

# **CENTRIA'S ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

## **2023-2024**



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# 1. Accessible Centria

The accessibility plan of Centria University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter Centria) outlines the objectives of accessibility work and concrete development measures for 2023–2024. Ensuring accessibility is considered important at Centria. This ensures the involvement of all stakeholders at Centria, both students and staff, as well as other stakeholders. The accessibility plan complements [Centria's equality and non-discrimination plan](#), providing concrete measures to strengthen inclusion.

Developing accessibility at Centria is linked to sustainable development and strengthens socially sustainable activities. Accessibility is also seen as part of quality, which means that the perspective of accessibility is included in the continuous development of activities. More than half of Centria's students are multi-modal students and about a quarter are international students. The national objective is to triple the number of international students. Continuous learning also increases the number of multi-modal students. Both goals also pose new challenges to accessibility.

## 1.1. Accessibility plan work

Centria's accessibility plan work is coordinated by the accessibility working group. Staff representatives from different profit areas and a student representative worked on the accessibility plan. Anu Kamau, Hanna-Riina Aho, Leena Saari, Päivi Ruohoniemi, Riikka Pajukangas and Risto Puskala participated in the group's work. In the background work of the accessibility plan, the group utilised Tapio Kosunen's accessibility plan for higher education, [Kohti saavutettavampaa korkeakoulutusta ja korkeakoulua](#) (Kosunen, T. 2021) (in Finnish). An important tool for the accessibility plan work was [the Accessibility criteria of the Oho! Project](#) that was used to assess the current state of Centria's accessibility.

Centria staff, students and management were extensively involved in the accessibility plan work. An accessibility survey was sent to both staff and students to provide information on the current state to identify development targets. Discussions on the development of accessibility were held with Centria's management. Accessibility surveys and management interviews utilised [a survey implemented in the Oho! project](#) (in Finnish), which was modified to suit the purpose (Lehto, R., Huhta, A., Huuhka, E. 2019.)

## 1.2. Developing accessibility at Centria

Centria's accessibility plan includes development measures for 2023–2024. Responsibility lies with all profit areas, teams and all Centria employees in their own work in areas where development targets and development measures have been identified. More detailed implementation plans are drawn up for the measures recorded in the plan. The development activities of the plan are monitored in an accessibility working group convened by the Quality Manager. The establishment of the group and the development of its activities are also mentioned as a development target in the accessibility plan.

The development of accessibility is monitored by conducting annual surveys for staff and students. The surveys are based on surveys carried out in connection with the 2022 accessibility plan work. In addition to the information obtained from the surveys, the impact of the development measures will be assessed using Oho! project's accessibility criteria (insufficient, good and excellent). In addition to the development targets planned here, the activities will be continuously improved and developed according to the identified needs.

If you notice any deficiencies or mistakes in this accessibility plan, please, contact the Quality Manager.

## 1.3. Development targets and measures

The development target for all Centria employees is increasing accessibility competence, which will be improved in 2023–2024 to ensure accessibility. There is an online accessibility training for staff in Centria's itslearning environment, which provides information on accessibility and instructions for accessible materials.

<b>Development target</b>	<b>Development measure</b>
Staff accessibility competence	Centria staff familiarise themselves with the implementation of accessibility through the Accessibility MOOC (in Finnish), which is found in itslearning.
Accessibility as part of orientation	Accessibility MOOC in itslearning is added as part of orientation
Accessibility instructions for staff easily accessible	Accessibility information and practical instructions as part of the Centria intranet instructions
Support for accessibility competence	Ensuring that support for accessibility competence is available for staff
Development of accessibility	Establish the activities of the accessibility working group, which will

## **2. Accessibility in student admissions and the organisation of teaching**

### **2.1. Accessibility in student admissions**

The diversity of applicants is considered in the different stages of the Centria student admission process. The student's best interest is considered in the activities. The main responsibility for Centria's student admission process rests with the Admissions Services, which advises and assists students at different stages of the application and admission process. The student can find information on [accessible student admissions](#) on the Centria website. The page contains contact information for the Admissions Services, where the student can receive individual guidance.

Centria's degree programmes are mainly applied for through the joint application process, and Centria follows the individual arrangements and process of the bachelor's degree programme described on the [ammattikorkeakouluun.fi](#) page. In addition, separate applications are organised for the education, and it is also possible to apply for the education through path and route studies.

### **2.2. Accessibility of teaching**

Centria offers students flexible ways to study in the daytime and in multi-modal learning implementations. The education will be developed in the coming years towards HyFlex implementation. HyFlex means flexible opportunities to study by participating in contact teaching or online teaching simultaneously or at different times. HyFlex calls for the development of pedagogy and accessibility in all implementation methods.

At the beginning of the studies, the student participates in the orientation week, which provides orientation for higher education studies. The student receives support from their own teacher tutor at the beginning of their studies and during their studies. The teacher tutor also guides the student in drawing up a personal study plan (PSP). Student counsellors and special needs teachers also provide guidance in the planning and individual implementation of the studies. The

student can participate in a reading screen to identify possible reading difficulties and support needs.

During the courses, assessment is based on competence-based learning outcomes. Ensuring versatile assessment methods is important in all courses so that the student receives feedback on their competence and learning.

### 2.3. Digital accessibility in teaching

Centria uses the itslearning learning environment that is utilised in study units in almost all implementation methods. With regard to study units, accessibility must be ensured in the online environment and in all learning materials, considering the diversity and individual needs of students.

The student plans their studies and registers for study units through the Peppi system. Accessibility must be considered when developing the system.

DigiStart online training has been created to support the use of digital systems used in studies. In addition to DigiStart, it must be ensured that the student has access to information and support on the accessible use of teaching environments.

### 2.4. Development targets and measures

Development target	Development measure
The process of individual arrangements is visible on the centria.fi page	Ensure that the instructions for individual arrangements are clear and available to the student on the centria.fi website.
Individual arrangements	Implementation of the revised guidance plan and specifying instructions for teachers to enable individual arrangements
Accessible communication in all application formats and applicant groups	Accessible communication will be developed in separate applications and fee-based training. Ensuring accessible communication, taking foreign students into account.
Accessible teaching materials	Clear instructions for producing accessible teaching materials and ready accessible material templates for implementation
Accessible e-learning environment	Clear instructions will be made on how to implement the Centria study unit in the itslearning learning environment,

	which ensures the accessibility of online implementation for students. Provide a clear point of contact to advise the student on accessibility. All online environments have a feedback channel on accessibility.
Accessibility of online environments	Accessibility is considered as a viewpoint in the development of online teaching environments
Support for study planning	Ensuring uniform practices regarding the support provided by the teacher tutor
Accessibility in practical training	Developing guidelines for accessible practical training and working life co-operation, taking into account individuality and guidance

### 3. Study and career guidance

#### 3.1. Guidance and support services

Centria offers students extensive support and guidance services. Centria has a guidance plan that serves as a tool for the participants in student guidance. The student receives support and guidance from the teacher tutor for planning their studies. The support provided by teacher tutors will be developed in a uniform manner, and their activities will be supported, for example, with the help of the teacher tutor checklist, which also describes Centria's other forms of support. Support is also provided by study counsellors, special needs teachers, study psychologists and work and career counsellors. The integration of international students is supported by international integration services.

The different guidance and support services are described on the [Centria's website in the student's guide](#). Communication and access to information on different guidance and support services and individual arrangements must be further developed so that information about the services reaches all students. International integration services

The Centria Library considers the accessibility of services. Students are offered guidance in the use of the library's services and the use of Celia's audio book services is made possible.

### 3.2. Student wellbeing

Centria offers services to support student wellbeing. Information on wellbeing services is available from, for example, [Centria's website](#).

### 3.3. Development targets and measures

Development target	Development measure
Accessibility competence of teachers and teacher tutors	Further development of the orientation of teacher tutors to achieve accessibility and ensuring that all teachers are informed of the services
Students' awareness of the available guidance, support and services that support wellbeing	Ensuring that the student receives information on the available services in an accessible manner in different communication channels
Enabling the student to utilise the materials of the orientation week later	Save support material related to completing studies and study skills in itslearning for later use
Taking the diversity of students into account in the activities of the student association	Encouraging student associations to participate in experiments that involve different student groups in the activities

## 4. Physical accessibility

Centria has three campuses: Kokkola, Ylivieska and Pietarsaari. In addition, teaching is organised at the Central Ostrobothnia Conservatory. A major renovation has been carried out on the Kokkola campus property and the accessibility of the facilities has been developed. In autumn 2022, induction loops and a voice transmission system were installed on the campus. The accessibility of other campuses should be further developed, and the accessibility of facilities considered from the perspective of different users.

### 4.1. Development targets and measures

Development target	Development measure
Ensuring accessibility in all premises	Accessibility and physical accessibility must be considered in all renovations of the premises.

	Regular annual accessibility walks in different Centria facilities together with risk assessments.
Ensuring accessibility in the safety plan	Accessibility is considered in the exit exercises and the observations are used for development
Accessible campus maps	Campus maps must be implemented in an accessible manner and information on the accessibility of premises must be included in the maps

## 5. Accessibility of communications

### 5.1. Communication as an enabler of inclusion

Centria uses Finnish and English. Accessibility of communication in both languages is important and ensures equal access to information and participation in Centria's activities. All language groups must be considered in internal and external communications and in the activities of the teams.

Centria has several different communication channels. In order to ensure the accessibility of communications and to reach the right target groups, it is important that the communication channels are known, and their purpose has been determined. In addition to the communications team, all Centria employees are responsible for communications, which is why accessible communications instructions must be available to everyone. Accessible communication is essential from the perspective of quality, and communication is developed as part of Centria's quality work.

### 5.2. Digital communication

The content of Centria's external website, internal intranet and student communication channels should be made more accessible. Different user groups and the use of aids must be considered in the development of online content.

### 5.3. Development targets and measures

Development target	Development measure
Access to information and opportunities to participate regardless of language	Equal accessibility must be considered in communications and instructions not only in Finnish but also in English.

	The teams agree on working practices that also enable the participation of English speakers in all situations.
Clear communication channels	Regarding communication channels, it must be determined which channels are used for different purposes and ensure that the channels are known to the target groups
Website accessibility	The accessibility of external website and the internal intranet should be further developed.
Competence in producing accessible communications	Training and instructions for Centria employees to ensure accessible communication
Accessibility of events	Accessibility and physical accessibility must be considered in the organisation, instructions, signs and implementation of events.

## 6. Preventing and eliminating harassment and discrimination

Centria's equality and non-discrimination plan outlines that Centria is an equal community that does not accept inappropriate treatment. Each Centria employee is responsible for ensuring that each member of the community can study and work without experienced harassment and discrimination. The equality and non-discrimination plan outlines actions in cases of harassment and discrimination. The instructions for intervening in cases of harassment or discrimination must be specified.

### 6.1. Development targets and measures

Development target	Development measure
Clear operating process and instructions for cases of discrimination and harassment	In spring 2023, an annex to the equality and non-discrimination plan will be drawn up to clarify the operational process, guidelines, and responsibilities in cases of harassment and discrimination.