

STATE OF THE STUDENT UNIONS

2023



SAMOK

National Union of Students in Finnish
Universities of Applied Sciences

Welcome to the State of the Student Unions 2023 study!

There are 24 universities of applied sciences in Finland, all of which have a student union. These student unions carry out the same statutory tasks and in many ways operate in a similar way, but there are differences.

This report provides the reader with information on the activities, membership and finances of student unions and gives a good overview of the structures, priorities and strengths of student union activities.

The survey was based on a questionnaire sent to all student unions in autumn 2023, and almost all student unions responded in full. Some student unions responded only partially and a few did not respond at all.

The survey was commissioned by National Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences – SAMOK and carried out by Miltton Ltd. The survey was carried out as part of the SAMOK supporting student unions -project funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The project, which will run from summer 2023 to summer 2024, aims to strengthen the structures that support the work of student unions.

The report provides valuable information not only for SAMOK but hopefully also for policy makers, staff and trustees of student unions, staff of universities of applied sciences and all others interested in the work of student unions and their development.

Helsinki, spring 2024

Tekla Kosonen
Project Manager
SAMOK supporting student unions -project

General

On average, 34% of students are members of a student union.

The highest membership percentage is at Tampere University of Applied Sciences (Tamko) (67%) and the lowest at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (METKA) (9%).

The following figures represent the averages of all 20 student unions that responded to the survey.

Personnel

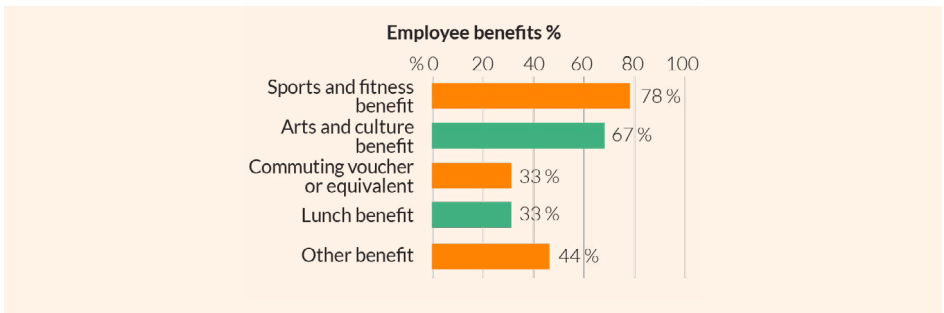
Average number of personnel:

Amount: 3.3
Person-years: 2.5

Other benefits:

Expanded occupational health, phone benefit, use of facilities

Employee benefits, all student unions



Union Board

Average number of Board members

On average, the Board has 8 members, including 2 chairpersons and 6 other members.

Average compensation of Board members

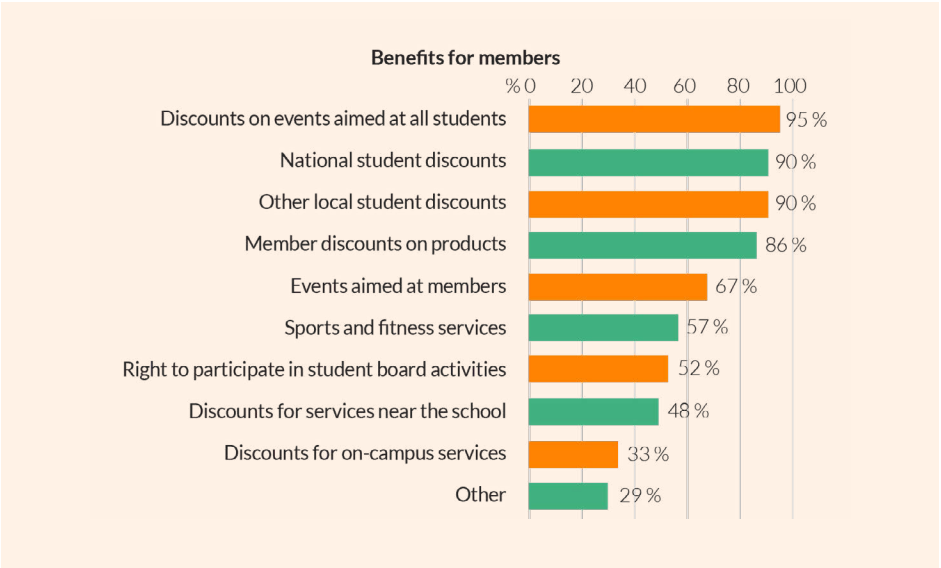
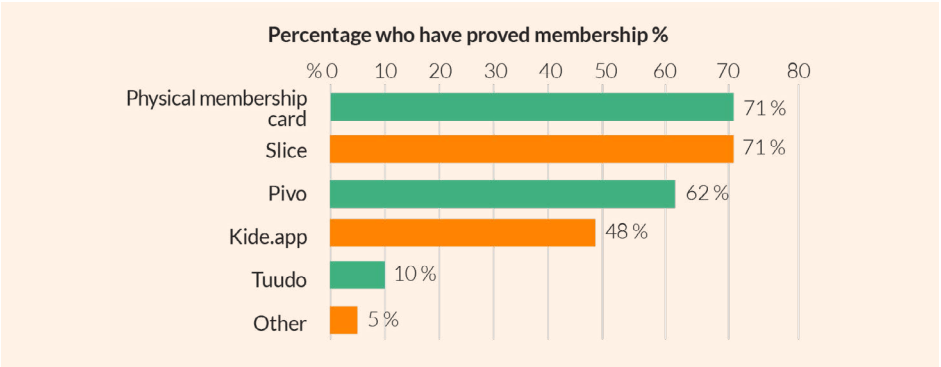
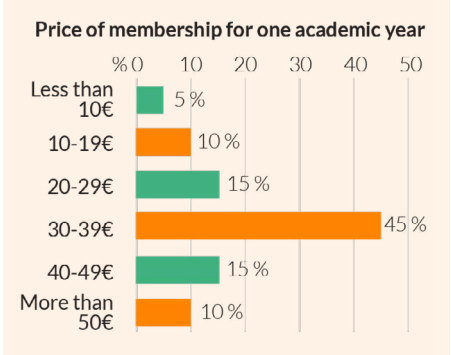
Chair: €580
Vice Chair: €330
Others: €135

Membership

Most have opted for a multi-year membership (65%).

Average cost of membership is between €30 and €39 and can usually be proved by both physical card and Slice

All student unions offer member benefits, the most common of which include discounts for student events and local and national discounts.



Financial statements

Revenue

Student union revenues are at a level of just under half a million, with slight variation.

Share of direct funding from the higher education institution:

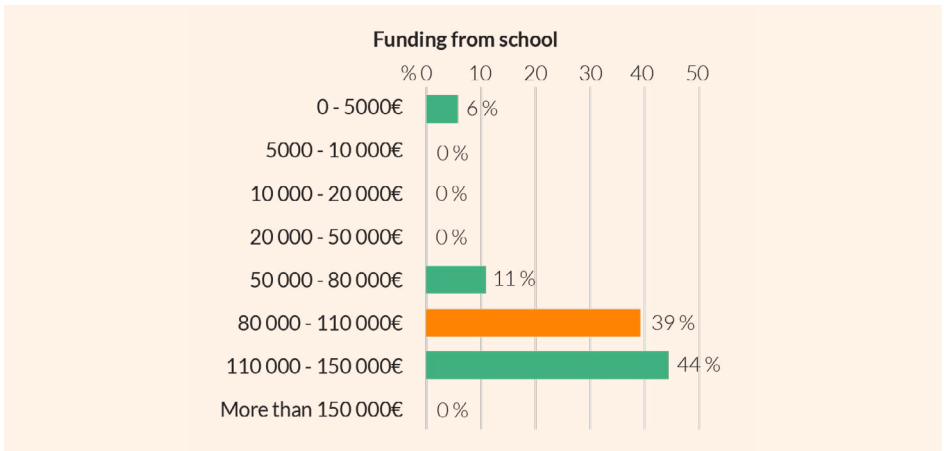
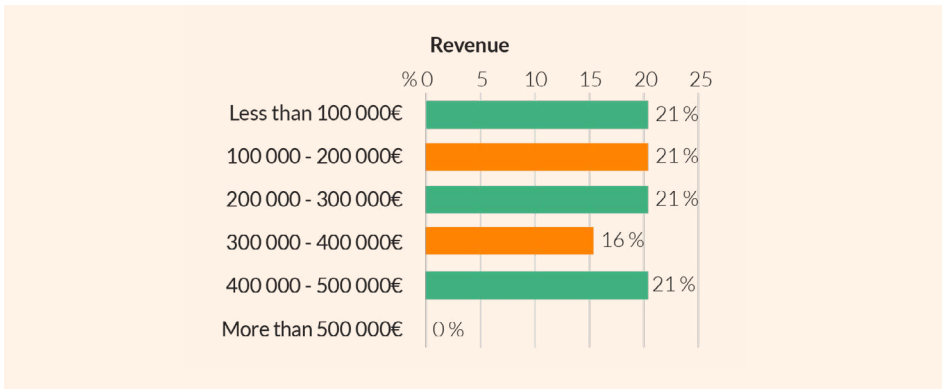
Nearly all receive around 80,000 to 150,000 euros in direct funding.

Other support

95% receive support other than direct funding. For example, facilities (sauna, office), technology and IT equipment, furniture

Separate business activities

35% (6) have separate business activities, such as café and rental business. Revenue for a separate business activities varies from tens to hundreds of thousands of euros.



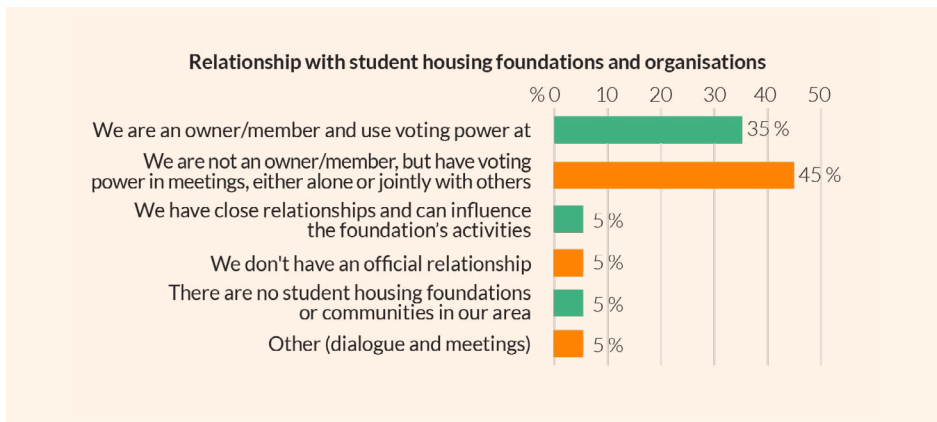
Relationship with stakeholders

Relationship with student housing foundations and organisations

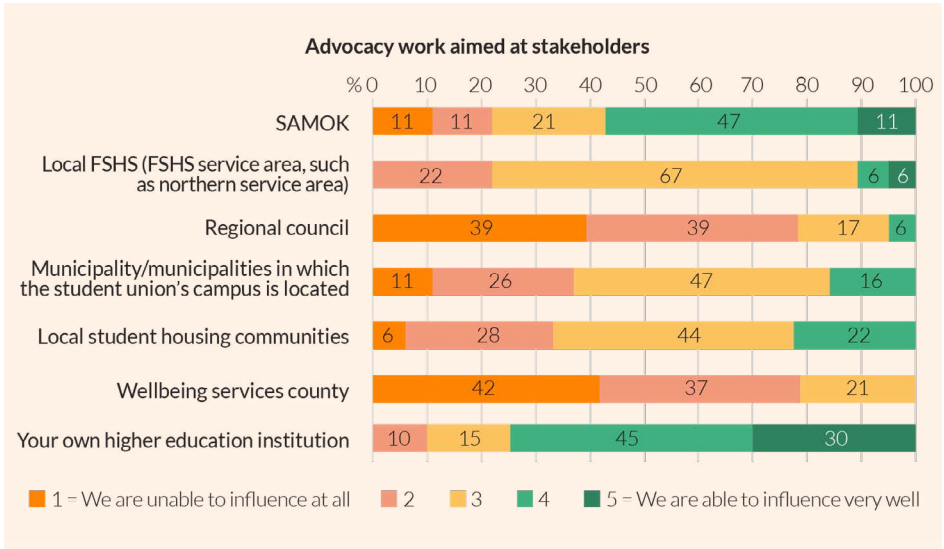
35% (6) student unions are owners or members who exercise voting power at meetings. Nine student unions are not owners or members, but still use their voting power in meetings, either jointly or shared with other student organisations.

Advocacy work aimed at other stakeholders

The most effective targets for advocacy work are the student union's own higher education institution and SAMOK. Student bodies are able to influence municipalities and the local FSHS and student housing communities to a moderate degree. Many student boards have no means of influencing the wellbeing services county or regional council.



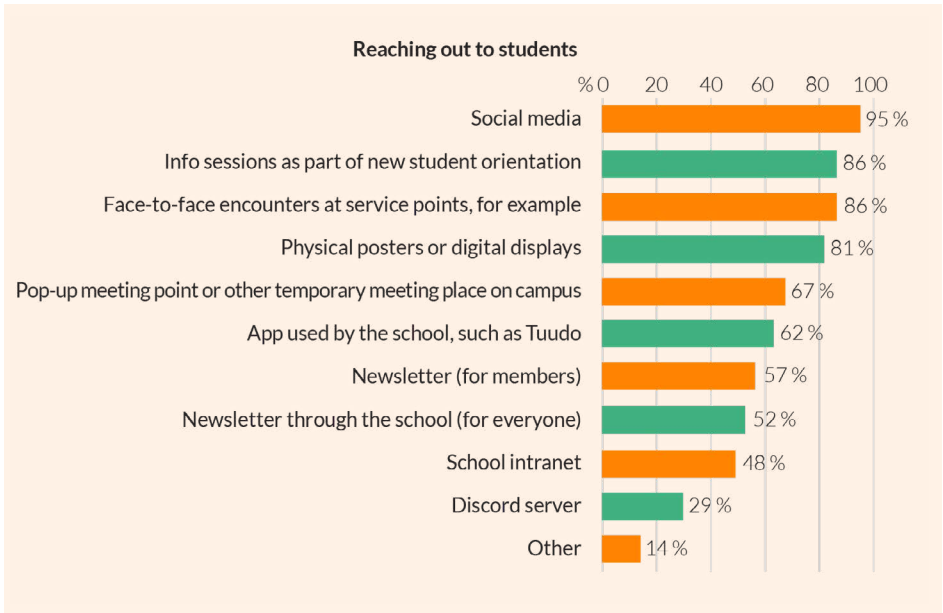
Stakeholder advocacy work – in particular, advocacy work with wellbeing services counties and regional councils is non-existent



Activities

Reaching out to students

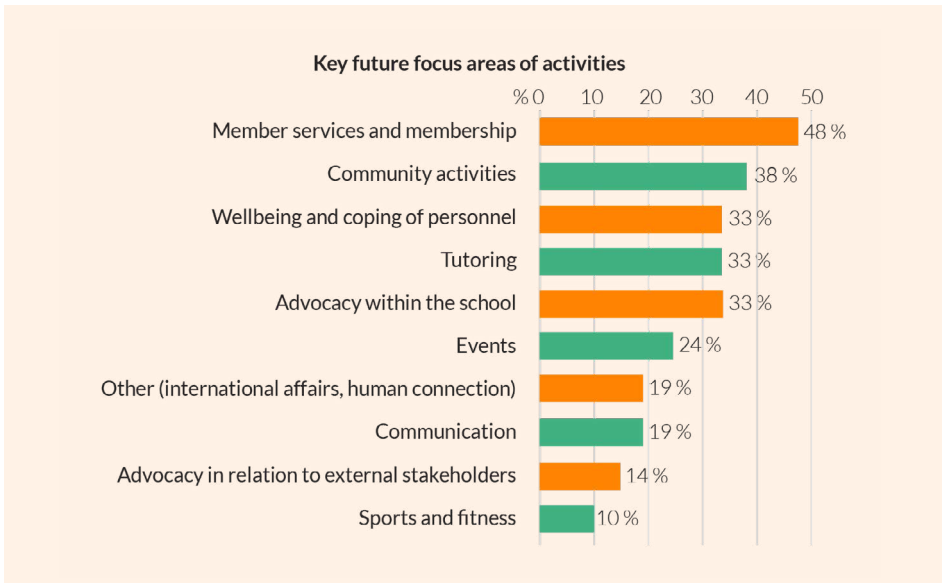
Students are reached across multiple channels, the most common of which include social media, info sessions, face-to-face encounters and bulletin boards (physical or digital).



Future outlook (up to 3 answers)

Nearly half want to invest in membership services and membership in the future. In addition, more than a third want to invest in community activities, the wellbeing and coping of personnel, tutoring and advocacy within the school.

Student unions feel less of a need to invest in communication, advocacy work with external stakeholders, and sports and fitness services.



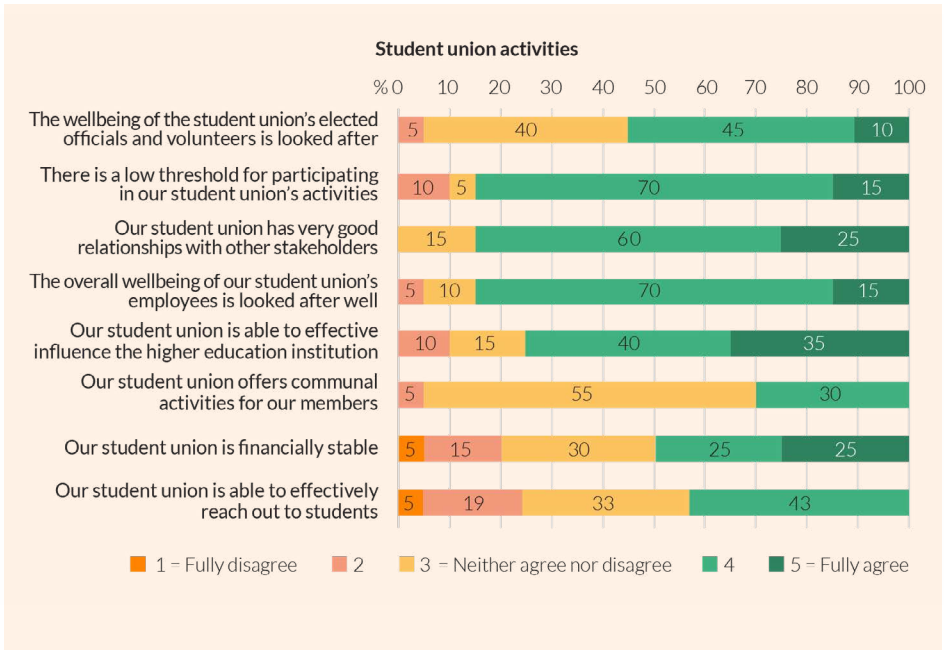
Activities and competences of student unions

Activities

Student unions see their relationships with stakeholders as very good (85%), and student unions feel they provide community activities to their members (85%). Also, 85% say that that the threshold for participating in activities is low, and 75% of the student unions are able to effectively influence their higher education institution.

The overall wellbeing of employees is taken into account well (85%), but the responses are less confident about whether wellbeing of elected officials and volunteers is taken into account (45%).

Many student unions are unable to reach out to students effectively (43%), and some of the student unions are not financially stable (20% report as being financially unstable, 50% report as being stable).

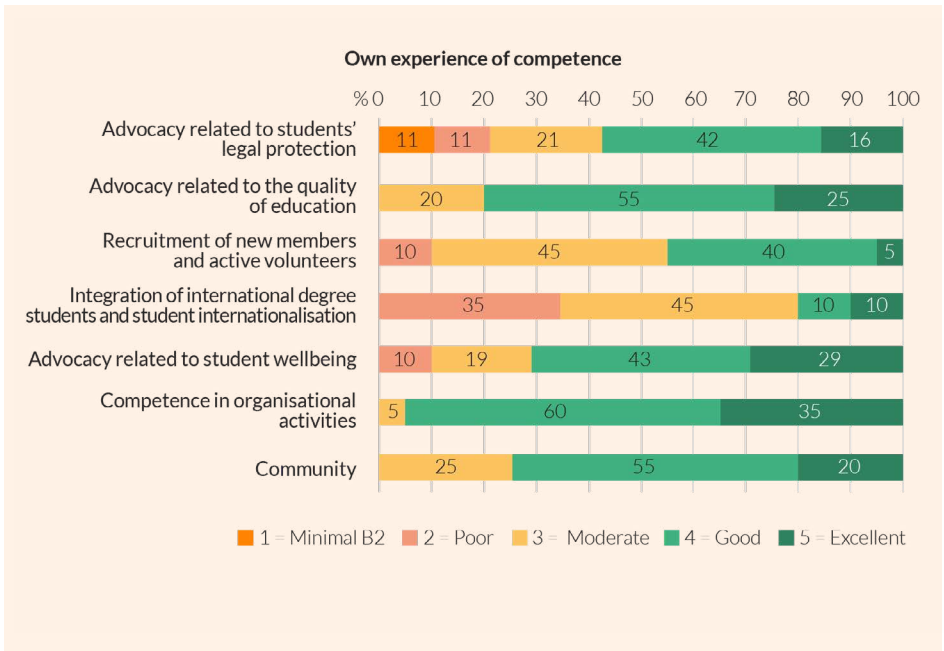


Competence

Themes in which unions bodies felt they were the most competent included student union activities, advocacy work related to the quality of education and communality. All student unions said they were at least moderately competent in these themes.

Student unions reported that their competence could be better in international affairs, membership and volunteer recruitment, and advocacy work related to student wellbeing.

Some of the student unions had no competence in advocacy work related to students' legal protection.





Suomen opiskelijakuntien liitto – SAMOK

Finlands studerandekårens förbund

National Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences

