



Position Document

Stockholm University Student Union

Adopted by the Student Union Representative Assembly April 15, 2021

Revised by the Student Union Representative Assembly February 24, 2022



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1. Introduction

The Stockholm University Student Union (SUS) position document forms the political platform on which we base our day-to-day advocacy and influence efforts for a wide range of actors and stakeholders. The position document is an important part of a transparent student union. SUS represents a large number of students, all of whom have different circumstances, opinions, and experiences. Despite this, there are also issues in which many students have common interests. The SUS position document contains our views on common student issues that primarily affect students at Stockholm University (SU), and secondly student life in Stockholm. This includes teaching, educational environment, education policy, and student conditions. But it not a general policy document that takes a position on issues that are irrelevant to the student body.

Through the policy documents adopted by Student Union Representative Assembly , the policy opinions of SUS are openly and clearly presented to members and stakeholders and can be democratically changed by submitting motions to the Representative Assembly or by voting as a member in the Student Union elections. All of this is designed to create as much legitimacy as possible for SUS' advocacy work.

The position document shall be used by all leading representatives of SUS and by the SUS central office in meetings with students, Stockholm University administration, partnering organisations, politicians, and the media. This is the foundation on which SUS is working to create a world-class education.

2. Basic principles

2.1. Higher education in society

An open academe must not be isolated, on the contrary, it must interact with the surrounding society, enrich it with its research, and be an open force in the development of society. The main task of SU is to provide education, and this should be open to students and the rest of society. The pillars of higher education in society are academic freedom, democracy, and lifelong learning.

However, the legitimacy of a university is not only based on its ability to produce good research and education. SU should also be and act as a role model in society. University operations should be permeated by equality and work for sustainable development. SU must be able to provide knowledge-based and relevant answers to the major challenges of our time and to counter extremism, simplistic thinking, and prejudice.

2.2. Student influence on quality

The Swedish Higher Education Act states that all students should participate in SU's development since this creates higher quality education. When students are allowed to

participate in decisions concerning students, the educational and study environment will be improved. We believe that the influence of students is best achieved when organised by the students themselves. Student unions play an important role as independent organisations promoting students' involvement and influence in their education. Each institute of higher education having at least one student union that is given a real opportunity to participate in the development of their education and to conduct independent activities for students at the university is therefore an important democratic right. It is obvious that all academic institutions should comply with the wording of the Swedish Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance regarding student influence.

2.3. Education for all

The right to equal education is a matter of justice and democracy because society's resources that are devoted to higher education should be shared by all. Two important principles for achieving this goal are that all higher education should be free of charge, and that SU should actively combat discrimination and encourage broader recruitment.

As society changes, the academic institutions also change. The number of students in higher education is much greater today than fifty years ago. New student groups and more students place new demands on the system and are changing old structures. SU must now adapt to be a university for everyone, and thus find new ways of working and growing. The fact that more people are taking part in higher education is an opportunity both for society and for individuals.

3. Stockholm University Student Union Positions

3.1. Quality in education

3.1.1. Science-based and teacher-led time

All academic education should be conducted on a scientific basis and be open to several scientific perspectives and should counteract the reproduction of a Eurocentric worldview. Students should be given the tools to both assimilate academic texts and to be able to critically review and question prevailing truths and structures. Elements of the scientific method should therefore be integrated into all aspects of education where possible, and separate methodology courses should be provided as early as possible in the educational programme. Students should be continuously trained in academic writing during their education. This is particularly important in preparation for writing a thesis. SU should also offer a voluntary introductory course to university studies in general and the scientific method in particular at the start of each semester. It should also be able to be taken in parallel with other courses.

Some parts of SU have minimal teacher-led time, not least in the humanities and social sciences. Teacher-led time is something that is prioritised when faculties have financial savings requirements. Resources for basic education must be increased to ensure that

students are entitled to at least 15 hours of teacher-led time per week and at least one hour of teacher-led academic supervision per credit in the case of thesis work. It is not uncommon for students in the above-mentioned faculties to have less than five hours of teacher-led instruction per week. This reduces the quality of the teaching and the ability of the teaching staff to provide scientific support.

3.1.2. Stockholm University Quality System

SU must have a quality system that includes quality assurance and quality development for all aspects of education and research. The student perspective is a very important part of the quality system, and it is crucial that the governing documents and processes for quality systems are transparent and similar throughout SU so that students' participation at all SU's levels can be obtained through educational surveys.

3.1.3. Examinations

Examinations are a central part of education that raise questions about legal protection. Anonymised exams are one such question. Currently, not all exams are anonymous, which is a problem for students, since there are risks that an examiner will know who the student is. Anonymous exams should be standard in order to increase students' legal protection. This applies to both physical exams in an examination room and online ones. SU's central exam administration must include online exams. Digital exams should be made available throughout all of SU.

In order to keep study time and leisure time separate, examinations must only take place during regular teaching periods.

3.1.4. Rating

SU uses a 7-point scale that is related to the expected study results that apply to the training provided. However, exceptions are made to the 7-point grading scale, which creates problems both for future recruitment to both postgraduate studies and to the workforce. It can also cause confusion among the individual students when they are judged differently in different courses. Some courses should only be graded with pass or fail grades. However, the basic principle is that SU should stick to a single grading scale.

The 7-point grading scale means that students experience high performance requirements, for example, in order to continue studying at higher levels. SU must work to reduce the hyperfocus on marks and additional grading stress.

3.2. Teaching and learning in higher education

SU should place greater emphasis on pedagogical qualifications in the appointment of university lecturers and professors. All PhD students shall be offered to undergo basic training in teaching and learning within higher education within the framework of their postgraduate field. The training in teaching and learning within higher education that is offered to postgraduate students must meet national standards (at least 7.5 credits).

The training in teaching and learning within higher education should include both teaching pedagogy and training in academic supervising of students. To the greatest extent possible, PhD students should be offered the opportunity to teach during their doctoral studies. All instructors who supervise thesis writing, including PhD students, must have completed the training for teaching and learning within higher education.

In comparison with several other major universities, SU gives low priority to both at pedagogical qualifications and educational training. This needs to be improved by SU in order to avoid future difficulties with PhD students and researchers from SU not being employed at other universities due to insufficient pedagogical training.

3.2.1. Forms of teaching

SU must be able to meet the needs of a heterogeneous student body. Therefore, in addition to campus-based, full-time studies, it should be possible to study both individual courses and entire programmes part-time, during the evening, remotely, and during the summer. In particular, more relevant courses that are a part of many students' degrees should be given in the evening, part-time, and in the summer. It should be possible to combine part-time studies with work, for example. Since everyone learns in different ways, different types of teaching and testing are needed. It is not appropriate that some courses consist almost exclusively of big lectures with several hundred students and exams in large halls during the first few years. SU needs more personalised teaching and more and different forms of teaching and testing.

3.2.2. IT in teaching

SU should use IT as a teaching tool to a greater extent than today. This can contribute to higher quality education for students through increased communication with teachers and fellow students and increased availability of information. Students who wish to receive information about their education or information from SU should have the opportunity to do so through a single teacher platform. The IT environment must be simple enough that even those who are taking individual courses at SU do not have to spend time learning the IT environment. All lectures should be recorded and made available on SU's learning platform.

SU should also use digital tools for campus-based teaching. It should be possible to participate from home in cases of illness, for example. It should also be possible to complement seminars with digital tools, in particular to make them accessible to students with childcare responsibilities. However, IT should always be used for quality-enhancing purposes and not be seen as an opportunity to save money through less teacher contact or more distance-learning courses for campus students. SU shall make its self-produced research and materials available via its website or the university library. Students are entitled to have access to the latest research and knowledge, which requires open access. Open access means that the author gives everyone the right to read, download, copy and distribute the work in digital form, free of charge, but with the copyrights intact.

3.2.3. Internationalisation

Society is becoming increasingly globalised and as this trend increases so does the need for internationalised education. In order to prepare students for international research and the labour market, courses, and degrees at SU must be recognised and viable outside Sweden.

Students must also be given greater opportunities to study abroad with respect to their education, both in terms of courses and programmes. Through exchange agreements, the financial and administrative burden for the individual is reduced, and SU will therefore work to ensure that more agreements are reached in all areas of education. International mobility must also be made possible within the framework of European university alliances and other partnerships. Part of the internationalisation efforts is to enable foreign students from all countries to study in Sweden. In order to improve the potential for this, the fees for non-European students must be abolished. It should also be easier for foreign students who have studied in Sweden to stay and work and live in the country after their degree.

In addition to the current language of instruction, more courses must be provided in English in order for more people to be able to take these classes. At present, large parts of the doctoral programme are provided in English, but at the masters and undergraduate level, it is less common for courses and education to be made available in English. This leads to fewer international students being able to take part in their education at SU.

3.2.4. Teaching students and students in other interdisciplinary fields

Students who are in programmes with courses in different departments in general, and teaching students in particular, are both geographically and organisationally spread out at SU. Currently, this contributes to a lack of both community and a lack of interaction during a students' education. It also makes it difficult for students to manage their education, since the continuity needed to create structures for student influence is often lacking. Frequently changing departments and faculty as a student also often leads to a lack of study-related and programme information, and it leads to initial problems organising one's studies because different departments and faculties organise their administration and teaching in completely different ways.

Whether the student is getting their education at one or more departments, SU should be able to guarantee clear information and equal opportunities for students to manage their education.

3.3. Sustainable education

3.3.1. Stockholm University as a public authority

As per Sec. 5 of the Swedish Higher Education Act, SU has a responsibility to promote sustainable development in its activities and should take this into account in all of its activities. This should be done in accordance with the EU's Sustainable Development

Strategy and Sweden's environmental goals. Stockholm University should compensate for its emissions, and Agenda 2030 should be incorporated both in terms of the education system and in government and workplace operations. SU must consider both the economic, social, and ecological aspects of sustainability in its work.

Actual environmental adaptation at SU is a prerequisite for SU to have a credible profile on environmental issues. SU should therefore work to ensure that students can live their lives sustainably on campus, in terms of everything from public transport solutions to recycling waste. SU should increase the use of IT in its information and training to save energy and resources. Routines should be established to post schedules, textbooks, and other materials on the website to save natural resources and energy. Information and accessibility for employees and students should permeate SU's environmental work.

SU's Climate Roadmap must be reviewed regularly to ensure that the commitment level is high and appropriate. SU should always and in all contexts take the climate and environmental aspects into account when planning travel routes and arranging conferences and meetings, and when SU chooses to participate in various events. Flights should be avoided, but when they are made, they should be booked through SU's travel agency. The departments should be given good options for replacing travel with digital meetings. SU should also facilitate sustainable travel for students participating in international mobility, for example, by subsidizing train travel. When choosing and negotiating with actors on campus, it should always be required that they meet strict climate and environmental requirements. Events arranged by SU should be vegan or vegetarian as much as possible.

A modern campus should also be a green campus. SU must constantly work to make its operations more environmentally-friendly and sustainable through lower energy consumption, more recycling, and environmentally conscious purchasing. Large parts of the campus have a unique natural location with a biodiversity that must be protected. It is therefore particularly important that environmental considerations are taken into account for new construction.

3.3.2. Sustainable knowledge

SU conducts research on sustainable development, which is of great importance to society and needs to be provided with resources. Education should also produce knowledge of sustainability. Each main field of study can be linked to one or more aspects of sustainable development, and how this is done is best determined by the teachers themselves. An academic degree must involve knowledge and understanding of how society will achieve sustainable development in relation to the chosen subject. Knowledge of sustainable development must be based on the understanding of the links between the state of the environment and human activities from a local, regional, and global perspective.

3.4. Student influence

3.4.1. Conditions for influence

Well-functioning student influence is a basic requirement for a democratic university and a prerequisite for high quality education. Students must be represented in all decision-making and preparatory bodies that affect the situation for students according to the Higher Education Act.

Influence over one's education is a right and should not be difficult or time-consuming for the individual student. SU has a responsibility to develop flexible and transparent channels to allow all SU students to influence their education.

SU must create good conditions for students to influence their education by ensuring that rules for student influence are followed. The time spent on participating in decision-making and preparatory bodies shall be reimbursed financially for student representatives, and by extending the employment of PhD students and student representatives, SU provides training on how the various decision-making and preparatory bodies function. SU must also train the students in SU's organisational structure. When many decisions at SU are prepared informally, students should have the opportunity to meet representatives of departments and faculties outside of ordinary meetings.

Most of the student influence over education is exercised by student representatives at the department and faculty level. It is therefore important that there are functional structures for student influence in all departments, usually in the form of a student council, which requires SU's active support. In order to have successful student influence, it is important that the department or equivalent institution support student representatives and student councils by appointing a contact person who maintains continuous contact with the Council, provides access to rooms and facilities, and allows the students to share information with the department's students. It should also act as a link to the department and provide support to the council. It is extremely important that there are contact persons to provide student input at all levels of SU to ensure that the students can have influence over their education.

3.4.2. Course evaluations

Course evaluations are one of the most important tools students have for participating in the design and development of their education. In order for course evaluations to work as an instrument for quality and student influence, they need to be well thought-out, and have a high response rate. Feedback and be followed up with the students are also needed. SU has an automated system of course evaluations that makes course evaluations look the same regardless of what a student is studying. This is the system that should be used. It is easier to manage your education if the framework for providing feedback is the same regardless of the subject. It is of the utmost importance that the departments also have procedures for how they report the outcomes of the course evaluations.

Students today often find it difficult to understand how the departments work with the course evaluations. This creates the impression that the course evaluations are meaningless and not used, which is why participation is dropping. It is of the utmost importance that the implementation, content, and follow-up for course evaluations, at a minimum, meets the requirements of the Higher Education Act. SU should also develop structures and guidelines for how student representatives can participate in working on course evaluations, since this often contributes to both better dissemination of results among students and to constructive suggestions to improve education.

It is important that SU also has a system for quality assurance and evaluation of entire programmes. The departments are responsible for programme evaluations and should ensure that evaluations are conducted and processed in order to improve the programmes. Students should have the opportunity to evaluate their education based on the entire programme.

3.4.3. Financing for Student Unions

The student unions are mainly financed by grants from the academic institution and by indirect government funding. Indirect government funding does not nearly cover the costs of the unions to ensure students have influence in their education, which has led to many student unions becoming dependent on voluntary contributions from their academic institution to maintain their activities. This insecure form of funding, which can stop at any time, and which places student unions in a position of dependency on the institutions that they are to examine, is not sustainable. The student unions represent all students, not just their members. Therefore, it is not appropriate for membership fees to finance basic student advocacy.

Strong and independent student influence and advocacy is important for continued quality in higher education. Therefore, the indirect government funding should be increased to reflect the costs of student unions monitoring education. At least a tripling of the current level is needed.

3.4.4. International students' opportunities for influence

It is difficult for international students and, not least, PhD students to influence their education since the official language is Swedish. The language of the internal publications should be the same as the working language. It is therefore of the utmost importance that course evaluations and evaluations of programmes are carried out in the language in which the training is conducted.

SU must be more open in terms of language within the decision-making structure. Today, student representatives need to be able to speak Swedish in many groups – it is not enough to just understand Swedish and speak English yourself. This is a problem because some voices are not heard.

Both undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate education is available in English. In spite of this, it is rare for English to be spoken in preparatory and decision-making bodies that make decisions on these educational programmes. It must be possible for students who do not speak Swedish have some influence over their education, not least by allowing them to speak English in the preparatory and decision-making bodies.

3.5. Study environment

3.5.1. A vibrant and modern campus

SU is the students' workplace. The teaching facilities must be safe, accessible, and adapted to the activities carried out in them. Students should also have access to study spaces, places for heating and eating food, places for socializing, and well-functioning computer rooms and wireless networks. The study spaces should be clean and attractive. More quiet and relaxed study spaces must be created in both the university library and elsewhere on SU's different campuses. These facilities should be located in all parts of the university campus and should be dimensioned according to the number of students at SU, so that no one should have to leave their campus against their will in order to study or eat. Creating stimulating and creative learning environments requires spaces that are not only functional but also attractive and in good condition. Many facades and locations at SU are now in great need of repair. The new construction has also been neglected at SU. There is a large lack of facilities, which leads to overcrowded lecture halls, exams being held in the evening and on weekends, and too few student spaces.

Part of the problem in terms of student spaces at SU depends on Akademiska Hus. Akademiska Hus' high profitability targets, which are also exceeded, means that resources that could be used for, e.g., improvements to properties or more instruction time, instead go to high rental costs for the academic institutions. The government must therefore adjust the profitability requirements for Akademiska Hus by revising its corporate directive.

3.5.2. University Library

A well-developed university library is an important part of a student's study environment and an obvious part of SU. The library should ensure flexibility and user-friendliness. In today's increasingly digitised era, it is important that the library closely follow developments through improved information searches via the internet and more e-literature. Making course literature accessible via the internet is positive both in terms of student accessibility and the environment. However, this must not be at the expense of the development of the physical library. The physical library holds an important function as a quiet study environment. To support students, the library should also offer courses on information searching. The library spaces associated with individual institutions should also be preserved and developed to support students studying there.

University libraries need to improve accessibility to reading course literature.

3.5.3. Course literature for everyone

All students should be entitled to a free education. This includes SU assisting students with the course material they need. This should be done by making the course literature available digitally, keeping editions of course literature in university libraries and, as part of the work toward a long-term goal of free course literature, introducing maximum limits on the price of course literature. It is also important that all course literature can be offered to students who need it. Therefore, departments should publish their bibliography no later than three months before the start of the course. Instructors should not unjustifiably reward their own written literature, but also make more space for other authors on the literature list.

In order to give students a good chance of achieving the established goals in the course syllabus, the course literature should be chosen from this particular point of view. The course literature should show the breadth of a research area. Course literature also plays a major role in SU's work on gender equality. Quality of education, criticism of norms, and the inclusion of a variety of perspectives should be important in selecting of course literature.

3.5.4. Student safety representative and influence

Many of the students' health and safety problems involve issues that cross multiple departments. Therefore, there must be a forum where these kinds of issues can be dealt with. The responsibility for monitoring how students experience their physical and psycho-social study environment at the common, university level in order to identify and address health and safety deficiencies that affect large student groups must be clarified. The legislation also needs to be clarified as to how far SU's responsibility for the study and work environment goes. Stockholm University often takes responsibility for the work environment linked to the actual teaching time and not for the study time as a whole, despite the fact that students' study time often consists largely of independent study outside the classroom.

3.5.5. Students' health

Students feel worse than their peers who are working at the same age. Higher education can be fast-paced and places high demands on independent work in addition to regular lecture time. At the same time, many students today have jobs, family, and other commitments alongside their studies. Students are a financially vulnerable group and their situation outside SU can also affect their mental health. The lack of both money and housing makes the situation worse. SU must work to ensure that this situation does not create unnecessary negative stress. Planning and scheduling should enable a smooth pace of one's study. SU should implement a norm that allows students to take time off between the autumn and spring semester. This would enable students to feel less stressed, and help them to focus on other aspects of everyday life, as well as allow them to recover before the next semester.

Students should be able to perform their studies without risking their health. For off-campus excursions and laboratory sessions, students should be offered basic first aid training and accident prevention.

3.5.6. Student Health Centre

The Student Health Centre at SU has an important mission and must provide more resources. The Student Health Centre provides healthcare for about ten universities in Stockholm and the current funding is insufficient. There are few appointments currently available, and if one tries to make an appointment, it is usually fully booked.

The Student Health Centre has an important task in preventing mental illness, which involves various forms of courses and workshops. It is important that SU continues to offer stress management courses for both students and PhD students, as well as other wellness courses.

Remedial measures to the physical environment, as well as preventive psycho-social work, are important keys for making students' health as good as possible. Departments and the Student Health Centre should work closely together to identify people with health-related problems early on and provide them with assistance at as early stage.

A further problem is that many students are not familiar with the Student Health Centre. SU must make the important work of the Student Health Centre visible so that students are aware of it.

3.5.7. Associations on campus

A strong community life and the opportunity for social interaction on campus are important for many students, especially students from other cities and international students. All associations built on a democratic basis, including political party associations, must be given the opportunity to appear and grow on campus. This should apply not only to SU but to all off the country's academic institutions.

At SU, faculty clubs play an important role in terms of community organisations, including welcoming activities and other activities to make social contacts. The faculty clubs contribute to a strong student community and a greater sense of belonging at SU. SU should ensure that the activities of faculty clubs are secured through faculty grants and other financial support where necessary. It is also important that there is good collaboration between faculty clubs

3.6. Gender Equality

3.6.1. Equal opportunities

According to the Swedish Work Environment Act, systematic work on health and safety must be take place at all workplaces and at SU. At present, far from all institutions do this, and in many cases where such work is carried out, the students are not included in it. SU must, to a greater extent than today, ensure the students' right to a satisfactory

working environment and the opportunity to influence it through the establishment of structures in which students are included in the regular, local health and safety efforts. An important measure to strengthen the students' influence over their working environment would be to give student council representatives for equality and study environment the same status and rights as the employee's safety representative. They should also be included in the institutions' local groups working on health and safety issues and equal opportunities.

Active anti-racist work repudiates racism, fascism, and xenophobia of all kinds and is important for the safety of all students. Working with parties and organisations based on nationalism risks making students feel unwelcome at SU or in SUS operations, which should be open to all. For this reason, SUS does not cooperate with parties or organisations based on nationalism or xenophobia.

Teaching staff should be instructed in using inclusive language and how to counter prejudice.

3.6.2. Anti-discrimination laws and active measures:

Higher education is a human right. This means that SU must enable everyone to pursue higher education. In order to combat discrimination, SU is responsible for ensuring that all students are aware of their rights and to train staff on non-discrimination issues. In cases of discrimination, the discriminated person is often in a vulnerable position. It is therefore extremely important that handling cases of discrimination and harassment is equally applied to students, and that the investigation process is transparent and predictable. SU must always investigate any suspected case of discrimination or harassment. SUS believes that it is important that SU takes responsibility for taking active measures at several levels, both at the departments and at the Student Support Services, and that these active measures should address all the courses of discrimination.

SU is a part of society and is thus affected by the same structures as the surrounding society, even when it comes to the issue of gender equality. Although more than half of SU's students today are women, the percentage of non-male professors is still low. Here too SU has a responsibility to take action.

3.6.3. Broader recruitment

Broader recruitment at SU creates a more inclusive university. SU must be accessible to all groups in society, and all groups should have equal access to higher education. Active steps should be taken by the university in order to make higher education an option for everyone. Targeted efforts are needed to attract smart students from different backgrounds to Stockholm University. The fact that not everyone knows that studying at SU is an option is a problem, and that problem must be fixed by SU. A key part of broader recruitment is marketing, i.e., how SU is marketed, and which students are seen in marketing campaigns affects which prospective students feel that SU is

open to them. The work cannot stop at recruitment either, but the perspective of broader participation must permeate all of SU's operations.

SU should have several alternative admission methods such as admission tests, previous work experience, and interviews to make higher education available to more people.

3.6.4. Intersectionality

SUS is committed to working on the basis of a norm-critical and intersectional approach. This means that the reasons behind discrimination should not only be treated separately, but that the focus should be on how they interact with each other. Students' situations should never be opposed to each other. It is important to always assume that power structures affect society as a whole and, of course, SU. Power structures affect everything from the hiring of staff to the research produced by the institution. SU should take responsibility for this and attempt to counterbalance it.

3.6.5. Accessibility and broader participation

Work on accessibility needs to be carried out in many different ways and on many different levels throughout the university organisation. In short, people live different lives and require different conditions in order to participate in higher education. SU must therefore offer flexibility and adapt to the different needs of different students. It goes without saying that people, regardless of their functional ability, should feel represented and have access to education. SU needs to work actively to ensure that everything from physical meeting spaces to information sources are accessible to everyone. This includes providing loopsets in all lecture halls and using them.

Having access to well-functioning support options, such as note-takers, mentors, language workshops, etc. can be a critical factor in determining whether a student is successful in their studies or not. SU should therefore offer a wide range of support options and make them available to as many students as possible. Rooms and facilities also need to be physically accessible to everyone. Students using a wheelchair, or the like should be able to get around at SU locations. Microphones should be used in lectures if they are available, and tactile flooring and pathways for the visually impaired should be located in central locations in the university environment.

Students should be able to study at SU regardless of their functional impairments. It is also of the utmost importance that special educational support works properly. Special educational support must be a right that is equal for everyone. A reduced queue time at Student Support Services for students in need of special support is therefore necessary. Awareness and knowledge of student health needs to increase among decision-makers and officials at the local, regional, and national level, and the Student Health Centre should be given sufficient resources to be accessible to all students.

The special educational support at SU should be centralised. Currently, Student Support Services provides a recommendation of what special educational support a

student needs, but it is the departments themselves who decide whether they want to provide the support. This not only creates space to re-interpret the student's needs, but it also means that students must fight for their right to special educational support. It is unreasonable for students to spend time away from their studies to demand the right to support. National guidelines regarding special educational support should be introduced.

3.6.6. Languages and national minority languages

SU is a university in the nation's capitol, and it should be possible to study many different languages at SU. Language plays an important cultural role in society and at SU. But it is also an asset on the labour market. SU also has an important role in its function as a public agency, when it comes to national minority languages. SUS therefore believes that SU should provide education and classes in all national minority languages.

SU should have a broad language education programme, including classical and modern languages, as well as minority languages.

3.6.7. International solidarity

SU is part of many international contexts. When restrictions are imposed on academic freedom around the world, this always affects students as a group. Therefore, SUS supports students who stand up for their rights both in Sweden and abroad. When SU enters into new partnerships, whether its partners uphold human rights in academic institutions must be taken into consideration.

Today, the rules for residence permits are designed in such a way that refugees arriving in Sweden must prioritise work before university studies, which makes things difficult for both academic institutions and students. Refugees studying at SU should not have to interrupt their studies in order to stay in Sweden.

3.7. Labour market

3.7.1. Work-related aspects of education

In order to improve students' chances of a good career after their university studies, SU must provide more meeting spaces and information opportunities between students and potential employers, e.g., in the form of employment fairs. This can be done both by employers or in cooperation with the student organisations at SU. SU should strive to offer more programmes and disciplinary domains at employment fairs than what is presently offered.

People who have studied at SU and enter the workforce can function as an important part of the alumni networks. The university should expand its alumni activities and create an active network of alumni. This provides good opportunities for finding mentors for students and relevant contacts for employment fairs and thus direct contact with the profession. Mentoring programmes are also an important tool for

increasing the connections with employers and understanding working life. These programmes should be run and financed by SU and should be continuously evaluated and developed. Mentorship programmes provide that important first contact with a future career and are part of the work of creating the equal conditions for students.

3.7.2. Traineeships and Vocational Training

SU shall offer practical training for all educational programmes leading to a degree. Traineeships must never run the risk of exploiting students as a free source of labour. It is therefore important that all traineeships have a clear link to the educational programme and are subject to quality control by the university. All academic supervisors must have continuous contact with the head of the university.

It should also be possible to apply for specific traineeships outside of the regular programmes, for example, for students who are taking independent courses. SU provides students who have progressed in their education the opportunity to take an independent traineeship of equivalent quality as the regular trainee programme.

Vocational training is a very important part of a students education, where this training is a mandatory component. All students are entitled to well-trained supervisors for vocational training and the ability to practice their fields of study during the traineeship. SU must correct the problems that cause students to get caught between trainee partners and academic institutions and end up receiving a traineeship too late. It is of the utmost importance for a legally secure assessment that there is ongoing contact between SU and the supervisors.

Vocational training and traineeships often involve hidden fees. This is unacceptable, and SU should bear those costs.

3.7.3. Career and Study Guidance

For the vast majority of students, higher education is a way to achieve future career goals. SU must therefore provide factual and up-to-date information on the usefulness of various education programmes in terms of research and the labour market. SU should offer career and study guidance that is tailored to different courses and subjects.

The career and study guidance at SU shall follow SU's guidelines and be available to all students. Providing high quality study and career guidance is a fundamental part of SU's link to working world. SU should also develop professional career guidance for PhD students and recently graduated PhD students that offers guidance for becoming established on the labour market, outside of the university world. Those providing career and study guidance should have the proper training to provide the service.

3.8. National education issues

3.8.1. Quality evaluations

It is important to be able to demonstrate the quality of various educational programmes, both in order to help students choose a rewarding education and to

ensure society's trust in universities. However, the question of what constitutes good quality in higher education must be constantly present in the debate on higher education policy. There needs to be continual discussion about the meaning of the concept of “quality” and how quality can be measured.

Quality assessment should take into account the local circumstances around the courses being evaluated and measure several aspects of quality rather than just the results of evaluations. A good quality system must also have the trust of the country's universities and be based on collegial principles, where those who are experts in a disciplinary domain are also those who examine others in the field. Allocation of resources based on quality results must give poor quality educational programmes opportunities to remedy their deficiencies and not to deprive them of resources.

SU should be continuously examined in a comprehensive manner by an independent body, such as the Office of the Chancellor of the Swedish Universities, with the aim of increasing the quality of education.

3.8.2. The resource allocation system

It is crucial that Sweden's higher education institutions have sufficient resources to maintain good quality and meet the expectations and needs of the students. A resource allocation system must never create an incentive for the institutions to approve sub-standard performance, which the current system contributes to by allocating money to the institution based on the number of approved students.

The demands for efficiency that public authorities are pursuing through price and salary adjustments remove resources available to the university every year. Having a system based on steadily making education more efficient each year is not appropriate. The system for setting prices and salaries must be changed and adapted to the special conditions of academic institutions in order not to jeopardise the quality of education.

3.8.3. Three-term system

Today, many students are prevented from studying during the summer months. Many of the summer courses offered are irrelevant to their degree, which means that students either opt out of them or “waste” study time and financial resources on courses they do not really need to read. An educational system with associated means of study that only offers students relevant full-time studies and facilities for three-quarters of the year is neither satisfactory for those students who do not have access to facilities during the summer nor for those who want to complete their studies quickly. One solution is to introduce a three-term system for students. This would allow students to complete their education in less time. A three-term system can, however, be designed in many different ways, with varying results for students and teachers. Therefore, a national study must be conducted to determine whether a three-term system is something that can and should be introduced in Swedish universities. In the meantime, more relevant summer courses should be offered by SU.

3.9. Students' Social Situation

3.9.1. Residences

There is a major housing shortage in the Stockholm area, which affects students to a large extent. The ability to live and study in the Stockholm region is a condition for securing a future supply of skills and make Stockholm an attractive region. Lack of available housing should never be a reason for a student to reject Stockholm as the place for their education or to cancel their studies prematurely.

Housing is an important social right, even for students. There needs to be a general increase in both the amount of student accommodation as well as small rental units in the Stockholm region. Municipalities should use the public utility companies to ensure that more student housing is built.

Because subletting is a common form of housing for students, secure housing for students must be improved on this market. Today, many students run into trouble through fake contracts, usurious rents, and abusive rental terms.

All municipalities in Stockholm county must take responsibility for housing construction, even those where no major university is located within the municipality's borders. Since many students live far away from SU's different campuses, it is particularly important to have good public transport links to SU, which also enables students to live in municipalities other than Stockholm.

The municipal property fees should be reformed to reflect the size and standard of the apartment. Today, the flat rate hits disproportionately hard on student housing and small apartments. The most expensive university town in Sweden to live in is Stockholm. Since rent is the single largest expenditure for students, the housing allowance is an important part of the student's social security system and should be designed so that more students can take advantage of it.

Many student housing units currently have high rents, which means that students cannot afford to live in them. It is therefore of the utmost importance that a national maximum ceiling be introduced for rents on student housing. The maximum ceiling shall not exceed one third of the total CSN income in the household.

3.9.2. Students in Greater Stockholm

It is in Stockholm's interest that conditions are optimal for the individual students to pursue higher education. Students are a prerequisite for future growth and competitiveness. Since students rarely have their own cars, public transport and good bicycle paths are often particularly important for this group. An extensive and functioning public transport system is needed in the city in general and from home to the academic institution in particular. When new campuses are built, public transport should be expanded so that students can get to the academic institution without counting on overcrowded buses and subway trains. The prices for public transport are constantly rising, while study allowances remain relatively unchanged. If prices are not

lowered in general or study allowances are not increased, the existing discount for students should be increased compared to the current level. The student discount must be linked to membership in the Student Union. In order to help students choose a bicycle over other means of transport, SU must offer sufficient bicycle parking facilities in the university area.

Students as a group often have a lower ability to pay than the average person. The city should adjust to make the city financially accessible to them as well. Student discounts should be available for all public and municipal cultural institutions. An open and accessible city with public places for both study and recreation benefits students and other citizens.

3.9.3. Student financing

The study allowance is a fundamental prerequisite for higher education for everyone. It is important that the study allowance covers the cost of living for a student. According to CSN, the majority of university students find that the study allowance does not cover the cost of living. Working while pursuing studies should be a choice, not a necessity, and it should be possible to pursue full-time studies on a full-time basis. Therefore, the study allowance should be increased so that it corresponds to the cost of living for a student.

People with a foreign background, functional disability, or with parents without an academic education are clearly underrepresented at the university. In order to reduce the social recruitment imbalance, the financial conditions for pursuing studies must be improved. The contribution portion of the study allowance should be increased, and the repayment rate for study loans should be based on the student's income, not the size of the loan. It should also be possible to avoid having to repay student loans in the first year after the graduating. Students who study full-time without a student allowance should not have to pay off their study loans while they are still studying.

The ability to take advantage of the study allowance should not be linked to age. Regardless of age, students should be able to take part in education. As part of lifelong learning, it is important that the opportunity to receive CSN allowances should remain available regardless of age.

If a student earns more than the earned income allowance, the study allowance will be reduced. This creates major problems during the summer when many students have to work to secure their livelihoods. The study allowance system must distinguish between future jobs and summer jobs.

Income received by students during the summer months of June, July and August should not be included in the earned income allowance.

3.9.4. Social welfare insurance

In the current system, students who have not taken study funding are at a disadvantage because social welfare insurance for students is based on an outdated idea of who is a

student and what conditions the student is under when pursuing their studies. The low graduation rate in higher education can be seen as a symptom of poorly designed social welfare policies for students.

Few students today have adequate health insurance. This is largely due to the fact that the right to health insurance is linked to the study allowance, despite the fact that only two out of three students receive a study allowance from CSN. A reasonable social welfare system must be able to protect all students. The right to health insurance should therefore be linked to the study rate and not to the study allowance. Universities should take greater responsibility for preventive work as well as helping sick students return to their studies. Universities should have a responsibility for rehabilitation in this area. The 30-day waiting period for students who are ill should also be reduced to a level closer to that of working people, who have one or two working days. Students should also be given the opportunity to take part-time sick leave.

Despite that every fifth student has children, the systems are far from adapted to the reality for students. In today's system, students who do not receive a study allowance during parental leave are disadvantaged by only getting the minimum allowance for parental leave. The level of the parental benefit supplement should depend on the student's previous study rate and not on whether or not they have received study grants or not. All students with children are entitled to adequate parental leave insurance. Students currently cannot transfer parental allowance to a partner or split it in order to share custody of sick children, which is possible for working people. This should also be possible for students. Unemployment insurance schemes must be designed so that they do not disadvantage students who choose to study early in life and at a rapid pace.

3.10. Postgraduate studies

Most of the PhD students are employed in a doctoral position, and in addition, there are PhD students and industrial PhD students financed by scholarships. Postgraduate studies concern four years of full-time studies and includes postgraduate courses and thesis work. Departmental duties for PhD students are normally included in postgraduate studies and involve administrative tasks at the department and teaching classes. Departmental duties for PhD students, together with Student Union work, sick leave, and parental leave, provides the right to prolongation, i.e. an extension of the corresponding period.

3.10.1. Introduction to postgraduate studies

All PhD students do not currently have access to teaching and learning in higher education, and it is of the utmost importance that all PhD students receive this training. For most PhD students, the working language is English, and many PhD students do not have Swedish as their mother tongue. SU is responsible for the academic freedom of the PhD students and must ensure this during the course of their education, which means that PhD students must not be responsible for their own academic freedom.

PhD students shall have the right to take part in classes on teaching and learning within higher education during their own education, since PhD students often teach and advise students at the undergraduate and master's level, and they will continue to do so during their career. All PhD students do not currently have access to classes in teaching and learning in higher education, and it is of the utmost importance that all PhD students receive this training.

3.10.2. Individual study plan

Postgraduate studies consist of courses, research, and dissemination of research results. An individual study plan (ISP) shall be drawn up for each PhD student. The plan shall contain the university's and PhD student's commitments and a timetable for the PhD student's education. SU should offer detailed examples of how an ISP can be filled in.

Courses at the advanced level are included in doctoral education, and PhD students shall be given time to participate and complete courses during normal working hours. Academic supervisors should not expect the PhD students to complete the courses during their free time. The universities shall ensure that there are sufficient and relevant doctoral courses in all programmes.

The ISP should specify the resources and assets needed for a PhD student to pursue and complete their education. This includes office space, computer equipment, access to laboratories, as well as access to electronic resources and data. In cases where the PhD student is dependent on access to a specific type of resource, it should be stated in their ISP. In addition, the ISP should clarify what will happen with specific resources and projects if a PhD student changes their academic supervisor.

If PhD students feel that the research ethics aspects of their education are negligible, there should be clear guidelines for how the PhD student should handle such cases. These guidelines should bear in mind that academic supervisors may be involved in the problem. The ISP should be used to address disputes about authorship to a much greater extent than is happening today. For example, the ISP should clarify the authorship order of the thesis project. Overall, all departments should strive to incorporate clear rules of authorship (and actively follow the Vancouver rules).

The introduction to graduate studies takes place at the department level, but there is information that could be provided at a more central level. Although PhD students are invited to the orientation day for new employees at SU, it is important to note that the doctoral position is the first full-time employment for many PhD students, especially since many PhD students are new to Sweden. International, PhD students should also be informed of their rights in employment law during their orientation. SU should therefore organise an orientation day for all new PhD students. It is important that PhD students are introduced at both the department and central level.

3.10.3. Academic Supervision

Academic supervision and the research environment are two of the most important parts of doctoral level education. In order for PhD students to receive the best educational guidance as possible, all new advisors at SU should undergo training for academic supervisors. Advisors shall act as scientific mentors for the PhD student and provide advice and support for their work, while the PhD student shall be given the opportunity to develop as an independent researcher. It is important that the academic supervisors continue to develop their skills in terms of providing academic guidance. During the course of postgraduate studies, all PhD students should be given the opportunity to receive additional support, for example, in the form of mentorship. PhD students shall be given the greatest opportunity to independently choose their thesis subject and the scientific methodology.

Regardless of the faculty or department, it is important that PhD students at SU receive qualified academic supervision and to the right extent.

3.10.4 International PhD students

Since a large percentage of PhD students are international students, it is important to minimise the linguistic barriers that PhD students may experience. This should be facilitated both by translating relevant documents, but also by compensating non-Swedish speaking PhD students from countries outside of Scandinavia who learn Swedish.

3.10.5. Employment

In order for PhD students to have access to a social safety net and equivalent social security as other university employees, PhD students must be employed instead of being grant recipients. For all postgraduate students who are grant recipients and those students subject to Higher Education Ordinance exceptions that extend beyond one year, the grant should be equal to the equivalent salary for the post-doctoral position, including a supplementary pension allowance, and it must contain clear guidelines for prolongation. If SU is unable to employ a PhD student, SU must review the PhD student's situation and ensure that the student is given the same quality of education as the employed PhD student.

The salary levels for PhD students should be clarified at all departments. Clear, objective guidelines for what a PhD student should have achieved and when they are considered ready for the next step in the salary ladder must be available. It must not be an arbitrary process in which a supervisor decides when it is time to step up the wage ladder. The PhD student is already in a position of dependency with respect to their supervisor. The PhD students who are receiving grants should follow the same salary ladder as the other PhD students.

PhD students should not be expected to work on their research project during weekends, public holidays or on their vacation. It is important that SU emphasizes that

PhD students should take vacation and holidays, and that academic supervisors should not expect PhD students to work overtime.

3.10.6. Organisational and social work environment

The duties and powers of a PhD student must not create an unhealthy burden. The high rates of sick leave among PhD students should be continuously monitored. PhD students should be entitled to an extension for medical appointments in order to take their health seriously.

If a PhD student is subjected to harassment or offensive discrimination, SU must investigate the matter. Over the course of the investigation, the PhD student's education should be taken into account as much as possible so that their work does not suffer consequences, such as lack of time, lost projects. In cases where a PhD student does not receive their degree within the specified time limit for the postgraduate studies, the departments should take major responsibility for ensuring possible solutions in the form of an extension that can be offered to the PhD student. The work of the PhD student must not be carried out without financial compensation.

PhD students are the most vulnerable group in academe when it comes to stress-related sick leave and harassment. SU must pay more attention to this and come up with preventive measures. At present, the Student Health Centre at SU has no responsibility for the health of PhD students and therefore has no preventive activities customised for postgraduate students. PhD students at SU are included in SU's occupational health services, but there are no preventive measures for the health of PhD students, which SU must prioritise.

If a PhD student chooses to change their academic supervisor, the department should handle the matter promptly and with as much consideration as possible for the PhD student's project and continued education. It is important that each PhD student knows the exact rules and procedures that apply to this already at the start of their postgraduate studies.

3.10.7. PhD student Representation

In its regulations, SU has a ceiling on how much prolongation PhD students can accrue per year. This can lead to problems when doctoral representatives are needed at the central level, such as representatives for REBUS, quality assurance of doctoral education, etc. The same problems may arise in terms of representation at national level. In order to allow for good PhD student representation, this ceiling should be raised.