, in accordance with the union's long-term EU engagement plan. In our advocacy work, attention is given to promoting and continuously monitoring the accessibility of higher education.

SAMOK will continue its advocacy work to improve the financial situation of student unions. The advocacy work is based on a report by Tapio Varmola on the need to change the funding of student unions. The work on improving the funding situation will take into account the necessary government investment in the basic resourcing of student union operations.

### **Key measures:**

- We will conduct a campaign ahead of the European Parliament elections together with our partners.
- We will prepare for the 2025 municipal and regional elections.
- We will ensure that students have opportunities to gain skills in diverse ways, for example through internationalisation in Finland and on exchange.
- We will contribute to strengthening Finland's attractiveness as a country of study and work, particularly by promoting openness in society and through job creation and labour market policy.
- We will prepare a housing policy paper for SAMOK
- We will prepare a policy paper on student admissions and open university of applied sciences education.
- We will do advocacy work in line with the Internship Policy Paper.



- We will assess the need for help of student unions in local advocacy work and support student unions in influencing municipalities and wellbeing services counties.

## **SAMOK as a service provider**

### **Description of continuous operation:**

SAMOK produces services and events for student unions that support the activities, wellbeing and advocacy work of student unions. Services offered by SAMOK include communication materials, consulting assistance and training events. In addition to Finnish and Swedish speakers, SAMOK also takes English speakers into consideration in all its activities. SAMOK develops its sponsored student union activities and clarifies its responsibilities.

Through its services, SAMOK provides opportunities for student unions for open discussion and the sharing of best practices. The community building of UAS student unions utilises digital environments, without forgetting face-to-face encounters. SAMOK also provides opportunities for remote attendance in as many of its events as possible. In planning services and events, SAMOK uses the results of the member survey, the needs and wishes of student unions and feedback from individual events.

### **Key measures:**

- We will highlight the competence of UAS students as well as the significance of universities of applied sciences in Finnish society and their essential role in raising the level of education through our public communication.
- We will review and develop the national awards handed out by SAMOK to persons and organisations working in higher education at universities of applied sciences.
- The service promise prepared in 2023 will be implemented in the union's operations.
- We will develop SAMOK's event production to be more organised.
- We will review SAMOK's communication strategy against the new strategy. If necessary, we will update the communication strategy on the basis of the new strategy.
- We will develop SAMOK's media communications and maintain existing media contacts as well as form new ones.
- We will develop the diversity of SAMOK's communications on UAS education and advocacy topics by developing the union's social media content.



## **SAMOK as an organisation**

### **Description of continuous operation:**

SAMOK contributes to ensuring that the UAS student community is an attractive environment where everyone feels welcome. SAMOK maintains and develops an open and equal operating environment with student unions. We promote inclusion by actively encouraging people from diverse backgrounds to participate in the union's activities.

The core of the Union's activities in 2024 is to improve the financial stability of the Union. SAMOK expands its funding base in accordance with the fundraising plan. In addition, SAMOK will develop its internal and external communications. The union actively interacts with people and stakeholders in the field by means of public communications.

### **Key measures:**

- We will update our Equality Plan and create an equal opportunities plan for the Union. We will ensure that these documents are actively utilised in the Union's activities.
- We will write a new strategy for the Union for 2025–2028 in cooperation with the student unions to be approved by the General Assembly.
- We will ensure that the strategic metrics and other metrics used are monitored regularly and that the generated data is utilised in our decision-making. We will outline SAMOK's metrics reporting policy for members.
- We will review our guidelines and present any changes to the General Assembly for approval.
- We will expand our funding base in accordance with the fundraising plan.
- We will begin planning the presentation of SAMOK's 30-year history.

