



PROFESSORILIITTO
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Academic freedom in Finland
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Different kinds HE institutions

In Finland, institutions of higher education (*högskolor*) can be

- universities (*universitet*) or
- polytechnics (universities of applied science, *yrkeshögskolor*).

There are two kinds of universities with academic freedom:

- public-law universities (*offentligrättsliga universitet*, universities sui generis under the Universities Act 2009)
- foundation universities (*stiftelseuniversitet*, the Foundation Act as *lex generalis* and the Universities Act 2009 as *lex specialis*)
- universities enjoy institutional autonomy under the constitution
- academic freedom is guaranteed by the constitution within the organisational structure of a university

The most fundamental problems for academic freedom within universities:

- Culture of non-compliance. Difficult to enforce the constitutional and legal protection of academic freedom.
- The funding model. Institutional autonomy diluted by public overreliance on quantitative indicators for basic funding. Indicators in practice applied by management to individual faculty members. Increased intake with no extra funding. Overreliance on centralised, project-based and competitive research funding.
- Lack of security of employment. 69 % of university researchers/teachers have a fixed-term or temporary employment contract. Funding risks in practice allocated to faculty.
- Centralisation within institutions. Faculty self-governance diluted by centralisation of top management within institutions. Large powers vested in the rector.
- Open science. Researchers' and teachers' intellectual property rights and freedom to choose publication channels not respected.

There are *yrkeshögskolor* without academic freedom:

- translated as “polytechnics” (earlier) or “universities of applied science” (since 2013)
- roots in vocational training
- not universities (non-profit limited-liability companies governed by the Companies Act as *lex generalis* and the Universities of Applied Science Act 2013 as *lex specialis*)
- not mentioned in the constitution
- no institutional autonomy
- no constitutional protection of academic freedom for teachers and researchers
- no right to use the title of professor, no right to award doctoral degrees

The most fundamental problems for academic freedom within universities of applied science:

- Although polytechnics / universities of applied science are classified as institutions of HE, academic freedom does not apply. It is meaningful to study academic freedom de jure within the organisational framework of universities only.