



# Guidelines for links between degree programmes and working life <sup>1</sup>

These guidelines were ratified by the Faculty Board on 2020-12-02 and are effective as of the same date.

Dnr HS 2024/209

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<sup>1</sup> This is a translation of the Swedish version (Riktlinjer för arbetslivsanknytning av utbildning, registration number HS 2020/994). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

Programmes and courses at the University of Skövde (the University) should have clear links to working life. There are several reasons behind this connection, primarily the following:

- *Workplace needs*  
The link to working life promotes the development of education based on the needs of the workplace, i.e., the needs of the organizations expected to employ students upon completion of their education (the recipients of the education).
- *Attractiveness and retention*  
The link to working life enhances students' understanding of how skills acquired through education will be practically applied in the workplace. This understanding can motivate students to complete their education, thereby contributing to increased retention. Education also becomes more attractive when students can form an understanding of their future professional role and various employment opportunities.
- *Establishment*  
The link to working life can serve as an entry point to a first job after graduation, thus facilitating students' establishment in the job market. The University should work to ensure that students encounter regional actors during their education, which can contribute to securing competence in the local area.
- *Quality*  
Workplace relevance is an important aspect of quality. When recipients are involved in the development of education, quality is promoted.

## 1.2 Regulation and follow-up

Requirements for workplace relevance in education are stipulated in the Higher Education Act. It is stated in chapter 1, sections 8-9 that education should develop students' readiness to meet changes in the world of work (first-cycle education) and the prerequisites for professional practice that demand significant levels of independence (second-cycle education).

Workplace relevance is also addressed in the government's annual appropriation directives aimed at universities. In these directives, it is specified that the range of education offered by the higher education institutions should meet the demands of students and the needs of the labor market.

The importance of collaboration and the link between education and workplace relevance is also emphasized in the University's local governance documents, primarily in the Development plan.<sup>2</sup>

The workplace relevance of education is examined and monitored both nationally (mainly by the Swedish Higher Education Authority) and locally, within the framework of the University's quality assurance system.

## **2 Responsibility**

### **2.1 Teachers with academic assignments**

The responsibility for the workplace relevance of education primarily lies with the Programme Coordinators (see below), but also with the Subject Coordinators, and Course Coordinators. This responsibility is outlined in the assignment descriptions for these roles.

A significant portion of the University's education is conducted within the framework of study programmes, many of which have a clear professional orientation, i.e., focusing on specific professional areas. Therefore, the Programme Coordinator has a special responsibility to establish contacts and initiate activities that contribute to promoting the development of the programme based on the needs of the recipients. The Programme Coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that there is a specific forum for workplace relevance (see below, section 4).

### **2.2 The Faculty Board and curriculum committees**

The faculty board and curriculum committees have a responsibility for the workplace relevance perspective within the framework of their mandate to establish and revise course and programme syllabi. In the programme syllabi, both the outcomes stated in the Higher Education Act regarding workplace relevance (as mentioned in section 1) and the national learning outcomes for various degrees related to workplace relevance are specified (for example, the outcomes in the bachelor's degree to "demonstrate the ability to identify the need for additional knowledge and to develop one's competence"). Upon the establishment of programme syllabi, faculty boards and curriculum committees are to ensure that the courses and programmes provide students with the conditions to meet these national outcomes.

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<sup>2</sup> Development plan for the University of Skövde 2017-2022.

## 2.3 Support services

Study and career counsellors, at Academic Affairs and the Student Support Office within the University's support services, are responsible for matters related to career guidance and preparatory efforts for students entering the job market.

The Office for Research Support, Collaboration and Innovation provides support at the university-wide level across several areas related to the workplace relevance of education, such as alumni-related issues. The work is conducted in collaboration with other relevant functions at the University, primarily Programme Coordinators and Study and Career Counsellors.

## 2.4 Overall responsibility for strategy and quality

The strategic and overarching responsibility for the University's collaboration with the business sector lies with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for collaboration with commerce and industry. Correspondingly, the responsibility for collaboration with the public sector is included in the Pro Vice-Chancellor's assignment.

Ensuring that the courses and study programmes include workplace relevance is part of the Faculty Board's overall responsibility for quality assurance of education. Furthermore, Heads of Schools and Heads of Divisions have a responsibility for the workplace perspective in the study programmes, within the framework of the overall responsibility for the School's quality work.

## 3 Examples of workplace relevance

Workplace relevance can be achieved in several ways, including:

*Collaboration with the world of work*

- Guest lecturers
- Adjunct faculty (who primarily work outside the academic domain)
- Study visits/workplace visits
- Field studies
- Placement
- Seminar series with connections to working life which can be carried out continuously throughout a course or study programme

- Teaching internships <sup>3</sup>

#### *Internship Cases*

- Practical examples from the workplace integrated into teaching
- Creation of a "case bank"
- Project work and thesis projects where students work on real-life problems from the workplace

#### *Courses*

- Courses with placement
- Internship courses
- Courses in project management
- Courses in entrepreneurship

#### *Networking*

- Alumni contacts
- Mentorship programmes
- Various forms of networks with consumers or trade associations

#### *Employability Activities*

- Job fairs
- CV workshops and information sessions on job searching

## **4 Forum for Workplace Relevance**

Every study programme at the University must - integrated with the activities and operations exemplified above - have a specific forum for workplace relevance. As mentioned earlier, the Programme Coordinator is responsible for establishing and actively operating such a forum. If several study programmes relate to the same professional field, they can be linked to a common forum, such as for field of healthcare or economics.

A forum for workplace relevance can be organized in various ways, as outlined below. Regardless of the form, the workplace relevance of the study programme should be regularly discussed in the forum, at least once a year, ideally linked to the annual review of the study programme.

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<sup>3</sup> Teaching internship involves giving teachers the opportunity for practical experience outside the university campus or in other ways providing them with the opportunity to acquire current information about the relevance of education for the world of work

## **4.1 Programme council**

A programme council, in accordance with the model that has been in place at the University since 2006, consists of a group where recipients, teachers, and students are included. The group can meet physically or virtually.

## **4.2 Workplace relevance through collaboration platforms**

The established collaboration platforms, linked to the University's education and research, contribute significantly to the workplace relevance of courses and programmes. Collaboration platforms provide arenas for dialogue between academia and the workplace. In cases where the activities conducted within the framework of the platform include issues related to study programmes, a collaboration platform can serve as a forum for workplace relevance.

## **4.3 Other forms**

A forum for workplace relevance can also have another, more flexible form – for example, as a network of workplace representatives, contacts with trade organizations, contacts through research projects, alumni contacts, etc.

## **5 The document is effective as of**

This document is effective as of 2020-12-02 and replaces the guidelines for programme councils (ref. no. HS 105/06-510).