



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

Vice-Chancellor

## **Equal opportunities plan for students at Lund University 2016**

*Approved by the Vice-Chancellor 31 March 2016 in the presence of University Director Susanne Kristensson.*

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Why an equal opportunities plan?**

Pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 16 of the Discrimination Act (2014:958) an education provider is each year to draw up an overview of the measures needed to promote equal rights and opportunities for students participating in or applying for the activities, regardless of sex, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability or sexual orientation, and to prevent harassment. Furthermore, in the 2009 manual for higher education institutions called “Preventing discrimination – promoting equal opportunities” (“Förebygga diskriminering – främja likabehandling”) the Equality Ombudsman (DO) recommends that the equal opportunities efforts shall also include the two new grounds of discrimination: *transgender identity or expression*, and *age*. By law, the plan must include:

1. An overview of the measures needed to attain the plan’s objectives,
2. an account of which of these measures the education provider intends to begin or implement during the coming year, and
3. a report on how last year’s planned measures were implemented.

#### **1.2 Why systematic work?**

The equal opportunities work at Lund University, as well as work to prevent victimisation, is to be conducted systematically and purposefully, i.e. through continuous planning, mapping and follow-up. The purpose of this type of work is that discrimination, harassment and victimisation should not occur within the University. Information and strategies are not enough. It is important that the University also recognises and takes action when it is discovered that a student feels victimised – be it by another student or an employee at the University. It is important, therefore, that the equal opportunities plan includes procedures for how employees should act when becoming aware of students feeling subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Likewise, there is a need for clear guidelines on who is responsible for follow-up and documentation. Lund

University has decided to use the DO regulations as a basis when drafting the present equal opportunities plan.

## **2. How are discrimination and harassment manifested?**

The Discrimination Act covers the following grounds of discrimination: sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation and age. At Lund University, as well as in society at large, there are different underlying power structures and norms that govern what is considered permissible and impermissible. The discrimination grounds are to protect groups that are often victims of these power structures, and therefore need additional protection.

It is important to see how the grounds of discrimination interact, in other words, to adopt an intersectional perspective on our organisation. An individual can obviously be discriminated against on the basis of more than one of the grounds of discrimination. Some grounds might also collide with each other. As an example, specific measures taken to promote the underrepresented sex can render the situation of transgender persons invisible. This underlines the need to adopt an intersectional approach in the conception of various proposed measures in order to take note of any such clashes and more thoroughly reflect on the short- and long-term consequences of various measures.

Discrimination can take many forms. The Discrimination Act addresses six different forms of discrimination (Chapter 1 Section 4): direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, inadequate accessibility, harassment, sexual harassment and instructions to discriminate. The latter refers to orders or instructions to discriminate based on the other five concepts.

Direct discrimination means that a student is disadvantaged by being treated less favourably than someone else is treated, has been treated or would be treated in a comparable situation, and the unfavourable treatment is connected to one or several of the grounds of discrimination. It is important to remember that both deliberate actions to discriminate against an individual and refraining from acting in a given situation can be considered direct discrimination. Direct discrimination could involve an applicant being denied access to education (and the denial is linked to one of the grounds of discrimination), that an examiner takes into account, for example, gender when assessing study performance, or that a lecturer on a study programme states that homosexuals are not suitable for the profession the programme serves as training for.

Indirect discrimination means applying a provision, criterion or a procedure that appears neutral in practice, but could discriminate against students on the basis of one or several of the grounds of discrimination. An example of indirect discrimination would be if the University were to impose specific entry requirements that are irrelevant to the course or programme and exclude a person (who is protected on the grounds of discrimination).

Harassment refers to a treatment that violates the student's dignity and that is associated with one of the grounds of discrimination. This can occur, for example, verbally, by email or text messages. One example would be if a lecturer says something derogatory to a student because of their sex. It is important to note that

it is not the intention of the person saying something or acting in a certain way that determines whether something is to be considered harassment, but the effect of the statement or conduct.

Sexual harassment means conduct of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity. This might involve glances or that a supervisor makes sexual advances, for example.

### **3. Focus areas**

The present plan does not present each of the grounds of discrimination in isolation, but adopts an intersectional perspective. The aim is to demonstrate how all grounds of discrimination may exist and interact within the various activities conducted at the University. Instead of discussing the discrimination grounds as separate phenomena, which could be addressed completely independently from each other and their context, the plan focuses on areas where discrimination on the basis of the different grounds may take place – individually or in interaction. This way the work can become more nuanced and multidimensional.

The objectives and proposed measures are presented at the University-wide level as well as at the faculty and department levels. Some measures should be carried out within specified time frames whereas other measures should be carried out continuously.

In the plan, the following focus areas are prioritised:

- Operational and systematic work for equal opportunities
- Educational planning and administration
- Recruitment and student support
- University premises
- Processing of discrimination cases

#### ***3.1 Operational and systematic work for equal opportunities***

The Discrimination Act gives higher education institutions an explicit responsibility to actively work to prevent discrimination and harassment (Chapter 3 Section 15). Lund University will focus on operational and systematic work for equal opportunities. Operational work involves a focus on ensuring that the measures and actions make a difference in the organisation, that policies and plans are accompanied by information that clarifies the objectives, and that the plans include concrete measures that can be followed up, among other things. Systematic work consists of repeating the four phases of planning, implementation, follow up, and development.

**Objectives:** At Lund University, teaching staff as well as other employees and students shall behave respectfully towards each other and treat each other equally. Equal opportunities shall be a priority for Lund University. All staff and students shall have good knowledge of the equal opportunities work conducted in various parts of the University. Staff and students shall be able to acquire knowledge about each specific ground of discrimination and about intersectionality through written information as well as training courses.

**Measures:**

- The University shall actively promote equal opportunities by making special funding available for initiatives to increase knowledge, such as training and dissemination of information.
- *Responsibility of: Management group for gender equality and equal opportunities*
- The University shall create a functioning organisation for systematic equal opportunities work. The allocation of responsibilities and roles is to be specified and supported by the Education Board and the management group for gender equality and equal opportunities, and synchronised with the systematic work environment management.  
*Responsibility of: University Director*

### **3.2 Educational planning and administration**

For a number of years, the University has had a list of rights for Lund University students, which was amended in 2013. The list of rights describes the obligations and rights of students at the University and many of the rules address equal opportunities and accessibility. It includes provisions designed to make it easier to combine studies with parenthood, or make it possible to remain anonymous during examination.

**Objective:** All education at Lund University shall be carried out in such a way that all students are given equal opportunities to benefit from the course or study programme – from planning and information to teaching and examination.

#### **Measures:**

- The list of rights for Lund University students shall be implemented throughout the University. It shall be followed up annually.  
*Responsibility of: Education Board*
- Information about the various religious holidays and customs that may affect the planning and execution of courses or study programmes shall be available to the entire University.  
*Responsibility of: Human Resources*
- Planning of education and development of teaching tools such as e-learning software shall take into account the different needs of all students. During the year, special attention shall be paid to ensuring that the software used for e-learning is compatible with the special computer aids used by the visually impaired.  
*Responsibility of: System owners*

### **3.3 Recruitment and student support**

In order to combat discrimination and harassment, it is important to actively work to recruit students from all groups in society. The University has an ongoing dialogue with the students' unions, student nations and the Academic Society to jointly ensure that student life is inclusive with respect to the grounds of discrimination.

**Objective:** All students at the University shall have equal opportunities to pursue their studies and to participate in the social life of the University.

#### **Measures:**

- The University shall promote widening participation in all courses and study programmes.  
*Responsibility of: Education Board*
- Necessary support for studies shall be available to all students.  
*Responsibility of: Students Affairs and External Relations*

### **3.4 University premises**

The Discrimination Act defines *inadequate accessibility* as “situations where a person with disability is disadvantaged when for example an education provider fails to take accessibility measures so as to ensure the person will be provided equal conditions as compared to persons without disability, based on accessibility requirements in laws or other statutes” (Chapter 1 Section 4 third point). Furthermore, the University’s policy for gender equality, equal opportunities and diversity states that “At the University, zero tolerance is shown to all forms of discrimination.” This means that Lund University does not lend or lease its facilities to activities with discriminatory and abusive elements.

**Objective:** Obstacles in the study environment must be eliminated so that all students have equal opportunities to complete their studies.

#### **Measures:**

- The accessibility for students is to be examined at safety rounds. The student safety representative has the right to participate in both physical and psychosocial safety rounds.  
*Responsibility of: Central HSE committee*
- Quiet rooms or equivalents are to be available on campus so that students are able to take time out for personal tranquillity or to practise their religion.  
*Responsibility of: LU Estates*
- Gender labelling of premises such as lavatories shall be avoided as much as possible, because it may be perceived as a negative experience for students who do not wish to be categorised as male or female.  
*Responsibility of: LU Estates*

### **3.5 Processing of discrimination cases**

**Objective:** All staff and students shall know what rights and obligations students have and how discrimination and harassment cases are processed.

#### **Measures:**

- The processing of discrimination and harassment cases shall be reviewed and coordinated for the entire University. Clear information about the procedures shall be distributed to all staff and students.  
*Responsibility of: University Director*

## **4. Implementation and follow up**

The Vice-Chancellor has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the University conducts functioning systematic equal opportunities work. Successful equal opportunities work requires that

- funds are reserved for the work on all levels
- responsibilities for the measures are delegated correctly
- examples of good practice are compiled and shared
- time plans are established
- outcomes are followed up

## References

*BRYT!: ett metodmaterial om normer i allmänhet och heteronormen i synnerhet.* 3rd ed., Forum för levande historia, RFSL Ungdom. 2011.

*Förebygga diskriminering – främja likabehandling: DO:s handledning för att utforma en likabehandlingsplan i högskolan.* Diskrimineringsombudsmannen. 2009.

*Lund University policy for gender equality, equal opportunities and diversity,* PE 2011/177. Lund University. 2011.

*List of rights for students at Lund University,* SU 2013/44. Lund University. 2013.

*Att bryta innanförskapet: Kritiska perspektiv på jämställdhet och mångfald i akademien* (2014) Kerstin Sandell (ed.), Makadam förlag

Diskrimineringsombudsmannens utbildning *Studenters rätt i högskolan:*

<http://e-utbildning.do.se/hogskolan/>