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Policy for student influence at Malmö University

Introduction

Students at the country's colleges and universities have a statutory right to exercise influence over their education, and they are expected to take an active part in the work of further developing it. With this document, Malmö University wants to express what student influence means, why student influence is important and how a strengthened student influence can be realized within the university.

The starting point is that the students' participation in the implementation, evaluation and development of the education is both desirable and necessary and decisive for its quality. Students' perspectives, prior knowledge and experience are needed to develop courses, programs and the learning environment as a whole.

Through the teachers' involvement in the student influence work, the pedagogical development work is given a touch of quality reinforcement and increased relevance.

A strong student influence presupposes a joint commitment and responsibility from both students and the university staff. Developing student influence is an important aspect of the university's further mission to work for sustainable societal development, welfare, justice, gender equality and equal rights.

Definitions

According to the law, student influence is the student's right to exercise influence over the education. Student influence exists, among other things, to ensure that educations are of good quality. The quality work is a joint responsibility for staff and students. The law also stipulates that universities and colleges must work to ensure that students take an active part in the work of further developing education.

This means that the students' experiences and views must be taken into account.

This applies to both individual students' involvement and those students who are involved in student and doctoral student unions.

As is clear from current legislation, student-influenced representation in various bodies refers to the students' interests being met and having an impact on concrete measures and changes.

By student is meant a student at undergraduate level, advanced level and postgraduate level.

By teacher is meant both teachers in undergraduate and advanced level as well as supervisors in postgraduate education.

Student influence at Malmö University

Malmö University identifies three types of student influence, *formal student influence*, *semi-formal student influence* and *informal student influence*.

Formal student influence

The formal student influence is the influence stipulated by law and regulation that is carried out by democratically appointed student representatives in the university's decision-making committees and bodies, for example boards and committees for education issues, research issues and gender equality issues. Students should be given the opportunity to influence at an early stage. A prerequisite for real student influence is therefore that students are also represented in preparatory committees and bodies.

The university is responsible for informing students about the possibility of the student being fluent. The appointment of student representatives is handled by the students themselves through the unions that have been granted union status by the university board. The unions ensure that student representatives are elected for boards and bodies at the university's faculties and the Library as well as all university-wide boards and bodies, and that representatives of doctoral students are appointed to the university-wide committees and bodies where the union has such places weighted.

A well-proven form of students' formal influence over their education consists of course evaluations. Course evaluations can be seen as the individual student's most concrete path to student influence (see Guidelines for the course evaluation process for undergraduate and advanced level education). In order for course evaluations to function as a means of student influence, active and constructive participation is required from each individual student, a well-functioning structure for compiling and reporting course evaluations and for action and feedback on the results from the university.

Semiformellt studentinflytande

The semi-formal student influence is not statutory in the same way as the formal one, and the unions are not involved in the same formal way as when it comes to the election of student representatives. The purpose is to bring about a constructive dialogue between appointed student representatives and responsible teachers. The dialogues can not be said to be formally decisive but are an important part of quality development.

The influence that is performed by student representatives in different types of *influence*, which at Malmö University occurs in the form of e.g. program council, course council and supervisory board, are part of semi-formal student influence. Influence councils are initiated within the faculties, which also assist the students in appointing representatives within the relevant student group.

Students' opportunity for influence during ongoing courses is another part of semi-formal influence. Students should be given the opportunity for continuous evaluation as a complement to course evaluation.

Informal student influence

The informal student influence arises in the daily and direct communication between student and teacher / other staff. In order for informal student influence to be possible, it is necessary that teachers and other staff are encouraging and accessible and receptive to the students' views.

Shared responsibility and mutual commitment

Student influence is exercised through cooperation between Malmö University and the unions that the university board has granted union status.

The basic prerequisite for student influence is a close collaboration between universities, unions and students. In order for the collaboration to continue as efficiently as possible, a clear division of responsibilities is required.

Malmö University's responsibility

- Student representation in decision-making and preparatory bodies: Malmö
the university is responsible for ensuring that student representatives are given a place in all the university's preparatory and decision-making committees and bodies where issues of importance to education or students' situation are dealt with. This also applies to temporary working groups, investigations, etc. Exceptions must be motivated in writing and communicated to the students. In faculty-specific committees and bodies, the dean is responsible for preparing places. Correspondingly, the head of department is responsible for department-specific committees and bodies.
- Consultation when decisions are made by individual executives: According to the Higher Education Ordinance, if a decision that is important for the education and students' situation is not to be made or preparation is carried out by a body, but by a single person, information must be provided and consulted. student representative in good time before the decision or completion of the preparation. The university's routines / guidelines for decision-making processes must be followed so that student influence is ensured.
- Information: The students' insight into the forms of student influence within the university's equal activities presupposes that the university has updated information on its website about which boards and bodies there are. It must be clear which issues each committee and body deals with and which members are included. Here, as in other contexts, the university must inform about the possibilities of contributing to student influence. It must be clear that the students' active participation is desirable and necessary to develop the education at the university.
- Support for students: To enable the students' formal influence, the university must introduce student representatives in the relevant

the work of committees or bodies. The chairman of the relevant board / body is responsible for this introduction. A prerequisite for student representatives in various committees and bodies to be able to combine representation with studies is that all staff have knowledge and understanding that such representation is a statutory right and requires time and work from the student.

- Certificate: Student representatives, who have had a formal representative features, receive a certificate from the university for their work. The certificate is issued by the committee's / board's administrator and signed by the chairman.

The responsibility of the unions

In the same way as for the university, it is the unions' responsibility to maintain good structures for student influence. The main responsibility lies in recruiting student representatives to the university's boards and bodies. Here, the unions must strive for the student representatives to reflect the composition of the student population with regard to, for example, gender, ethnic background and educational background.

The unions must communicate the internal division of responsibilities regarding the appointment of student representative positions to the university. At times when the unions have not succeeded in appointing a student representative, the university must be informed of this.

The unions must, to the best of their ability, contribute with participation and knowledge when the university so requests, in, for example, temporary working groups, focus groups or other bodies.

The joint responsibility of Malmö University and the unions

It is also important that the university supports the unions' work in recruiting student representatives to the university's boards and bodies. This is done by preparing the unions a place to inform new students about their activities.

To facilitate the appointment of student representatives, the dean is responsible for providing a complete list of the boards and bodies at the faculty where there are student representative positions and an explanation of which issues they handle.

In other respects, the work of individual student representatives must be encouraged, supported and facilitated in the best possible way.

The responsibility of the individual student and teacher

All students are co-actors in the university's activities and thereby have a co-responsibility to influence and develop the education. The student should actively take part in opportunities for influence that are offered during the study period.

Teachers are responsible for initiating and finding good forms of dialogue and for the students' opportunity to speak. Teachers alone can not achieve a positive development, but they can - in concrete teaching situations - create the necessary space for it.

Research students

The special nature of postgraduate education, with an individual study plan and a limited part of giving joint courses, means that the influence primarily takes place in dialogue between supervisors and postgraduate students. The doctoral student must be given the opportunity to influence both the individual study plan and courses as well as in the various contexts where the doctoral education is discussed.

Postgraduate students shall be given the opportunity to be represented in the bodies within the university that prepare and decide on issues concerning research and postgraduate education. It is part of the task for those responsible for postgraduate education at faculty and department level to inform both postgraduate students and supervisors about postgraduate studies.

their right to influence their education. In addition, the opportunity for course evaluations must be offered to postgraduate students in the same way as for other students within the university.

The involvement of research students at local and central level should be encouraged and supported by the immediate supervisor so that it does not constitute an obstacle to conducting research studies in parallel. As a representative, you have the right to extend the training period when you engage in formal assignments.

Implementation and follow-up

The work of strengthening student influence must be implemented and followed up in accordance with the same structure that otherwise applies at faculty and department level. This document does not set guidelines for this work. It is up to the faculties to decide on the forms for how the student influence policy is to be implemented and followed up. Examples of concrete measures and indicators follow below.

The faculties should annually follow up that all committees, bodies and influence councils have had student representation and how student representatives have been involved in the preparation prior to a one-man decision. An analysis of how student influence has worked should also be made. Furthermore, one should follow up on how information and training initiatives aimed at teachers and other staff are arranged.

The faculties should also follow up on how they informed and prepared students for representation and how they supported the unions' work in recruiting student representatives.

Additional indicators can be how attention has been paid to, analyzed and remedied any indications of shortcomings in student influence, for example by working with the unions' report.

The unions submit an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor as part of the comments on the annual

the account. In the report, the unions give their views on student influence at the university, how student influence has developed and what possible shortcomings are noted.

Appendix

The Higher Education Act

Chapter 1, Section 4 The activities shall be adapted so that a high quality is achieved in education and research. The available resources must be used efficiently to maintain a high quality in the business. Quality work is a common concern for university staff and students.

Chapter 1, Section 4 a The students shall have the right to exercise influence over the education at the higher education institutions.

The higher education institutions shall work to ensure that the students take an active part in the work of further developing the education.

Chapter 2, Section 4 The Government appoints the chairman of the board of a university. The principal shall be a member of the board. Teachers and students at the university have the right to appoint members of the board. The Government or the authority determined by the Government may, with the support of ch. Section 7 of the Constitution shall issue regulations on the number of such members and on how they are to be appointed. The Government appoints other members of the Board.

Representatives of the employees have the right to attend and speak at the Board's meetings.

Chapter 2, Section 7 Students have the right to be represented when decisions are made or preparation takes place that is important for the education or the students' situation. The Government or the authority determined by the Government may, with the support of ch. Section 7 of the Constitution shall issue regulations on the number of such representatives and on how they shall be appointed.

Chapter 2, Section 8 In regulations on how students appoint members of the board or representatives in accordance with section 7, the Government may hand over to individuals or associations to appoint the members or representatives.

Chapter 4, Section 9 A student union shall have as its main purpose to monitor and participate in the development of the education and the conditions for studies at the university.

Higher Education Ordinance

Chapter 1, Section 7 In the Student Union Ordinance (2009: 769), there are provisions on how such members of the board as the students according to Chapter 2 Section 4 of the Higher Education Act (1992: 1434) has the right to appoint, shall be appointed. The Student Union Ordinance also contains provisions on how representatives of students according to ch. Section 7 of the Higher Education Act shall be appointed.

The ordinance (1992: 1299) on remuneration for assignments in state boards, committees and councils, etc. shall also be applied to the members of a university's board who are appointed by the students.

Chapter 1, Section 14 The university shall give the students who participate in or have completed a course an opportunity to present their experiences of and views on the course through a course evaluation organized by the university.

The university shall compile the course evaluations and inform about the results and any decisions about measures that are caused by the course evaluations.

The results must be kept available to the students.

Chapter 2, Section 7 a The teachers have the right to appoint three members of the board. These members shall be appointed by election within the university. The university may issue more detailed regulations on the election procedure.

Students have the right to appoint three members of the board.

Chapter 2, Section 8 The Rector shall be employed by decision of the Government for a maximum of six years following a proposal by the Board of the University. The employment may be renewed, however, no more than twice if each for a maximum of three years.

Before submitting its proposal, the board shall consult the teachers, other employees and students in the manner decided by the board.

In its work to propose a rector, the board shall, as far as possible, select both female and male candidates.

The Board shall report to the Government on how the gender equality aspect has been taken into account.

Chapter 2 Section 14 | Chapter 2 Section 7 of the Higher Education Act (1992: 1434) contains a provision on students' right to representation when a decision is made or preparation takes place.

If a decision is to be made or the preparation is to be carried out by a single person, information must be provided and a student representative consulted in good time before the decision or completion of the preparation.

If a decision is to be made by a group of persons according to ch. Section 6, second paragraph of the Higher Education Act, students have the right to be represented by at least three members. However, the number of student representatives in such a group may be less if there are special reasons with regard to the total number of members in groups.

In other respects, a university itself decides on such a right to representation for the students as is referred to in the first paragraph.

Chapter 10, Section 4 The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of the Vice-Chancellor as chairman, a law-abiding member who shall be or have been an ordinary judge and a representative teachers at the university. Students at the university have the right to be represented on the board with two members.