



Sveriges universitets-
och högskoleförbund

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Code for Swedish Universities

A code for Swedish universities¹, grounded in international declarations such as the Magna Charta Universitatum, the Kalven Report and the Chicago Principles, as well as Swedish law.

The code and academic citizenship encompass everyone at a higher education institution. Within academic citizenship, everyone shares a common responsibility for the quality of education and research and for the academic environment. Universities should be a place for dialogue and the exchange of knowledge, where even uncomfortable and controversial questions have a place. At the same time, dialogue and discussion should always be marked by mutual respect.

Education and Research at the Centre

The fundamental task and responsibility of higher education institutions is to conduct education and research. These are interlinked. Higher education is based on a scholarly or artistic foundation and proven experience. In addition to subject competence and preparation for working life, students should also develop critical and independent thinking. Coherent environments combining education, doctoral education and research should be pursued. A higher education institution that does not itself provide doctoral education should ensure this through cooperation with other higher education institutions.

The Education and Research Process

The responsibility of universities is to freely seek and disseminate knowledge resting on a scholarly or artistic foundation. An ethical approach should guide and inform research. Academic appointments and career opportunities should be based on individual merit. High quality and relevance are ensured through openness, collaboration, peer review and engagement with external stakeholders.

¹ In this Code, “universities” refers to all Swedish universities and university colleges (Swedish: universitet och högskolor), that is, all higher education institutions within the meaning of the Swedish Higher Education Act.

Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy

Academic freedom is a prerequisite for higher education institutions to be able to carry out their mission. Academic freedom encompasses the individual freedom of students, teachers and researchers, as well as the self-governance of higher education institutions. Education and research should safeguard their integrity against ideological, political or commercial interests. Higher education institutions should develop and support academic freedom throughout their operations. Vice-Chancellors and leadership at all levels should safeguard the institution's autonomy and uphold an objective stance on complex issues.

Collegiality

At universities, collegiality is a fundamental working method that describes scholarly practice and how one works to follow and uphold academic norms. Collegiality is exercised by teachers and researchers who, by virtue of their scholarly or artistic competence, jointly review the quality of education and research, within a self-governing culture in which knowledge and sound argument are central. Collegiality is an expression of the academic citizenship shared by everyone at the higher education institution, but it should be kept distinct from, while coordinated with, the broader concept of co-workership. Students' influence over their education and their situation should be guaranteed and encouraged. The relationship between different preparatory bodies and decision-making processes should be clarified and transparent.

A National and International Community

All higher education institutions are part of a larger global community. Collaboration in education and research, both within Sweden and with other countries, is a fundamental prerequisite for the mission of higher education institutions and should be well developed and strong. The free mobility of students, teachers and researchers should be facilitated and supported. There should be an open international exchange of knowledge, conducted in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility.

Social Responsibility and Collaboration

Universities are a self-evident and central part of, and for, society, both now and in the future – and, through their activities, a critically reflective force in the development of society. Collaboration with the surrounding society is grounded in scholarly or artistic knowledge. Teachers and researchers should be visible and active in the public sphere and disseminate knowledge, as well as safeguard public trust in their activities. Collaboration with external stakeholders, companies and organisations provides mutual exchange, and mobility between higher education institutions and other stakeholders should be actively supported.

The code consists of principles describing central starting points and objectives for the mission of higher education institutions. These principles need to be continuously safeguarded, developed and protected. Each higher education institution decides for itself how the code is to be implemented in its own operations.