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 for the most part been conducted digitally even though a return to more regular conditions was possible as of 15 June. The Swedish Public Health Agency’s rules, general guidelines and recommendations to reduce the spread of infection have continued to be observed. To provide support for the organisation, there are guidelines on the application of decisions regarding education during the ongoing coronavirus outbreak.

The Government’s decision on 27 March 2020 to prohibit public gatherings and public events with more than 50 participants has also affected the University. The majority of the University’s activities are not covered by the definition of public gatherings and public events. The University has nonetheless observed this as a limitation of the number of people in a physical gathering.

In the autumn of 2020, the rate of infection has again increased in society. This has meant that the Swedish Public Health Agency has decided on local general guidelines for the county of Skåne, and the Skåne County Administrative Board has decided on rules to prohibit public gatherings and public events in the county. In
addition, as of 24 November 2020, public gatherings and public events in Sweden with more than eight (8) people are not permitted to be held. This naturally affects the University’s activities and there is therefore reason to further tighten up the University’s own decision on adaptations.

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.

**Decision**
In light of the above, the University has decided

*for education:*

- that teaching and assessment of students’ performance (examination) is as far as possible to be conducted digitally without physical attendance on the University’s premises. 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. In such activities, this decision and the Swedish 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 receiving 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.

*for employees:*

- that staff should work from home to the extent that the line manager deems possible when taking activities and the work environment into account.
that meetings, conferences or other gatherings are to be conducted using digital tools as far as possible. In exceptional cases where physical gatherings must be held, the rules and recommendations of the Swedish 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 in consultation with the line manager are deemed necessary and possible to undertake in a way that avoids spreading Covid-19. The Swedish Public Health Agency’s recommendations are to be observed for such trips.

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

to receive international visits only to the extent that it is deemed possible while avoiding the spread of Covid-19 and complying with any travel restrictions as well as the rules, regulations and recommendations of the visitors’ home countries.

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 as of 26 November 2020 and replaces the previous decision made on 22 October 2020 (reg. no STYR 2020/251).

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

Torbjörn von Schantz
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