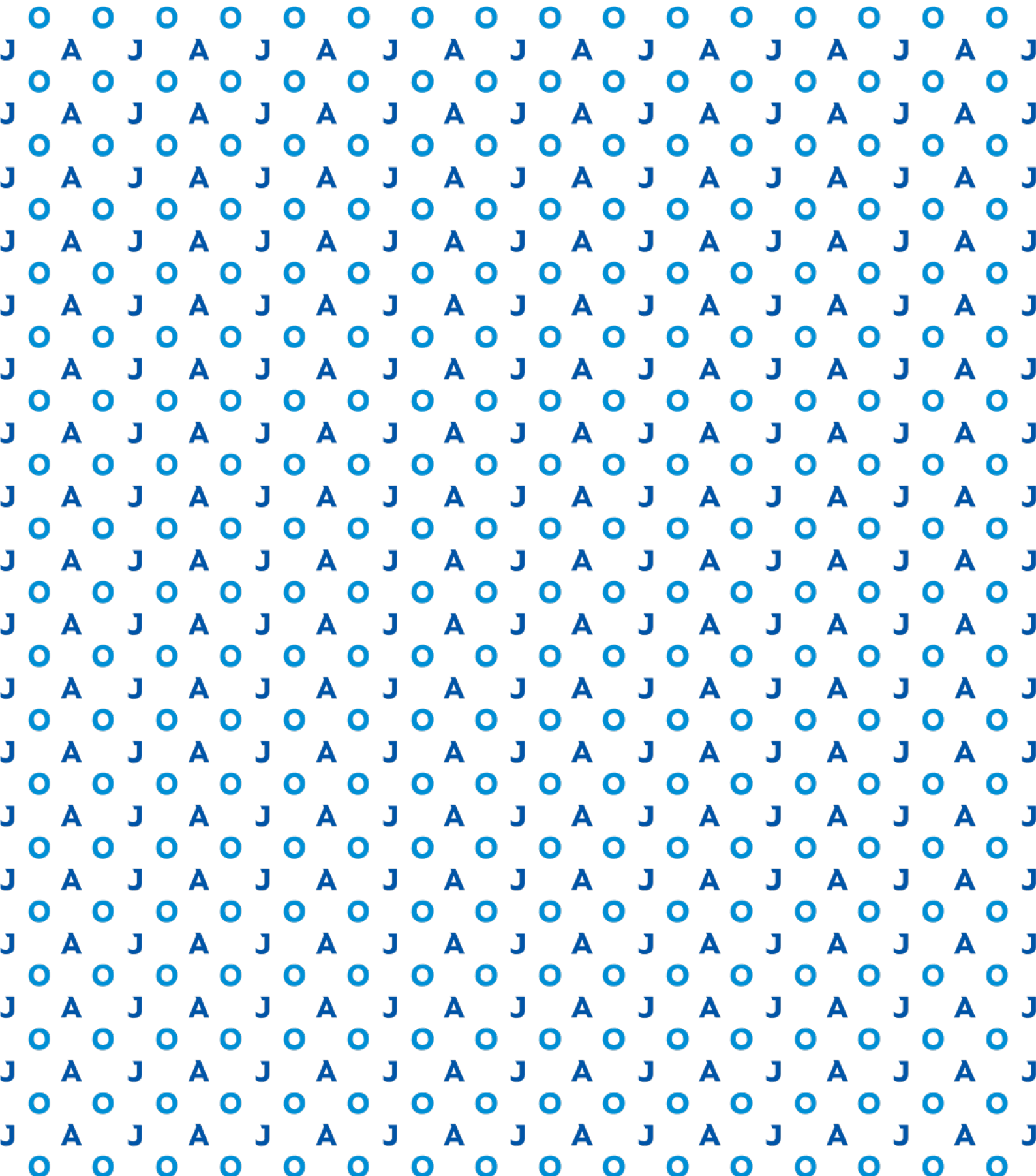


Guidebook for OAJ members working in higher education



If you are a teacher or researcher working at a university or university of applied sciences, OAJ is the trade union for you!

The operations and structure of OAJ are described in brief in our Member Guide and in more detail on OAJ's website.

This guide only focuses on OAJ membership as it applies to members working at a university or university of applied sciences.

We recommend reading the Member Guide and this guide together and also visiting the OAJ website.



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1. OAJ's advocacy for its members at higher education institutions

OAJ's organisation includes almost 7,000 teachers, researchers and specialists working at higher education institutions. This makes us one of the leading Akava unions in the higher education sector. OAJ has almost 120,000 members in total. There is strength in numbers – the entire union stands behind the demands of each of its member groups. This allows us to efficiently influence decision-makers and the media in order to develop the sector.

Higher education institutions operate autonomously. The most major reform needs and policies are decided at the national and European levels. OAJ develops and prepares changes in the higher education and research system and environment together with the major stakeholders and officials.

The 2030 vision for higher education institutions includes policies concerning the structure and operations of the institutions. The measures listed in the development programmes drawn up to support this vision include, for example, improving the well-being of staff.

When legislation around universities and universities of applied sciences was amended, qualification criteria for teaching staff were added to the Universities of Applied Sciences Act. For the Universities Act, the focus has been on improving the personnel's ability to influence matters.

Measures that influence the work of teaching and research staff are at the heart of OAJ's advocacy work.

OAJ listens to its members

OAJ pays close attention to how its members feel about their daily life and working conditions. We use member surveys to gather information for advocacy purposes. If you happen to be picked as part of the survey sample, it is important for you to respond.

Read more about OAJ's recent surveys and models:

[Working conditions barometer](#)

[Survey on exceptional teaching arrangements in spring of 2020](#)

[Improvements needed in working conditions, work planning and salary issues](#)
survey by OAJ and YLL

[OAJ's policies regarding science and innovation](#)

[Voi hyvin työssä!](#)
guide on working time

[Guide on education export](#)

Decision making at OAJ

OAJ's decision making is based on representative democracy. Read more about our decision-making system at oaj.fi and join in!

OAJ has a designated higher education working group for the higher education sector. The working group processes, prepares and envisions current matters related to income, salary and education policies in the higher education sector and develops the organisation and its memberships.

It is in close communication with the Minister of Education officials and other stakeholders. It also acts as a mediator in challenges between university sectors. The higher education committee includes representatives from [YLL](#), [OAO](#), [YSI](#) and Teacher Student Union of Finland [SOOL](#).

2. Membership

You can become an OAJ member if you are employed in a teaching, research, specialist or management position at a university or university of applied sciences.

You can become a member if

- you work as a teacher or in a comparable position in the education or research sector
- you work in a management or supervisory role in the education or research sector
- you are in an employment relationship that is valid at the time of applying
- you perform other tasks related to education or research, such as specialist work, management, design or research.

Having teacher qualifications is not a requirement for becoming a member. Foreign citizens may also become members.

Which association should I join?

Members of the higher education sector belong to OAJ through OAJ's Vocational Educators and Trainers [OAO](#) or the Union for University Teachers and Researchers in Finland [YLL](#).

The national OAO and YLL associations compile goals related to member advocacy and policy and give presentations, launch initiatives and organise training.

OAJ's Vocational Educators and Trainers OAO

OAO has approximately 16,500 members in total, and they belong to seven national associations.

- [Ammatilliset opettajat AO ry](#) (Association for Vocational Teachers)
- [Aikuisopettajien liitto AKOL ry](#) (Association for Adult Educators)
- [KSOLLI ry](#) (Association for Teachers of the Deaf and Blind)
- [Suomen musiikinopettajien liitto ry SMOL](#) (Finnish Union of Music Teachers)
- [TOOL ry](#) (Union for Teachers in Technical Institutions)
- [SKO ry](#) (Union of Teachers in Business Colleges and Polytechnics)
- [Koulutuksen esimiehet ja asiantuntijat KEA ry](#) (Association of Education Supervisors and Experts)

Union for University Teachers and Researchers YLL

YLL has approximately 1,500 members. There are 12 university-specific member associations.

All [member associations](#)

[Ulkomaanlehtoriyhdistys for Finnish teachers working at universities abroad](#)

The Helsinki region YLL association [PSYLL](#)

Dual membership

If you work in the education sector but would like to keep your membership of another Akava trade union related to your degree, you can apply for dual membership in OAJ. Through the dual membership, you can have the benefits of two different trade unions without having to pay two union fees, as dual membership is significantly cheaper than two union fees combined.

The primary trade union of a person with a dual membership is determined based on which union is responsible for advocacy in their sector. OAJ is the only trade union advocating for people who work in the education or research sector, so it always takes precedence in case of dual membership.

We have dual membership arrangements with the Finnish Business School Graduates, the Union of Professional Engineers in Finland and Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland TEK.

Dual membership guarantees economists and engineers effective means of advocacy in the education sector while allowing them to be a part of their own professional interest group.

The Finnish Business School Graduates

A dual member of the Finnish Business School Graduates pays the usual union fee percentage to OAJ. A member of the Finnish Business School Graduates may apply for OAJ membership on the OAJ website. Indicate on the membership form that you are interested in dual membership. Remember to also notify the Finnish Business School Graduates member service about becoming an OAJ member and wishing to continue dual membership.

[Become a Finnish Business School Graduates dual member](#)

The Union of Professional Engineers in Finland

A dual member of the Union of Professional Engineers in Finland pays the usual union fee percentage to OAJ.

A member of the Union of Professional Engineers may apply for OAJ membership on the OAJ website. Indicate on the membership form that you are interested in dual membership. Remember to also notify the Union of Professional Engineers customer service about becoming an OAJ member and wishing to continue dual membership.

[Become a Union of Professional Engineers dual member](#)

Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland TEK

A dual member of Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland TEK pays the usual union fee percentage to OAJ. A TEK member may apply for OAJ membership on the OAJ website. Indicate on the membership form that you are interested in dual membership. Remember to also notify the TEK membership service about becoming an OAJ member and wishing to continue dual membership.

[Become an Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland TEK dual member](#)

3. Union fees, services and benefits

The OAJ union fee is calculated in percentages and is determined by your total earnings. The union fee is entirely tax deductible.

You have access to all services and benefits for OAJ members.

Read more about our membership benefits:

[oaj.fi/en/membership/](https://www.oaj.fi/en/membership/)

[oaj.fi/en/membership/join-the-union/union-fees/](https://www.oaj.fi/en/membership/join-the-union/union-fees/)

[oaj.fi/en/membership/benefits/](https://www.oaj.fi/en/membership/benefits/)

[oaj.fi/en/membership/oaj-membership-is-worthwhile/](https://www.oaj.fi/en/membership/oaj-membership-is-worthwhile/)

Member association benefits

Your member association provides various valuable benefits for its members. You might receive a discount at a local shop or participate in recreational events or training organised by the association.

Events organised by associations can help you strengthen your professional identity and build community spirit. Be sure to participate in local member activity, as these events always include perspectives into developing working life while providing an opportunity to charge your batteries in good company. There are many different types of events depending on the tradition, university and association. We recommend checking out the selection!

In addition to OAJ's general membership benefits, members working in higher education institutions can receive benefits from their own national association, such as the Acatiimi, Toolilainen and Rondo Classic magazines and discounts to various holiday destinations.

Keep your information up to date!

Remember to keep your membership information up to date. OAJ must be notified when there are any changes to your contact information, employer, place of employment or association, when you retire or when you receive no pay for a period of time, for example due to childcare leave. You can update your information in the [My Profile](#) section of the OAJ website.

4. Negotiations and shop stewards

OAJ negotiates collective agreements in several different agreement sectors in the education sector. The agreements for universities of applied sciences fall under the agreement sectors of Finnish Education Employers FEE, the private education sector and Avaintyöntajat AVAINTA's Avainnotes.

JUKO, the negotiating organisation for public-sector professionals, is one of the major national negotiators for the employee side. JUKO negotiates employment agreements in the church, municipal, government and university sectors. The collective agreement applied to universities is FEE's general collective agreement for universities. In other words, collective agreements at universities for OAJ members are negotiated by JUKO. JUKO's largest member union is OAJ.

The other negotiating parties are Finnish Education Employers FEE, Trade Union Pro and Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors JHL. OAJ strongly influences the negotiations goals in JUKO's university negotiations commission and an OAJ representative participates in negotiations as a member of the main group.

Shop steward system

The purpose of the shop steward system is to ensure adherence to collective agreements, help settle disputes and promote peace in the workplace.

In addition to OAJ members, the shop steward also represents members of other JUKO unions in the university sector and certain AVAINTA universities of applied sciences. One of their major duties is giving advice to members and working through issues related to the collective agreement with the employer.

OAJ's own shop stewards operate in OAJ's agreement sectors, such as universities of applied sciences that fall under FEE's private education sector. According to the shop steward agreement, OAJ's shop stewards can only represent OAJ members.

5. Employment relationship

The 'Pay, conditions & help' section on OAJ's website provides professionals working in education, training and research with information about their sector's employment terms and conditions, as well as solutions for problem situations.

Our semester planning guide describes central contractual provisions on salary bases, work hours and employment contract terms, such as leave, for employees in the education sector. The guide is available on our website and is released annually.

Sign an employment contract

If you are in an employment relationship, sign an employment contract with your employer. The contract details the terms and conditions of your employment relationship, so make sure to read it carefully. You can have OAJ's shop steward go over the employment contract before signing it.

Examples of central terms and conditions included in employment contracts at universities include the employer, job title, duties, primary place of work, starting date, duration of the employment relationship, grounds for fixed-term employment relationships, trial period, regular working hours, applicable collective agreement, annual leave, notice period, salary, pay period, time required for work experience bonuses and other additional terms such as non-disclosure agreements or copyright.

Fixed-term employment relationship

According to the Employment Contracts Act, an employment contract is valid indefinitely unless it has been separately defined as fixed-term for a justifiable reason. A fixed-term employment contract always requires statutory grounds (reasons) and the grounds must always be included in the contract. A fixed-term contract drawn on the employer's initiative without a justifiable reason must be considered to be indefinitely valid.

The repeated use of fixed-term contracts is illegal when the number or combined duration of the fixed-term contracts or other entity formed by them indicates that the employer has permanent need for an employee.

Working on a grant

The status of a person working on a grant differs from university to university, but here are a few general rules:

- A person working on a grant does not have an employment relationship with the university or university of applied sciences.
- If the university offers teaching work during the grant period, a separate employment contract must be drawn up for the work and the work must be compensated separately.
- The grant period does not accumulate the condition of previous employment required for earnings-related unemployment allowance. The grant period does not cut off the condition of previous employment if it has been fulfilled before the beginning of the grant period.
- You may join OAJ during the grant period, but not the unemployment fund. Becoming a member of the fund requires having an employment relationship for which you are receiving a salary at the time of joining.

Intellectual property rights

Intellectual property rights are rights related to immaterial property, such as written work, software or inventions. Intellectual property rights can be divided into copyright and industrial property rights, with copyright being something all teachers will have to deal with at some point during their careers.

According to copyright law, the copyright is always owned by the creator i.e., the person who has created a piece of writing or art. If an employer wants to utilise works created by a teacher, any rights and compensations related to the use of the works must be agreed upon.

The employer has a right to inventions made in an employment relationship in accordance with the Act on the Right in Inventions made at Higher Education Institutions. Each higher education institution must have principles for applying the Act on the Right in Inventions made at Higher Education Institutions that have been discussed in co-operation negotiations.

6. Working time

Working time and work planning for teaching and research staff at a university

The annual working time for teaching and research staff is 1,612 hours. Each person draws up a work plan together with their supervisor before the start of the next semester. The work plan details how the 1,612 working hours will be distributed across different duties over the next semester. The work plan takes into account the person's participation in teaching, research and other duties.

The university approves work plans according to their organisational policy. The employee is responsible for their own working time and spending it on the duties detailed in the work plan. During the semester, the employee and supervisor may examine the realisation of the work plan and work results against the total working time.

Working within the framework of total working time gives the employee the freedom to plan their use of work hours. There is no daily or weekly work hour limit.

Employees working based on overall working time are not entitled to annual leave. However, they do have the right to take time off from work. Their leave is based on their own discretion and working time planning.

Amount of contact teaching

According to the collective agreement for universities that entered into force on 1 April 2020, the number of contact teaching hours of a person whose teaching obligation is a maximum of 394 (392) hours may not be increased. Other maximum amounts of contact teaching may not be increased either.

Higher teaching limits are still in use; however, their proportional share at universities must remain the same and may not increase. According to the collective agreement, the maximum number of contact teaching hours that may be included in the work plan of a person working in a teaching-focused position is 394 hours per academic year. This means that if the person has 394 hours of contact teaching, their annual work time of 1,612 hours is generally fulfilled. In this case the work plan has room for approximately 100 hours in total for other tasks such as planning the curriculum.

If the job description includes duties other than teaching, for example research, the work plan may not include the maximum number of contact teaching hours.

For professors, the maximum number of contact teaching hours is 141 hours per academic year.

The maximum number of contact teaching hours may be 452 hours per academic year only for teaching duties that require less preparation than usual and do not include research as an actual requirement.

The exclusion of research is not automatically grounds for applying the higher contact teaching limit. The negotiating parties have agreed that the proportional share of higher teaching limits at universities may not change. Additionally, the parties have agreed that applying the higher teaching limit requires the teaching-focused role to involve less preparation than usual.

Working time, work planning and work hour monitoring for university of applied sciences staff

The annual working time for principal lecturers and lecturers is 1,600 hours per work year. The work year is divided into working periods and periods of leave. The employee has a total of 12 weeks of leave in a year and the work hours are distributed across the remaining time. The work hours may vary on a week-by-week basis as long as the annual number of hours reaches the number set for the teacher. The entirety of the working time and all leave days always take place in the same work year (calendar year or academic year).

A person may also be employed as a full-time teacher for a period shorter than a year. In this case, the working time for the working periods is set at approximately 8 hours per day and/or 40 hours per week. If the average number of working hours per day/week during the working period is fewer than this, the work is considered part-time work.

The teacher may determine the work they perform and/or where they perform it for at least 28 per cent, or 448 hours, of the annual working time. The rest of the working time (a maximum of 1,152 hours) is working time for which the employer may define its time and/or place.

In technical and traffic education, the corresponding working times are 600 hours and 1,000 hours for people who have entered the field before 1 April 2020. Additionally, work bound to a time and location determined by the employer can be distributed over 35 weeks unless it has been agreed separately with the teacher that the hours may be distributed over more weeks. All new technical and traffic teachers are subject to the same working time regulations as teachers in other fields of education.

Working time plan

All teachers must have an approved working time plan detailing the time designated for various tasks and the timing of periods of leave for each academic or calendar year. If the time designated for various tasks is insufficient or the teacher is assigned additional work, the working time plan must be immediately verified or amended with a supervisor before the additional work or work exceeding the working time is performed.

The working time plan includes the amount of teaching-related work as well as the teacher's other work. The working time plan may specify, on a general level or in more detail, which tasks the teacher may perform in the location and at the time of their choice and which tasks are determined by the employer.

The working time plan is prepared by the teacher and a representative of the employer. The employer will confirm the tasks by their main category (for example teaching and instructing, development or project work, etc.) as well as the timing of the periods of leave. The number of hours designated for each main category of work is verified. The employer determines the time required for the work.

The realisation of working time plans is monitored regularly at universities of applied sciences, for example by having the teacher track the actual number of hours spent on each task. The teacher's supervisor uses the tracking information to regularly monitor the realisation of the plan, for example on a monthly basis. The goal is to ensure the working time plan matches the actual number of hours needed for the work, meaning it is neither over-resourced or under-resourced. Based on the supervisor's monitoring, the working time plan may also be amended as necessary.

Working time monitoring includes both the work that can be performed at the time and location of the employee's choice as well as the working time decided on by the employer. Drawing up the working time plan and monitoring it also helps the supervisor give the employee feedback on things such as the employer's expectations and the way the teacher's work can be organised and made more efficient.

7. Salaries

Salaries for teaching and research staff at a university

University staff works in teaching positions and research positions at different points of their career. OAJ has been promoting a career model that would take teaching experience better into account alongside research experience in both salaries and career advancement. In statistics, teaching and research staff is divided onto four career levels. Many universities use the tenure track system for professors. OAJ's principle for career models is that they should be based on indefinite employment relationships without fixed-term levels.

Universities follow a salary system that includes a separate system for teaching and research staff and the rest of the personnel.

Salaries for teaching staff at a university of applied sciences

Teachers at a university of applied sciences are paid a monthly salary. The agreement only sets a minimum monthly salary in euros. The individual salary of each teacher is determined by the employer. The agreement sets no upper limit for individual salary.

8. Unemployment benefits

If you are laid off temporarily or permanently or are only partially employed because the employer has no additional work to offer, we recommend you contact the Teachers' Unemployment Fund and apply for earnings-related daily allowance. The earnings-related daily allowance is paid according to the Unemployment Security Act (1290/2002). You can read more about the general terms of unemployment allowance [here](#).

If you are working in a teaching position at an educational institution such as a university or university of applied sciences, the condition of previous employment is fulfilled for the calendar weeks during which your working time is at least half of the minimum number of weekly working hours for a full-time hourly-paid teacher in the education field in question. In fields with no full-time hourly-paid teachers, eight hours is used as the reference limit.

For teachers on an hourly salary, the number of actual working hours is tracked. Teachers on a monthly salary are considered to work the number of weekly hours that the monthly salary is based on. A working time limit of 18 hours is applied to teaching not performed at an educational institution, for example teaching performed for a company that provides consulting and education.