



Lodz University
of Technology

ACADEMIC SUPPORT UNIT

responding to
academic community
challenges



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BACKGROUND

Offices for students with disabilities in late 2000s.

Their traditional role:

- supporting students with formal certificates of disabilities
- adjustment of educational process to individual needs



HISTORY REVISITED

- 2007 - appointment of the Plenipotentiary for Students with Disabilities
- 2008 – establishing the Office for Students with disabilities



2021 – 2024 ACCESSIBLE UNIVERSITY PROJECT

- career advisor
- staff training
- training materials
- online sign language interpreter
- audio description
- changes in regulations
- evacuation procedures



Programme financed
by the National
Centre for Research
and Development
from the EU funds

FROM MEDICAL TO SOCIAL MODEL

Modern understanding of disability:

- moving away from deficit-based approach
- concentration on environmental barriers



BARRIERS THAT STUDENTS FACE

- excessive requirements
- pressure of effectiveness
- lack of organisational flexibility
- insufficient access to psychological and educational support



NEW CHALLENGES

**Increasing number of students and staff
experiencing difficulties**

deterioration
of mental
health

prolonged
stress

difficulties
with
concentration

problems with
regulating
emotions

adaptation
challenges

neurodiversity

Difficulties affect

- studying
- social interaction
- drop-out risk

PREVIOUS SUPPORT SYSTEM WAS NOT ENOUGH

- Support dedicated only to persons with formal certificate of disability does not meet real needs.
- Disability as a dynamic experience depending on context:

Students' expectations:

- flexible forms of support
- access to support without formalisation
- quick access to information and specialists

„I have no certificate of disability, but sometimes I simply no longer cope”.



CURRENT NUMBERS OF SUPPORTED STUDENTS

172 with disability certificates

450 without disability
certificates

Increasing number of students
without disability certificates –
proportions are changing

NEW NAME REFLECTS THE SHIFT

- February 2026
- The office changes its name to:
- Academic Support Unit
- Purpose:
 - adaptation to the actual needs of the community
 - shift towards a broader, inclusive support model



ASU STRUCTURE

Disability SupPort

for students with disability
certificates

- equipment
- financial
- organisational

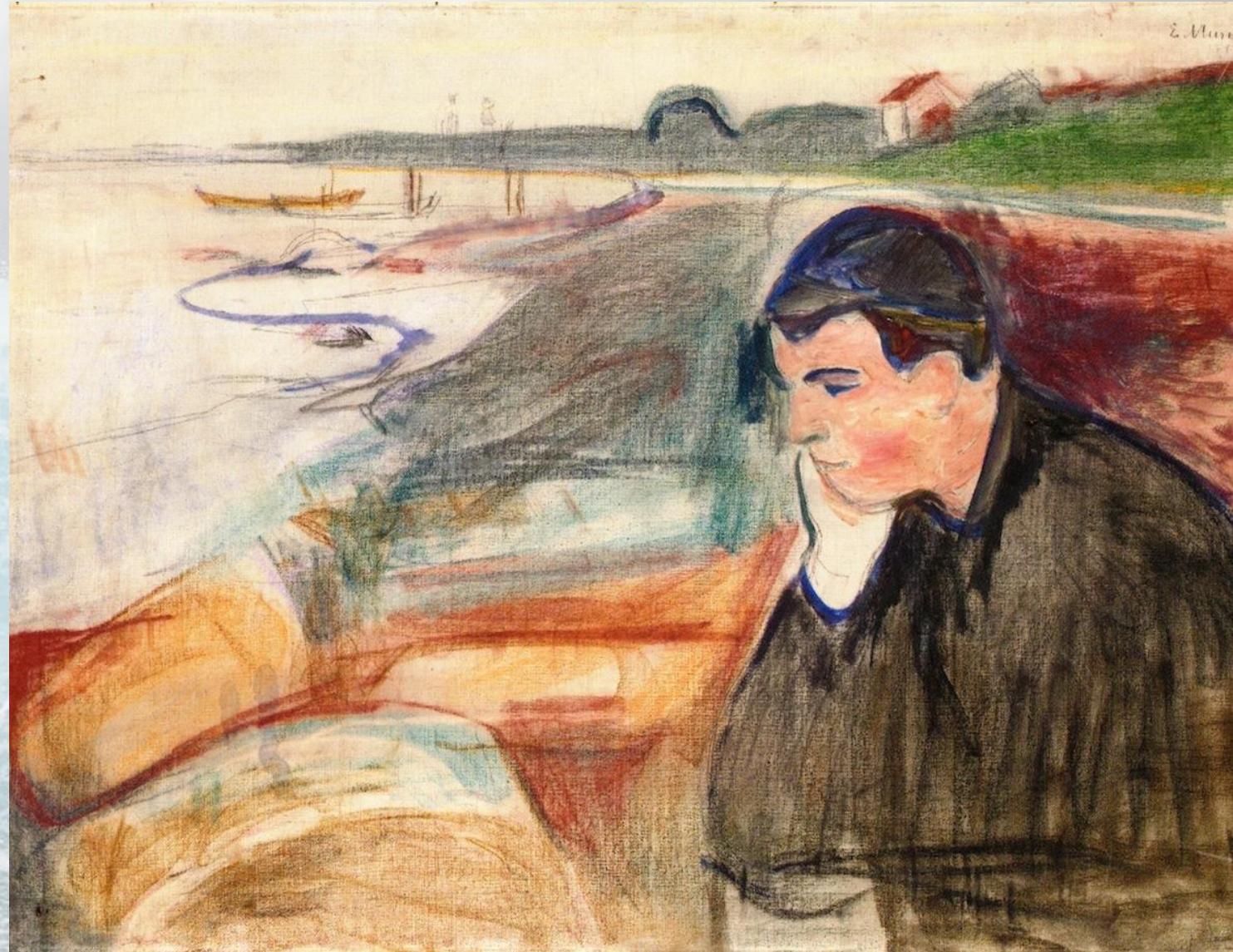
Training academics in:

- working with students with special needs
- creating accessible learning materials
- universal design in education

ASU STRUCTURE CONTINUED

Psychological SupPort

- for students, doctoral students and Staff
- in crises, emotional or adaptational difficulties



TOWARDS INCLUSION

- Support not as a special treatment but as an element of a system open to diversity
- ✓ Academic inclusion understood as:
 - Designing accessible learning environment
 - Responding to challenges before they escalate into exclusion
- ✓ Integration of psychological, educational and organisational support.





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TOWARDS INTEGRATION

**Cooperation with
other units of TUL**



...faculties

students' union

education centre

sports

career advisory

student services

dormitories

safety on campus

occupational safety

international

mobility

library

scientists

language centre...

IMPACT

- ✓ Modern responsible university
- ✓ Well-developed support system
- ✓ Change and integration
as an element of TUL development
strategy and investment in well-
being of the community





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Academic Support Unit

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