

# Equality Plan for Interaktio Ry

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## About the Equality Plan

The purpose of this equality plan is to guide and direct the activities of the board of Interaktio ry in a way that considers the equality of Interaktio's members and social science students, as well as individuals participating in Interaktios events from outside the organization.

Interaktio is a subject association for the Social Science degree program. Its membership includes students of sociology, social psychology, social anthropology, social policy, gender studies, and youth work and research. Interaktio aims to consider all students from these various fields in its activities and events.

Equality is one of Interaktio's core values and thus cuts across the organization's entire operations. It is important for Interaktio's to ensure equal treatment of its members in academic progress, opportunities to participate in the association's diverse events, and access to information about the association's activities as well as news related to the university and studies, so that Interaktio's members can feel part of the association and university community. Interaktio aims to integrate social science students into its own subject association and university community.

The implementation of this equality plan began in the autumn of 2023. The updating of the equality plan has been overseen by the 2023 Social Policy, Equality, and Well-being Officer, and their subordinate officials. The initial draft of the equality plan was provided for feedback to both the board and members in March 2024.

Based on the feedback, the draft was refined, and the final version was approved at the spring meeting in a associate meeting in September 2024. This equality plan is valid from 9/2024-9/2026.

## Equality Officer

An equality officer is appointed to the Interaktio's board, whose task is to ensure the consideration of equality perspectives in Interaktio's activities and adherence to the equality plan in the board's activities. The equality officer familiarizes both the Interaktio's board and members with the equality plan and discusses with other board members the implementation of equality so that the entire board can commit to, implement, and develop their equality work. The equality officer organizes an annual equality survey and informs both the board and members of the survey results.

The equality officer may have their own position or be combined with another responsibility. Currently, the role of the equality officer is combined with the role of the Social Policy and Well-being Officer.

The equality officer can be contacted via email or through the harassment and equality form, which can be found on Interaktio's website. Through the form, individuals can report if they experience harassment or barriers to the implementation of equality in Interaktio's activities. The form is handled confidentially by the Interaktio equality officer. The form can be submitted anonymously or with contact information if one wishes to receive a response from the equality officer. The equality officer evaluates the best way to address the issue and aims to work closely with the individual concerned. They inform the rest of the board about the matter in the best way they see fit.

## Equality

Equality refers to the principle that all individuals are equal regardless of their gender, age, ethnic or national origin, citizenship, language, religion, beliefs, opinions, disability, health status, sexual orientation, or any other personal reason. In a just society, personal characteristics such as birth or skin color should not affect people's opportunities to access education, work, and various services - basic rights belong to everyone. According to the Finnish Constitution, the principle of equality refers to both the prohibition of discrimination and the equality of individuals before the law. The Equality Act, Criminal Code, Equality Act, and labor legislation further define the ban on discrimination in various areas of life.

## Racism and Anti-Racism

Racism can manifest as intentional and conscious acts between individuals and groups, or as unintentional behaviour based on prejudices and fears related to race. Racism can also manifest in structures such as discriminatory practices and processes in the workplace, education, and services, where organizations,

companies, institutions, and agencies directly or indirectly discriminate against certain groups of people. Racism is a system in which politics, institutional practices, culture, and other norms maintain racialized social power structures. It is part of the social, economic, and political systems in which everyone participates. The extent and severity of racism are best understood by individuals who experience racism. Many studies also indicate the prevalence of racism. Racism can manifest as hate speech, discrimination, violence, or seemingly neutral practices that effectively exclude certain individuals. Incidents of discrimination and hate crimes should not be seen as isolated cases, but the underlying structural discrimination and racism must be recognized.

Anti-racism is active and conscious action against all forms of racism. Anti-racist action is the work that reduces ethnic discrimination, the effects of discriminatory practices, and negative prejudices.

Increasing one's understanding of racism is at the centre of anti-racism. It is important to understand the breadth of the phenomenon to identify, acknowledge, and change things. The first step towards dismantling racism is therefore to increase awareness.

Anti-racism is integral to all Interaktio activities. For example, by participating in Interaktio's events, participants commit to following the principles of safer spaces, which also encompass anti-racist practices.

## Accessibility and Inclusivity

Accessibility involves considering the diversity of people in the design, implementation, and maintenance of the built environment. Accessible environments, together with accessible services, tools, and understandable information, enable equal participation.

Accessibility enables people to live in their chosen places and participate smoothly in activities such as work, hobbies, culture, and education. Accessibility is equality and part of sustainable development.

Accessibility is not just about physical accessibility. It also takes into account factors related to vision, hearing, understanding, and communication, among others.

Accessibility signifies safety and quality. It reflects a mindset, the right attitudes, and consideration of diversity. An accessible environment does not treat people differently based on their capabilities. Accessibility is simply about considering the diversity of people in designing and implementing the built environment.

## Harassment and Discrimination

Harassment is discrimination prohibited under the Equality Act. In the law, harassment is defined as behaviour that intentionally or effectively violates the dignity of a person or group of people. Harassment occurs when a

person, through their behaviour, creates a degrading, humiliating, threatening, hostile, or aggressive atmosphere toward another person or group of people based on a prohibited grounds of discrimination, such as sexual orientation, origin, or disability. Harassment can also target a group of people in addition to an individual. This means that harassment can be assessed even without an individual victim of harassment.

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly based on personal characteristics. Discrimination is prohibited regardless of whether it is based on the person themselves or another fact or assumption related to someone else. Therefore, prohibited discrimination may place a person in a less favorable position, for example, because they are related to a person belonging to an ethnic minority or a person with a disability. Prohibited discrimination includes, according to the Equality Act:

- Direct discrimination: for example, not providing a hotel room to same-sex customers due to their sexual orientation.
- Indirect discrimination: for example, an employer requiring a job applicant to have complete fluency in the Finnish language, even if it is not essential for the job.
- Harassment: mistreatment at the workplace, where an employee is treated in a humiliating, demeaning, or threatening manner.
- Instructions or orders to discriminate for example, a manager instructing store employees not to serve customers belonging to the Roma community. This is discrimination, even if the employee has not yet followed the instruction.
- Denying reasonable accommodations: for example, not providing accessible access to a movie theatre.

Interaktio's activities are free from harassment and discrimination. All of Interaktio's activities aim to adhere to the principles of safer spaces.

## Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to equality between genders (Act on Equality between Women and Men 609/1986). The Equality Act covers gender diversity. It encompasses equality regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or gendered characteristics of the body. The realization of gender equality means ensuring equal opportunities and equal treatment for everyone regardless of their assumed gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

## Gender and Sexuality

Gender is one characteristic in individuals. An individual may define their gender through biology or personal experience. However, everyone has their own way of experiencing their gender. Gender identity includes an individual's own view of themselves as a girl, boy, non-binary, or genderless person.

Sexuality is a fundamental characteristic of human beings that cannot be separated from other aspects of being human. Sexuality includes gender, sexual orientation, reproduction, and gender roles.

In Interaktio's activities, the goal is to follow the principles of safer spaces. These principles consider aspects such as gender and sexual diversity. At the core of these safer space principles is not to make assumptions about anyone's identity based on external factors. Interaktio actively works to improve the position and rights of gender and sexual minorities, for example, by organizing pride weeks.

Object, action and responsible- table

The objective, action and responsible persons table has been created partly on the basis of the 2023 equality survey of the interaction in accordance with the development proposals presented in it. Those objectives and measures

Object	Action	Responsible
The Board of Directors, officials and members are familiar with the results of the equality plan and the equality survey	At the beginning of the board term, the equality and non-discrimination plan MAN and the results of the equality survey will be reviewed	Social policy, equality and welfare officer
Members are familiar with the principles of a safer space	The principles of a safer space are communicated to the members on various social media channels and websites, in event descriptions and in the subject association space	Social Policy, Equality and Wellbeing Officer, Event Sector and Communications Officer
The organisation and the board are perceived as approachable and safe	Adherence to the principles of safer space in all operations, more open communication, board presentations	Board

It is easy to give feedback to the Board	Informing members about different feedback channels, Making it more visible that everyone is welcome to board meetings, taking feedback seriously and taking it into account when developing operations	Board
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Communication is accessible and equal	The aim is to centralise communications on certain platforms, to implement communication and documents also in English, to take into account different needs in all communications, for example. Taking care of contrasts and subtitling videos, the aim is to use clear language in communication	The communications officer and everyone in association dealing with communication
The subject association space and Interaction events are free of harassment, discrimination and racism	Informing and adhering to the principles of a safer space, addressing harassment, discrimination and racism immediately, providing clear information on how to act in harassment situations	Social Policy Equality and Welfare Officer and board
No one is discriminated against on the basis of opinions, party affiliation or participation in political life.	Communicating and adhering to safer space principles	Social Policy, Equality and Welfare Officer and Government

Community spirit in the association space	Members have the opportunity to influence the activities - communicate about it clearly and often, involve the members in planning the activities, try to fulfil the wishes of the members, a wide range of events aimed at ensuring the participation of as many members as possible, for example. joint discussion events for members, making board activities more visible	Board
Events are physically and socially accessible and accessible	More diverse organisational activities that better take into account the different needs of the membership, for example. neurodiverse, introverted, socially anxious, the aim is to organise events in accessible event spaces, develop the list of accessible event spaces, provide comprehensive information on accessibility issues related to events	Event sector and social policy, equality and wellbeing officer
There is no pressure to drink alcohol	Korostetaan toiminnassa alkoholin käytön vapaaehtoisuutta, järjestetään myös kokonaan alkoholittomia tapahtumia esim. juhlia, kulttuuritapahtumia	Events sector

Operations are financially achievable	The aim is to organise as many low-cost and free events as possible, not to make a profit	Events sector
Operations are constantly being developed	Feedback is collected in different feedback channels and taken into account in operational planning, feedback on events is collected, various discussion events are organised, for example. Cake and development ideas event, an equality survey is held every year	Board

## Tracking the Implementation of the Equality Plan

- Annual Equality Survey
- Continuous open feedback opportunity for all Interaktio members
- Monitoring of activities by the Equality Officer, implementing policies necessary

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Handling Harassment Cases

Appendix 2: Equality Survey 2023 Results

Appendix 3: Safer Space Principles

## References:

<https://yhdenvertaisuus.fi/olen-antirasisti-kampanja>

<https://syrjinta.fi/etusivu>

Hyvakysymys.fi, consulted on December 8, 2023

<https://www.hyvakysymys.fi>