



# **Guidelines for equal opportunities at The University of Skövde**

These guidelines were ratified by the Vice-chancellor on January 30, 2024 and became valid on the same day.

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# 1 Introduction

The starting point of our work for equal opportunities at Högskolan i Skövde (The University of Skövde) is to advance equal rights and opportunities for all employees and students regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, ethnic background, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

The work for equal opportunities is based on democratic values and human rights. When all people's abilities, experiences, and potential are made use of this creates the conditions for a good work and study environment. In all the units in our university, there should be an awareness that similarities and differences enrich and that the right to be different is the basis for all people's equal worth. Our goal is to create an atmosphere that encourages and supports diversity in the whole organization. There must be zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment. We have a special arrangement regarding the handling of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and verbal harassment.

The work for equal opportunities is also closely related to the University's employee-environment work and the regulatory documents as well as action plans and business plans.

Definitions of terms regarding equal opportunities can be found in Appendix

## 2 Organization and responsibility

### 2.1 General distribution of responsibility

The distribution of responsibility for our work for equal opportunities follows the general distribution of University activities in accordance with "Work procedure at the University of Skövde" ("Arbetsordning vid Högskolan i Skövde") based on organization- and delegation documents. The Vice-chancellor has a general responsibility for University activities. On a lower level, the Faculty Board has an overall responsibility for teaching and research quality. The Heads of School and the Head of University Administration are responsible for the different schools as well as Support Services on a strategic and overall level. Operative responsibility for all activities, including matters regarding equal opportunities, is largely delegated to the Heads of Divisions. On all levels, goal-oriented and systematic work for equal opportunities must be carried out.

## **2.2 HR specialist, coordinator, coordination group, and committee**

As support for our work with equal opportunities, there are specific roles at the University's support services. For issues regarding employees, an HR specialist has that role while regarding students, there are specific coordinators for equal opportunities. Furthermore, there are coordinators for students with different forms of disabilities. The staff having such roles do both follow-up work and work proactively.

At the University there is also a coordination group for equality and integration, equal opportunities, and broadened recruitment. There are four operative committees working with this coordination group, one committee for each kind. There is a specific work description for the coordination group and its committees.

The committee for equal opportunities coordinates and follows up on the overall university process regarding ongoing activities, designs support for methods, and is consultative in matters regarding equal opportunities.

## **3 The employer's five areas of actively-taken measures**

In accordance with the Discrimination Act, the University, as an employer, has to actively take measures that include

- 1 work conditions
- 2 regulations and praxis regarding the employees' pay and other terms of employment
- 3 recruitment and promotion
- 4 training and other forms of skills development
- 5 opportunities to combine work with parenthood.

The administrative section responsible for an activity and an analysis has an overall responsibility for measures being taken and followed up on too. The responsible section also needs to document the activity. In some cases, one and the same section is responsible for all the steps in this work, but in other cases, the responsibility is shared between different sections

### **3.1 Work conditions**

Work conditions may, for example, include expressing oneself freely, working hours, equipment, harassment, and sexual harassment.

### **3.2 Regulations and praxis regarding pay and other terms of employment**

The part “Regulations and praxis regarding pay and other terms of employment” includes guidelines and criteria for the salary as well as regulations and praxis regarding employee perks.

### **3.3 Recruitment and promotion**

Reviewing regulatory documents for recruitment and promotion are included in “Recruitment and promotion.” This also includes reviewing how and where vacant posts are advertised, how the advertisements are phrased, and how the interviews are carried out.

### **3.4 Training and other forms of skills development**

The part “Training and other forms of skills development” concerns examining and analyzing if there are risks or obstacles making training and other forms of skills development not equal to everybody—regardless of basis for discrimination.

### **3.5 Opportunities to combine work with parenthood**

To make it easier for parents to combine work and parenthood, the employer should notice and make arrangements at the work place regarding obstacles which may make it more difficult to take care of children and one’s home.

## **4 The Educational Coordinator’s five active-measure responsibilities**

In accordance with the Discrimination Act, the University, in their capacity as the educational coordinator, is responsible for conducting active measures in the following five areas:

1. admission and recruitment
2. forms of teaching and the organization of programs and courses
3. examinations and assessment of student performances
4. study environment, and
5. opportunities to combine studies with parenthood.

Within the respective areas, the University is to perform active measures annually. These activities are to follow the four steps mentioned below, namely: investigation, analysis, measures, and follow-up.

The unit responsible for an activity regarding investigation and analysis also has the overall responsibility for measures being taken and followed up on. The unit responsible also does the documentation of the activity. In some cases, one and the same unit is responsible for all the steps in the task, while in other cases responsibility is shared between different units.

#### **4.1 Admission and recruitment**

Within the area Admission and recruitment, the University is to investigate if measures need to be taken to attract applicants regardless of gender, gender identification or expression, ethnic background, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, and age. This may concern how programs and courses are described in marketing, material with information, and contact with potential applicants. The selection process and eligibility must not only be non-discriminating but also be written in a way that the risk for discrimination does not exist. Studies on how admission is done in practice must be carried out but also how the University treats applicants during the recruitment process.

#### **4.2 Forms of teaching and the organization of programs and courses**

The area Forms of teaching and the organization of programs and courses is responsible for, among other things, how the University carries out teaching, lectures, seminars, distance teaching, and other forms of teaching. It may also include when and where teaching is done.

The University must look into any risk that a certain form of teaching or organization might have a negative impact on a particular group of students and if, in that case, this might be related to one or several forms of discrimination.

#### **4.3 Examinations and assessment of student performances**

Within the area Examinations and assessment of student performances, the University must guarantee that syllabi (course plans) and other assessment regulations do not become a risk factor or have a negative impact on any group regardless of form of discrimination.

This also includes studying if there might be risks that student performances in practical moments —intentionally or unintentionally—could be affected by factors that are related to any of

the forms of discrimination. Furthermore, this applies to the use of regulatory documents and routines.

#### **4.4 Study environment**

The term study environment refers to both the physical and psychosocial environment. Among other things, included in the physical study environment are physical rooms, aids, and equipment.

The psychosocial environment involves, among other things, how people are treated, addressed, and different forms of social relations. Here studying the risks for harassment and sexual harassment is included too. The study can, for example, include the jargon among students and teachers and if racist, sexist, or in other ways derogatory comments or jokes occur.

#### **4.5 Opportunities to combine studies with parenthood**

The University should make it easier for students to combine studies with parenthood. This includes, for example, how teaching is organized, time of the day, and if some parts can be done remotely or if there are certain needs regarding physical rooms.

### **5 Continuous work in four steps on active measurements**

The Discrimination Act states that within any kind of business, active measurements to work against discrimination and promote equal opportunities must be carried out. Active measurements include carrying out continuous, preventative, and supportive work by

1. investigating if there may be risks for discrimination or retaliation or if there may be other obstacles to an individual's rights and opportunities at the University
2. analyzing the reasons for risks and obstacles that have been found
3. taking the necessary steps of preventative and supporting measures, and
4. following up and assessing the work listed here above (Items 1-3).

At the University, the work on these active measurements is to be done continuously and be done in accordance with the areas mentioned above. All these steps must be done within a one-year cycle. This cycle, however, does not have to be a calendar year.

These steps should also be related to the cycle of improvement which is central for the quality system at the University.

## **5.1 Activities in the form of investigation and analysis**

The unit responsible for an activity which includes research and analyses also has an overall responsibility that measures are taken and followed up on. The responsible unit must also see to that documentation of the activity is done. In some cases, only one unit is responsible for all the steps in this work, while in other cases, responsibility is shared between different units.

## **5.2 Action and measures**

If actions done to investigate and analyze show that there are risks and obstacles in the different areas, measures are to be taken. Such measures must be done in relation to each identified risk and each identified obstacle. These measures may in some cases also be of a preventive and supporting kind.

The responsibility for such measures to be taken is, after consultation with the units doing the investigation and analysis, shared between the committee for equal opportunities and leaders involved here.

## **5.3 Follow-up**

As described in Section 5.1, it is the unit responsible for an activity or for taking measures that is responsible for a follow-up of the activity or the action taken too.

The committee for equal opportunities coordinates and follows up on the overall university process regarding active measures. The committee is to annually report on the work with active measures to the committee for work environment as well as the coordination group for equality integration, equal opportunities, accessibility, and broadened recruitment.

# **6 Guidelines, cooperation, and documentation**

## **6.1 Guidelines and routines**

A seat of learning must, as part of its active-measure work, have guidelines and routines aiming to avert harassment and sexual harassment. The University also has, besides this general regulatory document, a specific plan for plan for action called “Action plan in cases of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and violations.” Information about the routines regarding issues concerning equal opportunities, harassment, and sexual harassment can be found on the University website, the Staff Portal, and the Student Portal.



Guidelines and routines concerning equal opportunities, harassment, and sexual harassment are to be followed up on annually by the committee for equal opportunities.

## **6.2 Cooperation**

In our work with active measures, cooperation between leaders, staff, and students at the University is involved in different ways. One example of a forum for cooperation is the Vice-chancellor's group for University management, the Faculty board, and the Council for education. Furthermore, there are meetings with people in different leading positions, the Student union, and Student union sections, the Committee for work environment, and the Coordination group for equality integration, equal opportunities, accessibility, broadened recruitment, and committees in respective areas. In addition, there are thematic forums where different parts of the University and students are represented in the continuous work with active measures.

## **6.3 Documentation**

Our work with active measures for equal opportunities is to continuously be documented in writing. The groups that are responsible for an activity (see Sections 5-1 to 5-3) are also those responsible for documentation. In some cases, there is systematic support for documentation, for example through the systems used for various surveys.

The committee for equal opportunities is responsible for common documentation being compiled annually in accordance with the requirements in the Discrimination Act. This compilation is the basis for an annual presentation being made available for the different forums in the organization.

## **7 This document is valid from**

This document is valid from January 30, 2024 and replaces Guidelines for equal opportunities (Registration number HS 2018/192).

## Appendix 2 - Work model for active measures in the role as an employer

<b>Active measures in the role as an employer</b>			
Work environment: Work environment can, for example, include communication, working hours, equipment, harassment, and sexual harassment.			
Survey about discrimination Open answers	The HR department	Every second year	The HR's overall plan of action
Overview of relevant regulatory documents	The HR department	Annually	The HR department
Participation in the Appointment procedure group	The HR department	Annually	HR minutes from meetings

## Recruitment and promotion

<b>Action/Activity</b>	<b>Responsible unit and action/activity participants</b>	<b>Time frame/Frequency</b>	<b>Documentation (how and where?)</b>
Survey about discrimination Open answers	The HR department	Every second year	Business plan and overall action plan
Overview of recruitment routines and other relevant regulatory documents and processes	The HR department and the University appointment procedure group	Annually	HR minutes from meetings
Participation in the Appointment procedure group	The HR department	Annually	HR minutes from meetings

## Appendix 2 - Work model for active measures in the role as an employer

### Training and other competence development

Action/Activity	Responsible unit and action/activity participants	Time frame/Frequency	Documentation (how and where?)
Survey about discrimination Open answers	The HR department	Every second year	Business plan and overall action plan
Employee dialog	The employee's immediate superior	Annually	Dialog model
Overview of relevant regulatory documents	The HR department and the committees for Associate professor examination and university pedagogy merits	Annually	The HR department

### Opportunities to combine work with parenthood

Action/Activity	Responsible unit and action/activity participants	Time frame/Frequency	Documentation (how and where?)
Survey about discrimination Open answers	The HR department	Every second year	Business plan and overall action plan
Employee dialog	The employee's immediate superior	Annually	Dialog model
Overview of relevant regulatory documents and the Staff Portal	The HR	Annually	The HR department
Annual theme meeting in the respective field where participants deepen their knowledge and follow up on, for example, the results of a survey.	The HR department	Annually	HR minutes from meetings

## Appendix 3 - Work model for active measures in the role as education provider

### Active measures in the role as education provider

#### Admission and recruitment processes

This area includes, among other things, measures to make courses and programs attractive regardless of gender, ethnic background, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, and age. The criteria for selection and eligibility must be non-discriminatory and written in a way that there is no risk of discrimination.

Action/Activity	Responsible unit for action/activity	Participants	Time frame/Frequency	Documentation (how and where?)
Student survey	For distributing the survey, the Department for Studying and Student Support;  The respective units for handling their results.	Students  Student representatives  Relevant school / administrative unit	February–March	Documentation about actions to be taken by the respective administrative unit in a shared folder on S
Physical security check including a perspective on accessibility	The HR department for carrying this out; each unit for the results.		Annually	The Technical and Administrative Staff system;

				In a shared folder on S
Follow-up of accessibility inventory	The HR department and the Finance Office.  Follow-up in the Accessibility committee.		Every six months	The HR department and the Financial Office basis;  In a shared folder on S
Participating in a survey from the agency for accessibility	Each relevant department		Annually	The Register;  In a shared folder on S
Thematic meeting	For distributing the survey, the Department for Studying and Student Support;  The respective units/relevant units for handling their results.	Representatives from the different schools  Student representatives  Representatives from relevant units	Annually	Documentation from the thematic meeting is to be saved in a shared folder on S

### Appendix 3 - Work model for active measures in the role as education provider

#### Opportunities to combine studying with parenthood;

The University is to make it easier for students to combine studying with parenthood. This includes, for example, how teaching is organized, the teaching and other class time, if some parts can be done online, or if there might be certain needs regarding the physical rooms.

Action/Activity	Responsible unit for action/activity	Participants	Time frame/Frequency	Documentation (how and where?)
Student survey	For distributing the survey, the Department for Studying and Student Support;  The respective units for handling their results.	Students  Student representatives  Relevant school / administrative unit	February–March	Documentation about actions to be taken by the respective administrative unit in a shared folder on S
Thematic meeting	For distributing the survey, the Department for Studying and	Representatives from the different schools	Annually	Documentation from the thematic meeting is to be saved in a



	<p>Student Support;</p> <p>The respective units/relevant units for handling their results.</p>	<p>Student representatives</p> <p>Representatives from relevant units</p>		<p>shared folder on S</p>
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