



ONE STEP AHEAD RY ACTION PLAN

2021



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Introduction

Written by Alexandra Biris (Chair)

The year of 2020 brought with it many firsts. In the middle of a global pandemic, the first international Master's programme at the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Helsinki was kicked off, the Master's in Changing Education (CE). It attracted students from all over the world, united by a common passion for education. Perhaps due to the unusual circumstances in which we started this brand-new programme, the idea to do something new was sparked. In late December 2020, the paperwork for establishing the first international student association, One Step Ahead ry (OSA) at the faculty was finalized, and now the first board of OSA is eagerly seeking to operate as one of the 250 associations under the Student Union of the University of Helsinki (HYY).

The purpose of OSA is to promote research-based innovation and development in the field of education. Acknowledging that OSA is a first-of-a-kind student association, we want to provide representation for the existing and incoming international students at the Faculty of Educational Sciences. In the same vein, OSA represents a student-driven effort to support the internationalization of the faculty, and UH as a whole. Ultimately, the objective is to create a space where people who are interested in making education better can come together and do just that.

In 2021, our priorities as a brand-new association will be to build a solid foundation for OSA. We want OSA to be sustainable and last to represent new generations of CE students and students at the faculty. As such, we are making sure that the first board lays the groundwork for new board members to take over by participating in training sessions, creating handbooks for different positions, and cooperating with existing student associations. We are also planning on continuing to work closely together with the staff of CE to ensure that OSA is an integral part of the programme. We will reach out to the second batch of CE students as they accept their study places at UH, and make sure that we are available to them during their move to Finland. Close cooperation with associations at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and international associations will also continue to be at the top of the priority list. We will organize remote events, both for educational and leisure purposes.



Working together with other associations in this endeavour will ensure that OSA becomes a part of the very fabric of the university.

Currently, our main project consists of the multimedia platform changingeducation.fi. There, we will continue to post articles and videos on research in the faculty and developments in education from around the world. We will also continue producing the Changing Education Podcast, which will feature interviews with education experts, policymakers, and other stakeholders. The aim is to make the act of changing education possible by providing and promoting accessible research.

Finally, we must acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has had and will continue to have serious consequences for society, transforming many of our day-to-day routines. OSA is determined to do what it can to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic and will follow the rules and restrictions set by the Finnish government, as well as those of the university. In 2021, OSA will adapt to the changing circumstances, with the aim of achieving our goals and objectives through the means of technology, unless allowed otherwise by the official guidelines. After all, OSA was established because of the creativity of its members during testing times and will continue to function because of the combined efforts of dedicated individuals.



Governance

Anita Mezza (Secretary)

The Secretary is responsible for OSA's documentation, including minutes, the List of Members, Event Registers and privacy statements.

Minutes are taken during every Board Meeting and General Meeting. The Secretary prepares an agenda in advance of each meeting, with points to be discussed. For General Meetings, the agenda is made available to attendees five business days prior to the meeting. Agendas and minutes follow a template and include items to be discussed. Following each meeting, minutes are archived in OSA's communication platform of choice, presently Microsoft Teams, and thereby made available for all members to view. Sensitive information may be omitted from minutes.

The List of Members and Event Registers are only accessible to Board members. OSA has a GDPR-compliant Privacy Statement available on its website which thoroughly describes the data protection principles adopted by OSA.



Finance

Written by Natalia Stalchenko (Treasurer)

In the spring of 2021, OSA will become an official non-profit organization, registered by the Finnish Patent and Registration Office. The treasurer is responsible for the accounting, creating the budget plan, and reporting the financial situation. A bank account for OSA will be opened as soon as the organization receives the necessary registration approval documents. The treasurer and the chair will be responsible for the bank account. The accounting will be managed using Tilitin-authorized accounting software.

As a new organization, OSA aims to cover the initial expenses by collecting membership fees, organizing fundraiser events, and selling merchandise. Every year, starting 2021, the treasurer creates a budget plan, approved at the Autumn General Meeting, and presents the financial report, approved at the Spring General Meeting.

In addition, the treasurer will create the approximate budget before every event and subsequently calculate of the actual cost and earnings after the event. The treasurer will update other board members about the incomes and expenses, aiming not to exceed the estimated budget plan. All the receipts for every purchase for OSA are handed over to the treasurer, who then scans them, and stores them in a digital format. The money will be refunded either in cash or via bank transfer once the treasurer has received the receipt.

Any funds that may be left over after the term of office of the 2021 board will constitute operating funds for the association.



Communication

Written by Anita Mezza (Secretary) and Inka Ahonen (Social Media Manager)

OSA holds several communication channels that will be used to inform members and followers about operations and events. These are:

- The OSA website contains information about OSA, activities and events, and contains links to relevant social media channels and documentation. [Link to OSA's website](#)
- The OSA mailing list will be set up to send a monthly newsletter to subscribers, with information about activities and events.
- The OSA ry Facebook page is used to share events and updates. [Link to OSA's Facebook](#)
- The osa_ry Instagram account is also used to promote events and updates for members and followers. [Link to OSA's Instagram](#)
- Social media accounts for specific activities:
The Changing Education multimedia platform has its own channels for updates specific to this activity:
Twitter: [@ChangingEducat2](#)
Instagram: [changingeducation.fi](#)
For matters pertaining the Changing Education multimedia platform, the team can be contacted at [changingeducation1blog\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:changingeducation1blog@gmail.com)
- Members and the public can contact the organization at [osarysome\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:osarysome@gmail.com), though we aim to acquire an [@helsinki.fi](#) account as soon as possible.



Student Advocacy

Written by Alexandra Biris (Chair)

Student advocacy will be a very important part of OSA operations, due to both the pandemic and the international nature of the master programme we support. This year, the Chair (Alexandra Biris) is the Board member for student advocacy.

We want OSA to help support a sense of belonging among its members, and students at the CE programme and other degree programmes, despite the restrictions on socializing in person. As such, one crucial aim in 2021 is to have regular communication with teaching staff at CE to make sure that the projects of OSA are in line with the overall programme. For example, we will continue to ask teachers responsible for mandatory CE courses to integrate the Changing Education multimedia platform into their courses, making it possible for students to opt for writing an article for the blog or producing a video as part of their course work. OSA will also participate in the course *Studia Paedagogica*, which allows students to apply for credits for their work on the multimedia platform and in OSA. We want this work to be mutually beneficial, so creating avenues for students to be rewarded for their contributions is essential.

OSA will also work in close cooperation with the student representatives and student ambassadors to streamline events aimed at existing and incoming CE students, such as student panels to provide feedback on the programme, the recurring, remote, and informal meet and greets, and “survival guides” for new international students about living and studying in Finland.

We are aiming to make OSA an important actor in facilitating students’ experiences at the university. As such, we will create channels through which OSA members as well as non-members can easily reach out to OSA for help, or to ask questions, give suggestions, or recommendations.



Events

Written by Zoi Vasileiou (Event Manager)

OSA aims to promote internationalization and research-based education innovation and development through its events. OSA is committed to hosting inclusive and welcoming events for members and non-members, focusing on the international students at the University of Helsinki. We aim to organize a wide selection of events to fit the multiple interests of our members. Overall, we aim to organize both educational, leisure, and practical events, such as: online meet and greets, meet the expert events where we invite companies from the field of education specialized in innovations and education export, fundraiser events, welcome parties, info-sessions on practicalities related to living and studying in Finland etc. This year, we will be focusing on approaching new CE students, assisting them with their transition into the Finnish higher education system and being flexible to meet and listen to their needs.

Cooperation is essential for us and a core value of OSA. We aim to cooperate with other organizations under the CONDUS umbrella to reach out to more students with our events. Taking into consideration the latest guidelines regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, our organization will be hosting the events with the main principle of safeguarding the health and safety of our members. Due to the current restrictions, we will host our events online and ensure that we follow the official health protocols at all times. Importantly, every event will have a designated safety person who has the responsibility to ensure that the event is a safe space. The designated safety person will be the contact person for participants to reach out to with concerns or in the case of emergencies. The safety person and their contact details will be announced to all participants prior to the event.

YEARLY OVERVIEW OF EVENTS

One Step Ahead ry 2021-2022

JAN	FEB	MAR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring general meeting (end of month) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet (Early) Online movie night (Mid) Online cooking class (End)
APR	MAY	JUN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet (Early) Online stand-up comedy (Mid) Online Board game night (End) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online Vappu party (1st) Monthly online meet and greet (Mid) Online fundraiser (End) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet
JUL	AUG	SEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet (Early) Survival guide event with CISSI 1ST year CE Anniversary + recycled decoration workshop Helsinki sightseeing (End) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet (Early) Mushroom picking (Mid) Changing Education in Practice workshop (End)
OCT	NOV	DEC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet (Early) Online conference - Changing Education with Conodus (Mid) LGBTQ+ event with Qaareva 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet (Early) International Food Evening (Mid) Online team movie night (End) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly online meet and greet (Early) Pikkujoulut (Mid)

Environment

Written by Mihaela Nyysönen (Vice-chair)

Planning and implementing environmentally friendly operations is one of OSA's main goals this year. This year, the Vice-chair (Mihaela Nyysönen) is the Board member for environmental issues.

By being in line with HYY's guidelines for environmental sustainability and by following the agendas of major environmental programmes (e.g. Carbon Free Helsinki 2035, Paris Climate agreement) we will ensure that our operational plan is environmentally friendly to the smallest detail. We believe the responsibility of environmentally friendly operations is shared within our community, but to ensure a clear framework, we assign the role of the environmental officer to a member of the board every year. Their main responsibility will be to assist and support the members of our community with matters related to environmental awareness and practices.

OSA's plan for environmentally friendly operations is structured on four main areas: purchasing, premises, events, and food. Further on we will present the actions that will be taken in these areas:

Purchasing:

- When possible, we will purchase items from the flea markets and recycling centres.
- When possible, we will take into account the possibility of acquiring items with another association, so they can be shared.
- Purchasing items that have been produced according to international ecological and welfare guidelines (Fairtrade, less plastic, organic, small local producers).

Premises:

- On both outdoor and indoor premises, garbage will be recycled by clearly labelling the bins.
- Sorting instructions will be available.
- Posters indicating "recycling point" will be visible.

Events

- All the events, indoor and outdoor will have a marked recycling point.
- If possible reusable plates, glasses, and cutlery will be used. If not available, items made of paper and wood will be used.
- Make decorations from recycled materials. We will then store them appropriately, so they can be reused for future events.
- The premises of the events will be cleaned, and the garbage recycled.
- Take part in Earth hour events.
- Organize a “Recycle, Reuse, Reduce”-themed meet and greet, followed by a social media campaign and information related to this topic on the OSA webpage.

Food:

- We will avoid waste of food by preparing food according to the estimated number of participants.
- Vegetarian and vegan options of food will predominate our selection of food at the events.

OSA is planning to build a community that shares the same environmental values and works towards supporting the future of our planet. Every small step taken individually is a big step for our humankind.



Equality

Written by Anita Mezza (Secretary) and Inka Ahonen (Social Media Manager)

OSA is committed to respecting HYY's Equality Plan 2021-2023. This year, the Secretary (Anita Mezza) is the Board member for equality issues.

Any student at the University of Helsinki is welcome to become a member of OSA, and all members are welcome to run for a position in the Board. We are committed to the following objectives to ensure that we operate in a way that eradicates discrimination:

- Communicate with members about HYY's Equality Plan 2021-2023 (already available in the OSA website), including information about Student Union harassment contact persons and instructions on how to act in case of harassment.
- Follow HYY safety principles and principles of safer space. This includes organizing events in an accessible manner, whether remotely, in person or hybrid.
- Develop OSA principles of safer space and display them on our website and communication channels.
- Ensure that membership and events are economically accessible to students.
- Operate in English but be able to respond to any communication in English, Finnish or Swedish.
- For in-person events, ensure that food options cater to different diets (if necessary, by asking participants to sign up indicating dietary restrictions). When beverages are offered during events, ensure that a non-alcoholic option other than water is available.
- Ensure that members are encouraged to run for Board member positions regardless of their background or identity.
- Foster an atmosphere where everybody's beliefs and opinions are respected.



- Maintain and update relevant data protection statements, with particular emphasis on ensuring that members are aware of their rights.
- Cooperate with HYY continuously to promote equality.
- Reflect on inequalities in our own structures focusing on areas for improvement.
- Acknowledge gender diversity and ensure that representatives of different genders have equal opportunities in all activities.
- Acknowledge age and family structure diversity to accommodate students who are in different life situations in all activities.
- Use our activities and platforms to promote equality in our area of expertise (education), collaborating with other organizations that prioritise these themes.



Co-operation

Written by Alexandra Biris (Chair)

As a new association, we will make reaching out to existing associations and establishing ties with them a priority in 2021. Education and its improvement are in everybody's interest. Therefore, we are open to cooperating with associations both within and outside of the Faculty of Educational Sciences.

More specifically, we will continue our cooperation with Conduc. We aim to apply to operate under Conduc in 2021. In terms of specific events, we are currently planning on co-hosting an educational conference together with Conduc and other student associations at the faculty. Smaller events related to education, such as panel discussions with experts in the field, seminars, workshops, and student debates are also in the planning phase.

Because of our aims to facilitate the smooth transition of international students into the Finnish society and higher education system, we are planning on cooperating with other international student associations, such as CISSI. Specifically, we are planning on conducting workshops to help students with practical concerns, such as opening a bank account, purchasing a phone plan, and navigating the Finnish Student Health Services (FSHS) and the Social Insurance Institution (KELA). Such information and materials would be valuable resources not only for international CE students, but international students at other faculties as well, making cooperation mutually beneficial.

OSA has also been in touch with other associations which can provide OSA with a new and needed perspective on education, such as Qaareva. We have reached out to Qaareva and would like to organize an event with the theme of promoting the rights of LGBTQ+ people in education.

Finally, as much as the pandemic will allow, OSA will be happy to participate in large events organized for new students at the university, such as the Freshman Adventure and Opening Carnival in the beginning of the 2021/22 academic year.