

Study Environment Assessment Action Plan 2024 - 2028

Introduction

ITU's Action Plan for the study environment is aimed at strengthening the study environment over the coming years. The plan consists of seven focus areas. Each focus area is elaborated with 1. Issue(s) - examples of workshop discussions and data, 2. Vision and desired outcome, and 3. Supporting actions, actors and timeframe. Focus areas relate to three overall themes (Wellbeing, Learning Environment and Physical Environment) and vary in size and scope.

Process 2024

- ITU received Data from the Study Environment Assessment Survey (autumn 2023) in the beginning of 2024.
- Data was discussed by Board of Studies (BoS) afterwards and a workshop with relevant stakeholders (students, teachers, administration, and management) was held in april 2024.
- Based on the input from stakeholders, Dean of Education Support drafted an Action Plan and discussed with BoS end of April 2024. It was agreed on to draft an open action plan with room for changes and with few short term actions due to ITU's restructuring process.
- In May, Dean of Education Support collected feedback from internal stakeholders about the suggested focus areas, ideas, and actions in the action plan.
- The draft action plan was again discussed in BoS end of May and June and changes were made.
- The appointed responsible actors were consulted in June for approval.
- The final Action Plan and the follow-up plan was approved by Board of Studies end of June 2024.

Implementation and follow up plan

DoE Support will upload the approved action plan on ITU Student and will be responsible for updating the published plan regularly until June 2028, as described below.

The Action Plan will be discussed by Board of Studies every half year, starting in December 2024.

DoE Support will ask stakeholders to provide status updates. DoE Support will maintain and update a "backlog" with general comments and status reports and present at the Board of Studies meetings.

A thriving and inclusive study environment at ITU

Action plan 2024-2028 overview

Focus area	<i>1. Constructive feedback</i>	<i>2. Feedback mechanisms</i>	<i>3. Inclusive and constructive groupwork</i>	<i>4. Discrimination & harassment incidents</i>	<i>5. Special needs and disabilities</i>	<i>6. Optimizing the campus</i>	<i>7. Sanitary facilities</i>
Vision and desired outcome	Constructive and continuous feedback from teachers and teaching assistants to students and vice versa	Feedback loops: Better communication of course changes as a result of course evaluation	Skills development of teachers to enable better facilitation of group formation and inclusive groupwork Knowledge sharing of good practices of groupwork contracts ("collaboration agreements")	Simplified procedures for reporting incidents Clear communication about processes and roles Better collaboration between relevant ITU committees, students and employees/departments	Increased knowledge, awareness and open communication with and about students with disabilities	<i>A more welcoming physical environment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greener and more welcoming atrium <i>Better accommodate teaching and learning facilities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communication and use of the Emil Holms Kanal (EHK) building • Create a Design Space for digital design students <i>Better indoor climate</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properly heated auditoriums and air ventilation 	Cleaner and functional toilets

Focus area 1 - Constructive feedback (*Learning environment*)

<p>Issue <i>Examples of workshop discussions and data</i></p>	<p>Survey data Bad to medium evaluation of some questions about feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I feel I get enough feedback on what I do on the programme” (e.g. individual or collective feedback from teachers, peers or supervisors” (3.4), 22 % disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. • “What I have not quite understood is made more clear by the feedback that I receive” (3.4), 17 % disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. <p>Workshop data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students always want more feedback, but it is time-consuming, and the teachers do not have time • The quality of TA feedback is often not good enough
<p>Vision/desired outcome</p>	<p>Constructive and continuous feedback from teachers and TAs to students and vice versa</p>
<p>Supporting actions, actors and timeframe</p>	<p>EG (autumn 2024/spring 2025): Consider the opportunities for making a workshop 2 for TAs focusing on feedback. This will require making a budget request to ExeMan and Learning Support resources (LS, EG) or make feedback a stronger part of teaching competence development which will require a decision from management about prioritizing this and work with this in a strategic project.</p> <p>Learning Support: Feedback is a continuous focus area of LS and key to ITU’s pedagogical principles of student-centered learning. LS supports additional initiatives in principle.</p> <p>Timeframe for new actions: await new organisation/Head of Education. Re-visit in Spring 2025.</p>

Focus area 2 - *Feedback mechanisms* (*Learning environment*)

<p>Issue <i>Examples of workshop discussions and data</i></p>	<p>Survey data Bad to medium evaluation of some questions about feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I feel I get enough feedback on what I do on the programme” (e.g. individual or collective feedback from teachers, peers or supervisors” (3.4), 22 % disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. • “What I have not quite understood is made more clear by the feedback that I receive” (3.4), 17 % disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. <p>Workshop data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some teachers present earlier course evaluation results, and which changes in the course they led at the start of the course which give students incitements to share their opinions as well.
<p>Vision/desired outcome</p>	<p>Better feedback loops, e.g., communication of course changes as a result of evaluation.</p>
<p>Supporting actions, actors and timeframe</p>	<p>Autumn 2024ff: The SAT groups are encouraged to discuss these issues from a study-level perspective frequently, e.g., in relation to course evaluations.</p> <p>Autumn 2024ff: Course managers are reminded to inform students about student feedback and course changes as a result of course evaluation at the beginning of the semester and at opening lectures (Quality Coordinator and HoSPs).</p> <p>Learning Support: Feedback loops are a continuous focus area of LS activities for teachers at ITU.</p> <p>Timeframe for new actions: await new organisation/Head of Education. Re-visit in Spring 2025.</p>

Focus area 3 - Inclusive and constructive groupwork *(Learning environment and wellbeing)*

<p>Issue <i>Examples of workshop discussions and data</i></p>	<p>Survey data Group work is listed at one of the top 5 most common academic activities. No questions specifically on groupwork.</p> <p>Workshop data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work in relation to exclusion, harassment, loneliness, etc. - is there a connection? • Groupwork can be difficult and if a group member has disabilities this can further complicate things • Students prefer choosing their own group but alignment through groupwork contracts work well
<p>Vision/desired outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development of teachers to enable better facilitation of group formation and inclusive groupwork • Knowledge sharing of good practices of groupwork contracts (“collaboration agreements”) • Clear information about ITU’s practice of groupwork
<p>Supporting actions, actors and timeframe</p>	<p>Autumn 2024: Highlighting ITU’s practice of groupwork to prospective students on ITUs webpages. (SAP/COMM)</p> <p>Study and Career Counselling and Learning Support: Groupwork is an ongoing focus area regarding all students and teachers and is part of current project. Currently limited resources available.</p> <p>If resources available – autumn 2024/spring 2025: knowledge sharing of good practices related to “collaboration agreements”.</p> <p>Timeframe for new actions: await of new organisation/Head of Education. Re-evaluate spring 2025.</p>

Focus area 4 - *Discrimination & harassment incidents* (*Wellbeing*)

<p>Issue <i>Examples of workshop discussions and data</i></p>	<p>Survey data Many respondents have experienced some kind of discriminative, offensive and unwanted behaviour at ITU or in other study-related contexts. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Comments about appearance or gender that made you feel uncomfortable or were offensive” were reported by 68 respondents/12 %, • “Receiving offensive, rough or condescending comments” was reported by 61 persons/10 % • “Being exposed to unwanted sexual attention” was reported by 40 respondents/7 % <p>Workshop data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both students and staff are worried about the high number of incidents reported • Tutors were asked to present sexual discrimination procedures for new students in the study start last year. This was an overwhelming task, also because tutors did not find the procedures very clear. • Need for better overview of process • Include the Study and Career Guidance more in the DEI work
<p>Vision/desired outcome</p>	<p>Simplified procedures for reporting incidents Better communication to students about processes and roles Better collaboration across DEI committee, students and departments</p>
<p>Supporting actions, actors and timeframe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 2024: Relaunch of the "Here to help" campaign (COMM, SAP). The campaign was launched in 2023 to reinforce ITU’s values of inclusivity and mutual respect, aiming to address issues reported within this focus area. The campaign coincided with the student survey, so maybe the measurable impact will be seen later. Inform about the updated pages on how to report incidents, etc. remember to inform teachers as well so that they can help students. • Continue to have focus on the student area and collaboration across units and committees. Await new organisation/Head of Education. Re-evaluate spring 2025.

Focus area 5 – *Special needs and disabilities* *(Learning environment and wellbeing)*

<p>Issue <i>Examples of workshop discussions and data</i></p>	<p>Survey data 32 % of respondents report to have one or more of the listed impairments, diagnoses, or disabilities.</p> <p>Workshop data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open dialogue – it should not be a tabu to have a functional impairment • Students should approach teachers rather than TAs about their needs • Teachers are not very knowledgeable and skilled when it comes to neurodiversity • More resources are needed if 1/3 of students need extra help • Gender vs. inclusion and diversity in a broader sense – ITU needs to broaden understanding, e.g. functional impairments
<p>Vision/desired outcome</p>	<p>Increased knowledge, awareness and open communication with and about students with disabilities. Skills development courses where teachers could learn more about communication with and inclusion of students with disabilities.</p>
<p>Supporting actions, actors and timeframe</p>	<p>Spring-autumn 2024: Project "Students with disabilities: taskforce for teaching activities" - (SAP).</p> <p>Summer-autumn 2024: Committee for Diversity and Inclusion: Project Introducing the sunflower at ITU. Purpose: Create a culture change so that employees and students with disabilities feel better met, understood and included (SAP, COMM, HR).</p> <p>Autumn 2024: In collaboration with SAP, COMM is developing a new page on the website for prospective students to showcase the Special Educational Support (SPS) available for students. This initiative serves two purposes: to facilitate a smooth transition for incoming students and to underscore that SPS is an integral part of student life for many at ITU.</p> <p>Student Council (internal SPS group) can be consulted on new initiatives.</p>

Focus area 6 - *Optimising the campus* (*Physical environment*)

<p>Issue <i>Examples of workshop discussions and data</i></p>	<p>6.1 A more welcoming physical environment Survey data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most questions about the physical environment receive a good or very good evaluation at ITU level (scores 3.5-4.6). However, the opinion differs across study programmes. For example, respondents from some study programmes give bad to medium evaluation about whether they find the physical surroundings welcoming. <p>Workshop data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make ITU more cosy and colourful Use the atrium differently 	<p>6.2 Better accommodate teaching and learning Survey data (comments)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching rooms are too small or poorly designed for teaching and groupwork There is a lack of rooms for groupwork Design students do not find classrooms suitable for the activities of their programmes (both free text comments and data) <p>Workshop data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long teaching rooms are not good for teaching. Better overview of room bookings would be nice. More rooms for groupwork are needed for project work and exercises. There are many students at EHK and the rules for how they can use the meeting rooms are unclear. 	<p>6.3 Indoor climate Survey data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How satisfied are you with the indoor climate in the classrooms where you generally attend class? (indoor climate regards both noise, illumination, ventilation and temperature” (3.4)) <p>Many survey comments about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cold auditoriums Bad air ventilation (especially in smaller rooms)
<p>Vision and desired outcome</p>	<p>A greener and more welcoming atrium</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Better communication about students' use of the Emil Holms Kanal (EHK) building Optimizing of teaching rooms Creation of a Design Space (for digital design) students 	<p>Properly heated auditoriums and better air ventilation.</p>
<p>Supporting actions, actors and timeframe</p>	<p>FM explains that they have had many ideas about how to use atrium better. However, atrium is used for many events, conferences, etc., which makes it difficult to make permanent changes, e.g., decorate it with plants, put in new furniture etc.</p> <p>FM, EG, SAT CS find this focus area to be of low priority.</p> <p>Timeframe – low priority to begin with. Re-evaluate when new organization is in place.</p>	<p>Ad 1. FM suggests: Autumn 2024: Clear communication to students about how they can use the EHK building, meeting rooms etc. Make sure new students are aware of the opportunities (FM in collaboration with SAP)</p> <p>Ad 2. and 3. FM and EG suggest: Meetings between FM, EG+HoD, where needs, expectations and resources are aligned, involvement of SAP, HoSPs, ExeMan and other stakeholders as needed. Groupwork and teaching restrictions are overlapping themes.</p> <p>Spring 2025: EG initiates start-up meeting and discussion.</p> <p>Additionally: Student Council and FM are collaborating on a new room being planned in the Study Hall.</p>	<p>FM is limited with regards to larger improvements or changes, however promises to continue to monitor this issues.</p> <p>Autumn 2024: FM encourages students to report extraordinary changes in indoor climate to FM/Help desk.</p>

Focus area 7 - Sanitary facilities (Physical environment)

<p>Issue <i>Examples of workshop discussions and data</i></p>	<p>Survey data 120+ survey comments about the sanitary facilities and most of these find the sanitary facilities unsatisfactory. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toilets are often unclean, e.g., urine and paper on the floor• Water taps are often out of order, soap dispenser empty, etc.• The conversion to unisex toilets has made the toilets more unhygienic <p>Workshop discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unisex toilets are the way to go but students should take greater responsibility for keeping facilities clean and for reporting things out of use• Toilets should better accommodate user's needs, e.g., nursing facilities, hangers for clothes and bags.• Cleaning of toilets should be better timed with teaching in the big auditoriums
<p>Vision/desired outcome</p>	<p>Cleaner and functional toilets.</p>
<p>Supporting actions, involved actors and timeframe</p>	<p>Autumn 2024: Investigate opportunities for changing daily cleaning schedule (FM).</p> <p>Spring 2025: Make toilets more user-friendly, e.g., posters about reporting toilets out of use, more hangers, etc. (FM), and communicate about it (FM/Communication).</p>