Decision in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic

Background

In light of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Lund University is continuously adapting its activities in order to continue to conduct teaching, research, external engagement and administration as safely and responsibly as possible.

The University observes the applicable parts of the rules, general guidelines and recommendations from the Swedish Public Health Agency. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD) advice against non-essential travel to different countries is also taken into account in the University’s activities. The University is in continuous contact with other higher education institutions as well as relevant public authorities and organisations in order to achieve as good a concordance as possible in its own decisions and adaptations. The rules and recommendations are updated as the situation changes and this applies accordingly to the University’s overall decisions and approach. Students and staff are urged to stay updated via the websites of the Swedish Public Health Agency and Region Skåne as well as the University’s dedicated coronavirus webpages: lu.se/corona and lunduniversity.lu.se/corona.

On 17 March 2020, the Government recommended that universities and other higher education institutions should switch to remote teaching as of 18 March 2020. Following this, education has largely been conducted digitally, with continuous adjustments made to comply with applicable restrictions and recommendations. To provide support for the organisation, there are guidelines on the application of decisions regarding education during the ongoing coronavirus outbreak.

The decision by the government and the County Administrative Board of Skåne to ban public gatherings and public events with more than a certain number of participants also affects the University’s activities, despite the majority of these activities not being covered by the definition of public gatherings and public events.

In the autumn of 2020, the rate of infection has again increased in society, which has led to the introduction of additional restrictions. As of 24 November 2020, public gatherings and public events in Sweden with more than eight (8) people are not permitted to be held. As a complement to this, Skåne County’s Administrative Board has decided on rules to prohibit public gatherings and public events in the county. The Swedish Public Health Agency has decided on new national rules and
general recommendations as of 14 December 2020. These decisions have impacted the University's activities and led to it taking its own stricter decision.

As the spread of infection remains serious, the government announced additional restrictions for the whole of Sweden on 18 December 2020. Among other things, all activities conducted by the state and which are not necessary should be shut down immediately until 24 January 2021. Furthermore, all government agencies have a particular responsibility to ensure that all staff who do not need to be at the workplace are to work from home up to and including 24 January 2021.

For the University, this means that all parts of the organisation are affected.

In order to ensure a safe work and study environment for employees and students, and to help to reduce the spread of infection throughout society, the University has made the following decision. The decision initially applies to the organisation up to and including 24 January 2021. The conditions that may apply to the organisation for the period from 25 January 2021 will be announced later.

**Decision**

In light of the above, the University has decided that

- all activities that are not necessary to carry out with a physical presence on the University's premises are to be carried out digitally, with the following clarifications.

*for education:*

- teaching and assessment of students’ performance (examination) is to be conducted digitally without physical attendance on the University’s premises. Only teaching and assessment that are impossible to conduct remotely, or possible only with great difficulty, may be carried out with physical attendance on the University's premises following a decision by the dean. In such activities, this decision and the Public Health Agency’s rules, general guidelines and recommendations to reduce the spread of Covid-19 are to be observed. Such activities are to be preceded by a risk assessment concerning the risk of spreading infection. The vice-chancellor tasks the dean of each faculty with deciding in detail how this is to be carried out. This decision cannot be delegated further.

- to permit changes in approved course and programme syllabi regarding the autumn semester of 2020 and the spring semester of 2021 concerning the forms of assessment of the students’ performance and for teaching to be conducted using digital solutions to the extent that is necessary for compliance with this decision. The decision on changes is made by the officer who made the decision on the course or programme syllabus in question. The decision is to be documented and the reason for the change is to be stated. There is to be consultation with the student union concerned.

- to carry out education components abroad only to the extent that these are deemed possible to conduct safely based on any travel restrictions and avoiding the spread of Covid-19, and while taking into consideration the
host country’s and the higher education institution’s rules, regulations and recommendations.

- to receive students from other countries for education at Lund University only to the extent possible while taking into consideration any travel restrictions and avoiding the spread of Covid-19, and the rules, regulations and recommendations of the students’ home countries.

- students are encouraged to study from home by default until 24 January 2021. Study spaces and computer rooms are to be left accessible during this period only to a limited extent and for students who need such a space, e.g. for information retrieval, use of reference materials, access to distance learning and examination equipment. Other spaces intended for students, such as group rooms, lunch rooms, coffee rooms etc. must remain closed during this period. For libraries, see below under the heading Other.

_for employees:_

- employees who do not need to be at the workplace to maintain necessary activities are to work from home, initially until 24 January 2021. The line manager assesses the possibility for such work, taking activities and the work environment into account.

- meetings, conferences or other gatherings are to be conducted digitally. In exceptional cases where physical gatherings must be held, the rules and recommendations of the Public Health Agency to reduce the spread of infection are to be observed. Physical meetings, conferences or other gatherings are never to be organised with more participants than necessary. This applies to all activities at the University, i.e. education, research, external engagement and administration. It applies to gatherings of the University’s employees and students as well as invited guests.

- until further notice to only grant permission for domestic business trips which the line manager has deemed necessary and possible to undertake in a way that avoids spreading Covid-19. The Public Health Agency’s rules and recommendations are to be observed for such trips.

- until further notice only to grant permission for business trips abroad which the line manager has deemed necessary and possible to undertake in a way that avoids spreading Covid-19 and taking into consideration any travel restrictions. In cases where the Ministry for Foreign Affairs advises against personal travel, this advice is also to be observed for business trips abroad as far as this is deemed possible.

- receive visits, including suppliers and craftsmen, only to the extent that it is deemed absolutely necessary and possible to conduct by the operational manager while avoiding the spread of Covid-19. In the case of international visits, consideration must be given to any travel restrictions as well as the rules and recommendations of the visitors’ home countries.

_for other:_
– activities aimed at the general public, for example museums, are to be closed to the public until 24 January 2021.
– libraries are to be kept open with limited hours for the University's employees and students to the extent necessary to allow deposits or lending of books and access to reference literature.
– activities involving appointments and consultations or equivalent are to be kept open during the period up to and including 24 January 2021 only to the extent necessary to maintain legal requirements or other necessary activities.

As a starting point, for all activities, there is to be an assessment of the risk of spreading infection and adequate measures are to be taken to avoid the risk of spreading infection.

In cases where studies or work are negatively impacted by the decision above, you are to contact your line manager or programme director so that work and studies can be conducted in the best possible way.

This decision applies from 21 December 2020 and replaces the previous decision made on 26 November 2020 (reg. no STYR 2020/251).

The decision on this matter was taken by the undersigned deputy vice-chancellor in the presence of university director Susanne Kristensson, following a consultation with a representative of the Lund University Students’ Unions and a presentation by general counsel Annette Nilsson, Legal Division.

Sylvia Schwaag Serger

Copies sent to:
All faculties
All administrative divisions
Internal Audit
Lund University Library
University Specialised Centres
University Cultural and Public Centres
MAX IV Laboratory
Lund University Student Unions Association
Staff organisations