

## **Research study – KEKKO: Kestävyyssosaamista korkeakouluista käytäntöön (“Sustainability competences from higher education to practise”)**

You are invited to participate in a research study that explores the sustainability views of higher education students, teaching staff and representatives of partner companies and the changes in these views during degree studies. We received your contact information from the higher education programme where you study or teach or with which your employer collaborates.

After reading this information sheet, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. You will be separately requested to provide consent for participating in the study.

### **Purpose of the research**

This study explores how the sustainability views of students from different backgrounds develop through social interaction with teachers and partner companies during degree studies.

### **Description of the process**

The study starts with data collection. Depending on your study programme and your role within it, we will invite you to participate in 1-8 interviews about your sustainability views and to reply to 1-2 questionnaires about your sustainability views and 1-16 questionnaires about your social networks. An interview session will last around one hour, while replying to a single questionnaire will take around 15 minutes. Further, we ask for our permission for using as research data the motivation letter and preliminary exercise you may have written as part of your study programme. The data collection will take place during years 2026-2030. We will analyse the data both right after the collection and at maximum two years after all the data has been collected.

We will analyse the study data with methods of qualitative content analysis, network science, narrative studies and statistical analysis. We will detect from the data concepts and narratives that the study participants use to describe their relation to the field of their study programme. The detected sustainability views will be compared to the information about the participants' background and their social networks. This way, we will investigate how participants' background and social interactions explain the emergence of sustainability views.

Participants will not receive financial compensation.

### **Procedures for collecting research data**

The study participants will reply to the questionnaires electronically. The interviews will be organized either face-to-face or over a video connection and recorded.

While conducting the questionnaires and interviews, we will collect also background information (e.g. age, gender, the highest earlier degree and its major, nationality, first language) about the participants. Besides, we will collect the participants' names that we will use to connect the different questionnaire responses and interviews of the same participant. After data collection, we will pseudonymise all data by replacing participants' names by participant codes. More details about the personal information collected in this study and its processing can be found in the attached privacy notice.

### **Potential risks and benefits of participation**

Participating in the study interviews may offer you a possibility to reflect and evaluate your own sustainability view and changes in it. You will not receive any other direct benefit from participating in the study.

The results of this study will help us to understand which factors affect the changes of sustainability views during degree studies. This information can later be used to develop sustainability education.

The procedures and methods used during this study do not involve health risks, social risks, financial risks and risks relating to personal data breaches. If you participate in this study as a student, the information you give will not affect the progress or evaluation of your studies.

### **Data confidentiality, processing and storage**

All personal data collected during the study will be processed in compliance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the data protection laws of Finland. The data will be pseudonymised right after collection, and only the principal investigator (Onerva Korhonen) will have access to the combinations of names and participant codes. The personal information will be processed only by the members of the research group (Onerva Korhonen, Milja Heikkinen, Elise Kraatila, Anna-Stina Kuula and Markus Laukkanen), and it will not be shared with anybody outside of the research group. Your data will not be transferred outside of the EU-EEA area. All personal information collected in this study will be stored password protected, and special category data will be also encrypted. Your personal data will be protected using appropriate technical and organisational measures. We will protect your data through technical measures, including antivirus software, firewalls and regular software updates. Because of these safety measures, processing of the personal information does not cause risks to the participants. More information on the processing and protection of your personal information is available in the attached privacy notice.

## Protecting the privacy of participants in research papers/publications

The study results will be published in relevant scientific journals. When it comes to personal information, we will publish only aggregated group-level results (e.g. average age, distribution of nationalities) that will not enable identifying single participants. We will not connect any results to the personal information of single participants,

The names and original interview recordings will be retained by Tampere University until 30.6.2032 and other research data until 30.6.2042 at the latest. After the retention period, the personal information will be securely destroyed, while the anonymised motivation letters, questionnaire replies and interview transcriptions will be archived, with the permission of the participants, to the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (<https://www.fsd.tuni.fi/en>), where they will be openly available for the academic community. Before archiving the data, we will remove from it all names and personal information that could enable identifying the participants.

## Funding sources

There are no specific funding sources for this study.

## Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. This will mean that you will no longer participate in questionnaires or interviews. Further, you can at any time discontinue your participation temporarily, for example for having a break during a study interview. If you are a student in one of the studied study programmes, refusal to participate or discontinuing participation at any time will not affect the progress or evaluation of your studies.

You can withdraw or discontinue your participation by contacting the principal investigator (Onerva Korhonen, [onerva.korhonen@tuni.fi](mailto:onerva.korhonen@tuni.fi), +358 50 911 3044).

In this study, the lawful basis for processing your personal information is a task carried out in the public interest, in particular scientific research. Therefore, your data may be used in the study even after you have withdrawn your participation. However, you have the right to request restricting the processing of your information or object to the processing of your information. You can find more information on these rights, as well as your other rights as a study participants, in the attached privacy notice and on the web page of the Office of the data protection ombudsman (<https://tietosuoja.fi/en/rights-of-the-data-subject>).

**Use of data for non-research/later research purposes**

The data collected in this study will not be used for purposes other than this study. After the study, some of the data will be offered to be archived permanently in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive without any personal information. The Finnish Social Science Data Archive will grant access to this data for all users. This anonymised data may be transferred also outside of the EU-EEA area.

**Researchers' contact details**

Onerva Korhonen

Data Science Research Centre/Tampere Institute for Advanced Study

+358 50 911 3044, onerva.korhonen@tuni.fi

## Privacy Notice – Scientific Research

This privacy notice describes how we process your personal data in compliance with data protection legislation. In data protection legislation, the term “data subject” refers to the person whose personal data are processed. In this privacy notice, we refer to data subject as “you” and controller as “we”.

This privacy notice may be updated or edited if necessary. You will be notified of any significant changes as mandated by data protection legislation.

This privacy notice came into force on 17.6.2026.

### 1. Controller

The controller of the research project is multiple organisations:

Tampere University Foundation sr. (Tampere University)

Business ID: 2844561-8

Kalevantie 4, FI-33100 Tampere, Finland

and

University of Helsinki

Business ID: 0313471-7

B.O. Box 3 (Fabianinkatu 33), 00014 University of Helsinki

The research project will be conducted as a collaborative project among controllers, with multiple partners jointly determining the purpose and means of processing personal data.

The contact person for questions about data processing is Onerva Korhonen, Senior Research Fellow, who can be reached at [onerva.korhonen@tuni.fi](mailto:onerva.korhonen@tuni.fi), +358 50 911 3044. To call Tampere University's switchboard, dial +358 (0) 294 52 11.

If you have general questions about data protection at Tampere University, please email our Data Protection Officer at [dpo@tuni.fi](mailto:dpo@tuni.fi).

### 2. Scope and purpose of data processing

Name of the research project: KEKKO: Kestävyyssosaamista korkeakouluista käytäntöön (“Sustainability competences from higher education to practise”).

This is a follow-up research project that will last until 30.6.2030. The data collection phase will last from two to four years, depending on the duration of each participant's studies, and end on 30.6.2030 at the latest. The data will be processed and results prepared for publication both during the data collection phase and for two years after data collection.

We will process your personal data as part of a research project. The purpose of processing your personal data is to conduct the research project specified above.

The research project explores how the sustainability views of students from different backgrounds develop through social interaction with teachers and partner companies during degree studies. The data of the research project will be collected through questionnaires and interviews. Besides, the data contains the motivation letters written by the students when applying for the study programmes and preliminary assignments written in the beginning of the study programmes if the students give their permission for using these texts for the research project. During this research project, personal data will be processed with methods of qualitative content analysis, network science and narrative studies. Concepts and narratives used to describe sustainability will be identified from questionnaire and interview material. The identified sustainability views will be compared with background information and information about social networks to investigate how participants' background and their social interactions explain the development of sustainability views.

The principal investigator (lead researcher) is responsible for overseeing the research project. The research group may also be assigned to serve as the principal investigator, with its members participating in conducting the research project.

The research findings, reported in aggregate form so that individual research participants cannot be identified, are intended to be published in relevant scientific journals.

### 3. Lawful basis for processing personal data

The lawful basis for processing your personal data is:

- ☐ consent (of the data subject)
- ☐ controller's legal obligation
- ☐ protection of vital interests
- ☒ a task carried out in the public interest or the exercise of official authority
  - ☒ scientific or historical research or compilation of statistics
  - ☐ archiving of research and cultural heritage material
- ☐ legitimate interests of the controller or a third party

In case special categories of personal data (such as health data or criminal offence data) will be processed, the lawful basis for processing is:

- ☐ explicit consent (of the data subject)
- ☐ protecting vital interests when the data subject is physically or legally incapable of giving consent.
- ☐ establishing, exercising or defending legal claims
- ☒ scientific or historical research in the public interest or conduct of statistics
- ☐ public interest in the area of public health based on national legislation<sup>1</sup>
- ☐ other lawful basis that complies with data protection legislation and is specified in national legislation:

For medical research, Section 6, Paragraph 2 of the Finnish Data Protection Act (1050/2018) will apply.

#### 4. Sources and types of personal data

Depending on the circumstances, we may collect personal data either directly from you or from other sources. We will collect data from:

- ☒ you as the data subject
- ☒ the following regular data sources: lists of the names of students and teaching staff of the investigated study programmes, received from the organizers of the study programmes (University of Helsinki, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences)

We will process the following types of personal data:

☒ General personal data:

all participants: name, email address, age, gender, highest degree and its major, nationality, first language; questionnaire material on social networks

teaching staff, in addition: position in the higher education institution and related major(s), length of work experience

representatives of partner companies, in addition: place of work, its field of business and position there, length of work experience

☒ Special category data (sensitive personal data): Special category data will be processed only if the participants themselves bring such data up during the interviews. This data will be processed with special care and it will be never published.

☐ Technical data:

☐ Other data:

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to processing that is conducted to ensure the reliability of research, the safety of research participants, or compliance with statutory notification, reporting or archiving obligations.

We will process data on the following categories of data subjects:

☐ employees x students x research participants ☐ research staff ☐ others, please specify:

## 5. Transfer and disclosure of personal data

Under certain circumstances, your personal data may be transferred to a third country or an international organisation located outside the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA). During such transfers, personal data will be appropriately protected by employing suitable transfer mechanisms (such as standard contractual clauses) and technical measures.

x Your personal data will not be transferred outside the EU/EEA.

☐ Your personal data will be transferred outside the EU/EEA as follows:

x Your personal data will not be regularly disclosed to other controllers.

☐ Your personal data may be disclosed to other controllers under data protection legislation as follows:

In some cases, your personal data may be processed by data processors with whom we have signed appropriate data processing agreements. Here, such data processors are the members of the research group that are not employed by the controllers (see section 1).

## 6. Protecting personal data

Your personal data will be protected using appropriate technical and organisational measures. We will protect your data through technical measures, including antivirus software, firewalls and regular software updates. Users who can access personal data are required to log in with a username and password or, in some cases, with multi-factor authentication.

We will also protect your data through organisational measures. Our staff are obligated to maintain confidentiality, and access to data is restricted. If necessary, we will implement additional safeguards to protect data, such as separate storage locations.

Any physical documents will be safeguarded by storing them in locked facilities.

Material will be:

x collected with direct identifiers

☐ collected without direct identifiers

x pseudonymised after collection

☐ stored with personally identifiable information, which is necessary for the following reasons:

During this research project, your data will also be protected through the following measures: The principal investigator will pseudonymise the data, and other members of the research group

will not have access to the name information during the analysis phase. Files that contain special category data will be stored as encrypted.

## 7. Retention period for personal data

We will retain your personal data for only as long as necessary, as determined on a case-by-case basis. The retention period also depends on the requirements set out in data protection legislation. We will adhere to our Data Management Plan and all applicable legislation when determining the retention period of personal data.

Your personal data will be retained as follows: All personal data will be stored until 30.6.2032, by when all results of the project will be verified and published. After this, the name data and interview recordings will be destroyed, while background information will be stored for 10 years for potential verification purposes and pseudonymised questionnaire material and interview transcriptions will be archived in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (<https://www.fsd.tuni.fi/en/>) without personally identifiable information.

After the research project has been completed, the research records containing personal data will be:

- ☐ destroyed in their entirety
- ☒ anonymised and archived without personally identifiable information.
- ☐ archived with personally identifiable information.

## 8. Profiling and automated decision-making

We will not use your personal data for profiling or automated decision-making.

## 9. Data subjects' rights and how to exercise them

Data protection legislation affords certain rights to data subjects, depending on the lawful basis for processing their personal data. Under certain circumstances, your rights may be restricted, for example, due to our legal obligations or if personal data are processed for scientific research, statistical or archiving purposes. If your rights have been restricted, we will implement appropriate and necessary technical and organisational measures to protect your privacy. As a data subject, you have the following rights which you can exercise by sending us a request.

### Right of access

You have the right to request confirmation of whether we hold your personal data and to receive a copy of the data we hold.

### Right to rectification

You have the right to request that any incorrect or incomplete personal data we hold about be revised or supplemented. You can also request to have any unnecessary personal data erased from our records.

#### Right to restrict processing

You may have the right to restrict the processing of your personal data in certain cases defined by law. For example, this right may apply if you believe the personal data we hold about you is incorrect or that your data are being processed in violation of data protection legislation, or if you have opposed the processing of your data.

#### Right to object

In certain circumstances, you have the right to object to the processing of personal data on grounds relating to your particular situation.

#### Right not to be subject to automated decision-making

You have the right not to be subject to decisions based solely on automated processing (such as profiling) that produce legal effects concerning you or otherwise similarly and significantly affect you. However, there are exceptions to this prohibition.

#### Right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority

You have the right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority (Data Protection Ombudsman), if you believe that the processing of your personal data violates data protection legislation.

#### Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman

Street address: Lintulahdenkuja 4, FI-00530 Helsinki, Finland

Postal address: PO Box 800, FI-00531 Helsinki, Finland

Switchboard: +358 29 56 66700

Fax: +358 29 56 66735

Email address: tietosuoja@om.fi