

Cutting support for students will cost us in the future – resilience is built on faith in the future

Aalto University Student Union's Parliamentary Election Programme 2027

Young people's faith in the future has plummeted, and pessimism has reached an all-time high. Only 17 per cent of young people in Finland are optimistic about the future of the world ([Youth Barometer, 2025](#)). As Aalto students, we should be at the forefront of a renewing society, but amid today's crises, confidence in the future is wavering. The decline in faith in the future threatens Finland's ability to renew and grow. Competent, thriving students are the foundation of economic growth, innovation, and social stability. When students have the opportunity to focus on their studies and build the future, the entire nation benefits.

Now is the time to secure the prospects of current and future generations of students. This cannot be achieved without strengthening faith in the future, building a better society, and investing in sustainability. Capable, thriving students are Finland's best guarantee for the future. Without us, the future cannot be built.

Debt burden erodes faith in the future

The importance of education to Finland is repeatedly highlighted in political parties' election programmes and speeches. Yet education continues to be treated as the easiest sector in which to make adjustments. Decision-makers' faith in education—and their willingness to invest in it—is too easily shaken. It is therefore no surprise that students' faith in the future is also wavering.

In practice, the current support system forces students either to take out a student loan or to work alongside their studies, both of which undermine their ability to study. As a result, full-time studies are not a realistic option. 24% of students have worried that they may not have enough money for food, while 18% have cut back on medication because of financial constraints ([KOTT, 2024](#)). At the same time, the student loan stock has reached an all-time high, exceeding EUR 6.6 billion ([Bank of Finland, 2025](#)).

As housing is the largest monthly expense, especially in the metropolitan area, access to affordable student housing is a prerequisite for ensuring that all young people can aspire to higher education and apply to study, regardless of their background.

Measures

- All student financial benefits will be tied to the national pension index.
- The study grant and housing supplement will be increased towards the level of basic social security in order to reduce students' reliance on loans.
- The maximum housing supplement for students in the metropolitan area will be increased.
- Adequate authorisations for interest-subsidy loans to support the construction of student housing will be secured, and investment grants for student housing will be reintroduced.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's pilot project on transferring students to the general social security system will be implemented in a way that preserves the income-based nature of student financial aid.
- A comprehensive basic income pilot, including students, will be introduced, providing a monthly unconditional payment to Finnish citizens.
- The social security reform will introduce a single, individual housing allowance that is indexed and takes regional differences in housing costs into account.
- Graduates' transition into working life will be supported through incentives for employers to offer internships, thesis projects, and entry-level positions.

Accessible education is a prerequisite for the future

In an ever-changing world, education lays the foundation for competences that shape our society. Investments in education and culture foster faith in the future among students and society as a whole. Like previous generations, we too must have the opportunity to build a brighter future through accessible education.

High-quality, free higher education provides students with peace of mind and enables them to help build the society of the future. Raising the level of education creates the conditions for a sustainable economy and a resilient society, but this requires a stable outlook for public funding to safeguard quality and independence. Continuous learning offers flexible opportunities to develop competences in different life circumstances.

Measures

- A long-term funding plan extending beyond the electoral term will be drawn up to raise young people's level of education to 60% by 2040. The university index will be maintained in full.
- Degree programmes and the application process will be free of charge. Tuition fees for second degrees will not be introduced, and application fees for international students will be discontinued.
- The university funding model will be reformed to place less emphasis on performance, and a quality indicator will be introduced. Funding criteria will promote high-quality degrees rather than prioritising the number of degrees and the speed of graduation.
- Continuous learning will be developed separately from degree programmes. Fee-based continuous learning, tailored to learners' starting points, will be supported through a model similar to the adult education allowance.
- The open university will be developed as a platform for updating competence and as a pathway to degree studies. The open university will not award degrees.

Internationalisation strengthens the future of Finland

Finland must remain competitive in a rapidly changing world. We need international students, yet only around half of them remain in Finland permanently after graduation ([Finnish National Agency for Education, 2025](#)).

International students' greatest challenges relate to high tuition fees, financial security, and employment. Finland must seriously consider how to ensure the position of international students and their integration into Finnish society.

By investing in the position of international students and ensuring a smooth transition from studies into working life, we safeguard both individual opportunities and the future of the Finnish welfare state.

Measures

- Access to permanent residence permits and citizenship will be facilitated for immigrants who have graduated from a Finnish university.
- A voucher system will be introduced as an incentive for employers to support the recruitment of international students and the learning of national languages alongside employment.
- Students and recently graduated immigrants who have completed higher education in Finland will be given the opportunity to complement their studies in national languages free of charge.
- The inclusion of international students in a financial incentive scheme that supports their livelihood, completion of studies, and residence in Finland will be clarified.
- A comprehensive scholarship system, respecting the autonomy of higher education institutions, will be developed to mitigate the negative effects of increased tuition fees.

The ability to study supports work capacity

Students must be able to study in order to ensure smooth graduation, a higher level of education, and skills required in working life. In addition to unstable global politics, our generation of young adults and students faces pressures from a performance-driven society and a mental health crisis that undermine their ability to study and their faith in the future.

As many as 29% of higher education students experience significant psychological distress ([KOTT, 2024](#)). Our generation has to grow up learning to tolerate uncertainty in an increasingly crisis-ridden world, but concrete measures and investments in stronger support structures can secure a future with capable professionals.

Measures

- FSHS services will be expanded to include free contraception and the reintroduction of dermatology and gynaecology services.
- Options for improving the treatment of substance abuse and addiction by FSHS and wellbeing services counties will be reviewed.
- The therapy guarantee will be extended to cover all higher education students and individuals under the age of 29.
- FSHS services will be extended to all outgoing and incoming exchange students.
- Rehabilitative psychotherapy for higher education students and individuals under the age of 29 will be provided free of charge.
- The benefit system will be amended to identify and support students who are temporarily unable to study.

Planetary boundaries determine our future

A viable planet is the foundation of a secure democracy, a functioning economy, and resilience for future generations. The sustainability crisis undermines the wellbeing of young people and their faith in the future. According to the Youth Barometer ([2025](#)), 41% of young people experience uncertainty due to climate change.

The accelerating environmental crisis has been shown to increase global uncertainty and the risk of conflicts ([Sitra, 2026](#)). For this reason, Finland's environmental and climate policy must safeguard the right of young people and future generations to a viable environment and promote sustainable decision-making both in Finland and internationally.

Measures

- The achievement of the 2035 carbon neutrality target will be ensured.
- Natural resource policy will take into account the right of young people and future generations to a viable environment and will strengthen carbon sinks and biodiversity.
- The introduction of congestion charges in cities will be enabled in order to develop public transport.
- Kela's meal subsidy for plant-based meals in student restaurants will be increased.
- Development cooperation funding will be increased to a level closer to 0.7% of gross domestic product.

Joona Lipponen
Chair of the Board
+358 50 353 9325

Rico Martikainen
Manager of Advocacy and Communication
+358 50 436 3990