

SFS opinion program

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Opinion program

The document is revised every three years.

1. Introduction

This is the opinion program of the Swedish United Student Union (SFS). The opinion program is SFS's ideological platform and explains SFS's idea of the knowledge society and the principles that should permeate higher education.

In all political advocacy work that SFS conducts, guidance can and should be drawn from the opinion program. The opinion program does not aim to present reform proposals or concrete political solutions for SFS to pursue. Instead, all positions taken on political issues and all political focuses that the organization chooses should be made with an analysis and through rhetoric that is consistent with the principles expressed here.

In this text, a student refers to someone who has been admitted to and is pursuing higher education at the undergraduate, advanced or postgraduate level.

Training place is used as a synonym for the official term study place to describe how many students can be admitted to a program.

1.1 Starting point for SFS's advocacy work

SFS's purpose is to represent and safeguard the interests of its member bodies and students through advocacy work. A democratic society is a prerequisite for good student influence and for student safety. Success in free and general elections provides access to democratic institutions and the outcome must be respected. Democratic principles must be protected.

SFS as an organization is based on fundamental democratic principles and thus safeguards an inclusive approach with respect for gender equality, equality, diversity and the equal value of all people. The mission is based on the members and the organization is structured to reflect the members we have.

Both in opinion formation and opinion exercise, SFS is independent. It is a transparent organization where outsiders can gain insight and understanding about us. In the same way, SFS must have understanding for others. The organization conducts advocacy work towards external parties to promote the interests of students and student unions, and only cooperates with organizations that share SFS's values, but conducts advocacy work towards everyone. As part of its advocacy work, SFS works towards the government regardless of its composition.

1.2 SFS's view on the knowledge society

The idea of the knowledge society is based on the fact that the independent and democratic academy has a central role in societal development and the common welfare. The importance and special position of the academy is legitimized through high quality, broad popular support and a high degree of student influence and collegial co-determination.

The knowledge society is permeated by a belief and insight that higher education benefits both the public and the individual. Equal access to higher education for all is a foundation in how higher education is governed and operates, and it goes without saying that education is free of charge for everyone.

There is also a comprehensive security system which, combined with decent social and economic conditions in general, provides good conditions for students to pursue higher studies. The knowledge society is a global concern and extends beyond national borders. Academic freedom, integrity and space for critical dialogue are basic prerequisites for high quality in education and research.

2. The Academy's responsibilities and conditions

The Academy's unique role in society makes it a matter of public interest. Higher education, research and the Academy's interaction with the surrounding society affect people regardless of whether they themselves work in academia or not. Through politics, the public can influence the structural conditions and governance of academia. It is also through politics that the public formulates its expectations of and needs for academia.

For the public to perceive the academy as legitimate, admission in equal competition at all levels, transparency, legal certainty, consistently popular and democratic representativeness, accessibility and high quality in education and research are crucial. To live up to these expectations, the academy must have a relationship with politics that is characterized by mutual trust and confidence. The academy must also be governed internally according to democratic principles. It is not least important that there is a broad representation of students, academic staff and other personnel in boards and other decision-making and preparatory bodies.

Higher education institutions should have the opportunity to include external representatives in decision-making bodies to promote multifaceted perspectives on the activities. However, the external representatives should never be the largest group. For the academy to operate effectively at all levels, the internal leadership, and the well-established collegial decision-making on which it is based, must include extensive, strong and independent student influence. The internal governance of higher education institutions consists largely of four fundamental systems: the resource allocation, quality, employment and management systems. These should strive to be transparent, easy to understand, fair, flexible, nationally compatible and quality-promoting.

2.1 Academic freedom

Academic freedom means that students and academic staff should have the opportunity to freely seek knowledge within academia. Academic responsibility means that higher education institutions and academic staff should follow laws, regulations, rules and decisions made collectively and have a responsibility towards those who participate and invest in academia – society and primarily the students. Academic freedom should always be pursued but in constant balance with academic responsibility.

There is a natural conflict between academic freedom and academic responsibility, which results in the demand and need for transparency and influence among academic stakeholders. However, in order for academia to be able to take its responsibility, academic freedom is a fundamental prerequisite. Thus, it is important from a long-term perspective that neither politics nor the market encroach on academic freedom. It is also important that academia understands the needs of society and students.

expectations and needs, but that it is the academy itself that controls its operations so that they are eventually fulfilled. It is the responsibility of both the state and the higher education institutions to

ensure academic freedom for students and academic staff. Universities have a special responsibility for the academic freedom of doctoral students.

To support the freedom and responsibility of the academy, the greatest possible long-term perspective, clarity, predictability and trust from politics are required, as well as adequate funding for the academy's activities. Furthermore, politics must have a realistic and solution-oriented approach to the academy's activities and mission. The surrounding society should cooperate with the academy and the students, but its special interests must never prevail over the academy's mission. Academic freedom must be ensured so that the academy is not reduced to just a

labor market policy instrument. Under strong academic freedom in balance with academic responsibility, academia will contribute to and stimulate the development of society and individuals. Academic freedom is not only essential for students in Sweden, but also in other parts of the world where it is under active threat. To ensure academic freedom, SFS believes that Sweden should work to strengthen academic freedom globally.

2.2 The Academy's distinctive nature and boundaries

An academic education is distinguished from other post-secondary education in that it provides knowledge, skills or abilities that are based on scientific or artistic foundations and proven experience, and that are developed in a close relationship with research. An academic education also always has an educational function in addition to the educational one, and always includes generic knowledge in addition to the subject-specific ones. The academy is unique because it provides society with a long-term and free supply of knowledge.

A course can be non-academic for two reasons: because it is not intended to be so, or because it is not conducted in a way that makes it academic. Courses that are not intended to be academic include foundation years and other preparatory courses that provide special qualifications. They are located at higher education institutions because these courses benefit from being arranged in the same environment as higher education. These courses should not be included in the education budget but should preferably be conducted in conjunction with academic courses.

If a course is not conducted in a way that gives it academic qualities, it should either be changed or removed from academia. Higher education institutions and the state should carefully consider whether a course has academic value or whether it should be conducted within another form of education, such as a university of applied sciences or folkbildning. Similarly, courses in other forms of education, the usefulness of which would increase if they were given academic qualities, should be moved to academia.

Within the same subject area, there can be both academic and non-academic education. It is positive that individuals can choose different types of education within a certain subject area. This clarifies that different types of education, academic as well as non-academic, can be

useful for different individuals, which follows from the fact that usability is based on the individual's needs.

Doctoral education is the highest level of academic education. The principles governing doctoral education are in many ways similar to those governing undergraduate and graduate education, but the focus of doctoral education is always to train doctoral students to become independent researchers. For a doctoral education to be considered academic, the academic freedom of the individual doctoral student must be protected as strongly as that of other researchers within academia.

2.3 The Academy's role and mission

The Academy's core business is to create, refine and disseminate knowledge. The Academy therefore plays a crucial role in the development of the knowledge society.

Through the academy's dissemination of knowledge, solutions can be created on how to best deal with common problems. The major challenges facing society cannot be solved by politics, the market, civil society or the scientific community on their own. The academy therefore has an important role to play as a hub between the various activities at local, regional, national and international levels.

The primary purpose of higher education is to enable people to develop into independent individuals who are able to critically examine, understand and relate to their surroundings. The academy should also provide the individual with the opportunity for personal development. In this way, education gives the individual greater power to control their own lives and realize themselves.

The desire to meet the short-term needs of the labor market must never override the academy's mission to promote the general public and individual development in general. The knowledge development that individuals undergo within academia is absolutely crucial for people's professional development and working lives.

2.4 Diversity and norms in academia

People's equal value and opportunities to influence are central to academia. This means that diversity among students, academic and other staff is desirable as it brings more perspectives to research and education, which contributes to social development for all. It is important that academia is made accessible to society and individuals. For the popular support and trust of academia, it is important that its recruitment results in society's population composition being reflected.

The norms that govern who feels welcome in academia must be continuously examined and questioned. There must be strategies to combat exclusionary structures throughout academia. It is important to have a critical approach to see structures and injustices. Against the background of the

knowledge that exists about power structures within academia, inequality and structural discrimination should not be accepted. It is important that academia takes a stand for equality, human rights and against racism, fascism and violent extremism. The academy should be characterized by norm criticism and strive to be a role model for other activities in the area of equal opportunities.

Norm-critical approach The Academy

should be characterized by norm criticism and strive to be a role model for other activities in the area of equal opportunities. A more heterogeneous teaching staff that reflects society to a greater extent would contribute to a broadened knowledge and research production. In order to achieve a completely open and gender-equal university, more measures should be taken. For a broad academy, it is important to counteract tasks and scientific areas being considered linked to a certain gender. A norm-critical approach is one of the ways to broaden the academy, in teaching as well as research.

SFS believes that the teaching staff at universities should reflect the composition of society. Therefore, all higher education institutions should actively counteract a biased recruitment of teaching staff by being norm-critical in every appointment to achieve diversity and counteract a discriminatory structure. This should be done in parallel with long-term work focusing on pedagogical qualifications. The Academy has not qualified pedagogical skills to the same extent as scientific skills. SFS believes that pedagogical skills should be seen as equivalent to scientific competence in teacher appointments. An outdated gender stereotypical view of teaching and administration becomes a trap for women that leads to reduced career opportunities. In order to counteract the fact that certain tasks are usually performed by a certain gender, the Academy's activities must be given the same status.

Historically, higher education and research have been conducted based on the male gender norm and also on the whiteness norm as well as norms around class, age and sexuality. This has contributed to pedagogical methods and research on education being adapted to privileged groups in society. A norm-critical pedagogy gives the student a broad understanding of the field of knowledge, makes norms within one's own discipline visible and creates space for reflection on norms in learning. Through a critical approach, the results of research can be made available to more people and contribute to social change. SFS believes that all pedagogy in higher education should be norm-critical. In order to enable a norm-critical pedagogical foundation in higher education, norm-critical perspectives should be included in the higher education teaching training for teaching staff and doctoral students so that it can permeate all teaching at undergraduate and graduate levels.

Distribution of research funds and gender mainstreaming

SFS believes that research funding should be distributed in a way that promotes the full breadth of the research community in each scientific field. This increases the opportunity for more people from underrepresented groups to seek a career in the scientific field and thereby drive research forward with a broader perspective. This also allows the activities to take advantage of a diversity of experiences that in the long run create better research and education. If different types of experiences are valued by academia, there are also more incentives for individuals who leave academia for other working lives to come back and contribute new perspectives. One step is the application process where SFS believes that research funding should be prepared anonymously to a greater extent so that applications are assessed more equally.

The academy as a whole must be gender-integrated to become more inclusive; it is an important piece of the puzzle to create a more equal and gender-balanced university.

According to SFS, gender equality is a perspective that should permeate all decisions, from the choices made by higher education institutions to decisions made by individual teachers about the structure of teaching. For higher education to reflect society, reflection on the consequences of different decisions for different groups is required. Only through awareness of gender equality can the learning process and research reflect different perspectives that lead to the development of society as a whole.

2.5 Governance of the academy's scope and offering

The state can control higher education through direct decisions, through the design of regulations and other systems, and through economics. SFS believes that the state should finance higher education so that it can benefit everyone on equal terms.

The state must be able to set requirements for education and control the scope and supply of education at an overall, national level. Control must be done openly, in dialogue with ministries and higher education institutions and with stated objectives. Student influence must be given transparency in all forums where higher education institutions are controlled, for example government dialogues.

It is important that the scope and supply of education is controlled through regulations and economic frameworks with good predictability for higher education institutions and students. The control must be long-term so that higher education institutions have good conditions to conduct their operations. SFS believes that student demand should be the most important factor when the scope of Swedish higher education is controlled. This applies to both the control of the total scope of higher education and the scope of individual education programs. It is the state's responsibility to enable higher education institutions to adapt their educational offerings to student demand. The state must examine how large the demand for higher education is, and take into account how the current educational offerings affect demand. Higher education institutions must in turn take demand into account when they start education programs and size them.

Dimensioning higher education

The knowledge society requires a high proportion of academically educated people. The size of the Academy must be guided by the need for a broad educational offering and the possibility of conducting research in a large number of areas. It is important that people are not deprived of the right to higher education due to too few educational places.

SFS believes that the number of places in higher education should be controlled so that all qualified applicants can get a place to study at undergraduate and graduate level. This means that the total number of places for all programs should correspond to the number of qualified applicants, as long as the programs are of high quality. Everyone should therefore be able to get a place, but not guaranteed at the first choice. The number of places at doctoral level should be adjusted to the needs of both academia and society.

In order to achieve the desired goal, long-term planning is required at both the national level and at the higher education institution level, which lives up to the high degree of freedom that SFS believes that academia must have. Flexibility is required in the allocations for higher education because educational places within different education programmes cost differently. The total number of educational places should not decrease just because more students choose a higher-cost education programme. SFS believes that absolute quantitative targets, such as a certain number of educational places, or proportional targets, such as a certain percentage of the population studying, should not govern the supply of higher education. Instead, the educational allocation should be continuously adjusted to meet the total demand from those seeking higher education.

Dimensioning all education programs directly based on their corresponding application pressure is a good governance principle but can be problematic for starting new education programs or maintaining smaller education programs. SFS therefore believes that maintaining smaller education programs, especially those linked to a certain industry or research area, can be valuable even if there is not always proportional application pressure from students. Starting new education programs based on the development of society or science can also be important. However, education programs should not expand or sometimes even be given if there is not sufficient interest or if the quality is lacking. In order to expand a program or form of education, it therefore seems better to first increase the number of applicants and then enable an expansion instead of the reverse of increasing the number of places.

Furthermore, SFS believes that the needs of the state and society are naturally met by student demand in the vast majority of cases. In cases where this is not the case, measures should primarily be aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the education or its associated professions in order to increase the number of applicants and restore the balance. This is instead of, for example, reducing the number of places on one programme and then increasing them on another, in a way that is not proportional to the corresponding application pressure for the programmes.

Educational offerings and placement

The offer in higher education includes the different types of education and the subject areas into which higher education should be divided. It is important to have a good overview of the national education offer in order to be able to assess whether changes to the offer are needed. SFS believes that an authority should be tasked with creating a system for an overview of the education offer. Higher education institutions should be able to use the overview to take into account their national context when designing their education. SFS also believes that there should be a national database for the courses that are arranged within the framework of doctoral education at higher education institutions.

The state's control of the offer of higher education institutions should only take place through expanded assessments of degree rights. The assessment should not only be based on academic factors, but also assessments of the structural and social conditions of the education.

This means, for example, that the academic environment's competence and resources, society's competence needs, access to mandatory internships, and the student's study environment must be taken into account in order to obtain the right to graduate in a new field of study.

Universities and colleges should be strategically located geographically and spread across the country, which is absolutely necessary to make studies and research a real option for everyone and to ensure the supply of skills throughout the country. Within and between higher education institutions, there should be a wide range of research and education.

Mission training

Commissioned education constitutes an important part of the higher education institutions' mission to collaborate with the surrounding society and contributes to high-quality skills development. The student unions have the right to exercise influence over decisions regarding commissioned education, as stated in Chapter 1, Section 4 a of the Higher Education Act. The student unions shall therefore be given the opportunity to participate in the preparation and decision-making of the agreements that the higher education institution concludes with clients of commissioned education.

In cases where student unions undertake a study monitoring assignment linked to participants in commissioned education, the student union shall be compensated as part of the student union's work within the framework of the institution's quality assurance assignment. The student union shall always be given the opportunity to represent participants who participate in co-education.

The student union's right to transparency into the focus and scope of commissioned education at the university must be ensured. Commissioned education must never have a negative impact on regular education.

2.6 Resource allocation

Resource allocation is about how the education programs are financed and how much resources different programs should receive, but also about how the state gives money to higher education institutions.

and how universities use them. Both education and research require large resources.

In order for academia to have the right conditions to shoulder its role in the knowledge society, it is necessary that both education and research are financed in such a way that academic freedom and the quality of education are not compromised. According to SFS, the majority of research conducted at higher education institutions is financed by the public through non-competitive public funds.

SFS believes that the resource allocation system should be designed according to the principle that the compensation for the education corresponds to the cost requirements of the education in order for it to maintain high quality. SFS supports a resource allocation that is largely participation-based rather than performance-based. In this way, the higher education institution and the student group as a whole within a program are not affected if certain students are not approved for the program, and the higher education institution's compensation for the program is more in line with the actual cost of educating a student. It would also reduce financial incentives for over-intake. A performance-based system risks reducing the demands placed on students in the program's examination over time, which in turn risks leading to less support for students because expectations of them are lower. This in turn leads to a reduced quality of education that risks further lowering the demands placed on them, leading to a vicious spiral.

Existing education should not suffer from changes in the resource allocation system and for this reason, transitional rules may be needed when the resource allocation system changes. Education that takes place in collaboration with external actors must not lead to an erosion of educational resources. When it comes to doctoral education, higher education institutions must allocate enough funds to ensure that the educational environment and education of doctoral students is secured for as long as the studies are ongoing. For the financing of doctoral education, it is essential that the higher education institutions have the resources to dimension the education. Higher education institutions should not be dependent on external funding to maintain the necessary scope of doctoral education.

Higher education depends on a long-term economic perspective in order to be able to put the quality of education at the centre. Erosion of appropriations must be prevented. There must therefore be no requirements for productivity increases and price and wage adjustments must correspond to the actual increase in costs. To further counteract the erosion of resources for higher education, state-owned companies and authorities whose main purpose is to provide goods and services to higher education institutions should primarily do so as a service to facilitate the operations of higher education institutions. This means that they should not be allowed to make unreasonable surpluses on the goods and services provided. In addition, a financing principle that means that the state cannot give higher education institutions new assignments without increasing the allocation of resources must cover all activities at higher education institutions. In this way, new assignments can be given to higher education institutions without jeopardizing their financial planning.

Collaboration with the surrounding community

A mutual connection between higher education and research is a necessity to maintain high quality in both education and research. Through collaboration with the surrounding society, innovations are created and knowledge is disseminated that contributes to the development of the knowledge society. Both the surrounding society and academia benefit from the dissemination of knowledge that occurs through collaboration within the framework of education and research.

Since a large part of research is financed by public funds, it is important that both results and data are available to the public. The results of all publicly funded research must therefore be made available through open archives. In order to stimulate the emergence of innovations and promote collaboration, it is also important that private funds can be allocated to research.

2.7 The role of the Academy for sustainable development

Sustainable development refers to development that ensures a healthy and good environment, economic and social welfare and justice without doing so at the expense of future generations. Higher education, research and collaboration between academia and the surrounding society are crucial issues for sustainable development.

All aspects of sustainability are central to society. The state has a special responsibility to set clear requirements for sustainability aspects within academia at the national level, especially in light of the rapid climate change and its major negative impact on society. Higher education institutions have a major role to play in the transition, both in terms of reducing their own negative environmental and climate impact and in contributing relevant knowledge to other sectors of society. It is of great importance that governance and financing models for academia also enable higher education institutions to set a good example as carriers of scientific and artistic research.

In order for higher education institutions to best contribute to sustainable development, they must be largely independent social actors. At the same time, politics, business and society have high and justified expectations that research and higher education will contribute to a sustainable society. Political control of resources for higher education institutions related to key societal challenges should therefore promote the freedom of higher education institutions to, individually or together, develop well-thought-out approaches and strategic perspectives on sustainability in education, research and collaboration, rather than restricting them. The Academy has a responsibility to disseminate and utilize knowledge about sustainable development and to contribute objectively to the societal debate. The transition to sustainable development cannot be discussed solely from a national perspective but must be seen as a global concern. In order to address the global challenges that sustainable development encompasses, it is necessary to collaborate beyond national borders.

The academy plays a crucial role in generating new knowledge about sustainability through research. Sustainability can be included in all subject areas regardless of scientific discipline. SFS believes that there should be cross-institutional work for sustainable development. This should be done systematically, clearly and be easily accessible to students as well as to others within the academy. Furthermore, within the academy there should be support for students and academic staff's ability to contribute to new industries and identify opportunities and to create resources to exploit these opportunities. It is essential that sustainability issues within the academy are addressed in an international context and that mobility is not restricted. This requires a shared responsibility in the internationalization that is taking place.

Science and research-related education of the highest quality are a prerequisite for the transition to a sustainable society. SFS believes that long-lasting, stable and resilient institutions and structures are required to realize this transition. The academy and especially the students are a key player.

Mobility among students, researchers and teachers between different universities and countries means, among other things, opportunities to develop joint strategies to meet global challenges.

The mission of the university

Universities have a central role in acting as collaboration partners but also as meeting places. It is of great importance that the research that is created is presented and illustrated. The activities that take place at or in connection with universities play a central and important role in mutual learning. Part of collaboration is about creating points of contact and here the business community, authorities, relevant actors in civil society and other central co-actors are. In order to influence both individuals and society, the utilization of the education and research available at universities is a cornerstone.

It is important that there are goals and ambitions for each higher education institution's work on sustainable development, both regarding the higher education institution's contribution to the transition of the rest of society and regarding the higher education institution's own transition. The higher education institution should take full ownership of the work. The organization can vary depending on, for example, the size and focus of the higher education institution. It is important that there is a stated plan for the work, that sustainable development is integrated into existing processes and that it is linked to clear management and organizational structures.

Higher education institutions must identify risks, challenges and opportunities when setting goals, but also relate them to the national goals that Sweden has committed to. Higher education institutions must promote sustainable development and be at the forefront of the work to achieve the national goals, regardless of whether the higher education institution is a government agency or not. This work must be monitored both by the higher education institution itself and by regulatory authorities. Furthermore, higher education institutions have an additional responsibility to be helpful to other social actors.

Sustainability work should be part of regular operations and each higher education institution should therefore allocate resources to finance it. In addition to this

SFS believes that there is reason for each higher education institution to report on its work and investments in sustainability in a special order.

The universities' own environmental and climate impact

Universities are large organizations and therefore have a significant impact on the environment and climate, both in their local environment and on a global level. As bearers of scientifically based knowledge about the environment and climate, it is important that universities act as role models and also take responsibility for their environmental and climate impact in action. SFS believes that universities should identify what within their organization causes the greatest environmental and climate impact and which sustainability initiatives are most beneficial. Student representatives should be involved in the identification and decision-making processes. Carbon dioxide emissions and asset management are two aspects that SFS believes are central to all universities.

State universities and colleges are the authorities that account for the largest carbon dioxide emissions from air travel. Within academia as well as other sectors of society that require air travel, the role of travel in operations therefore needs to be reassessed. Other parts of the higher education institutions' operations also account for significant negative environmental impact. SFS believes that each higher education institution should identify what within their organization has significant negative environmental impact and strive to minimize it.

Swedish higher education institutions should have more ambitious goals than becoming climate neutral themselves. A prerequisite for this is that the higher education institutions have sufficient structural conditions and resources for this work to work and that measures are implemented and followed up. Sweden, including Swedish higher education institutions, have good opportunities to help the entire world transition, which also means opportunities for students to work in an international context.

Internationalization can lead to increased emissions through travel. Universities have a responsibility to use digital communication and efficient transportation to minimize emissions.

2.8 Work environment and mental health

It is of great importance that higher education institutions investigate and work on the causes behind students' mental health in order to be able to address and prevent them. In order to be able to prevent mental health, SFS believes that the state and its authorities should ensure that higher education institutions investigate, evaluate and keep statistics on the health situation of students and the causes of students' mental health. Good mental health requires a safe and secure work environment.

Several authorities supervise how higher education institutions meet the requirements for the work environment and the situation of students at the higher education institution. When several authorities are involved, it is important to have collaboration that involves anchoring within and between the authorities, regardless of which authority is primarily responsible for supervision.

The authorities should assist with training or other methods to support and help follow up on the universities' systematic work environment work so that it is done effectively and close to the student. SFS believes that the authorities should develop this work together through collaboration and that the responsibility rests equally on all authorities responsible for the students' work environment.

2.9 Internationalization

The Academy's role in the knowledge society means that it operates to a very high degree in a globalized context. Students as well as research and teaching staff must be given the opportunity and encouraged to engage in exchanges and international collaboration.

It is therefore important that national regulations are developed to promote mobility for students, academic staff and other personnel.

It is also important that students as well as research and teaching staff are given the opportunity to develop their intercultural competence, thereby enabling effective and appropriate communication with other cultures.

Internationalization does not only refer to being physically active in another country but also to, for example, establishing international contacts as a student or academic staff.

There must also be conditions for international students at all levels of education within academia to remain in Sweden after completing their studies, as this is necessary for society's development and skills supply.

Residence permit processes both before, during and after studies should function seamlessly and legally. A residence permit must not be the limiting factor for being able to study at a Swedish higher education institution or undertake a position of trust within the broader student community.

3. A high-quality education

The purpose of higher education is that it should be useful for the student. The education provided must be based on the individual's overall need for knowledge and intellectual development in working life and social life. A useful education provides the student with the conditions to meet a changing society and trains subject-specific knowledge, general abilities and a critical approach to the world around them. For doctoral education, usefulness means that the doctoral student should become an independent researcher with the ability to manage, expand and convey knowledge within the scientific field for the benefit of both the individual and society.

The value of an education lies in the usefulness of the education for the individual. A distinctive feature of higher education is that students are equipped to understand and analyze their own life situation and the society in which they operate. For this to be possible, students must learn to reflect on the knowledge they have acquired and the learning process itself. Different education programs have different conditions for satisfying this

and it is important to create a balance. Some education programs respond to a greater extent to well-known needs in the labor market, while others instead create the conditions for creating new jobs.

In higher education, students and academic staff collaborate with each other in teaching and research. Students play an important role within the institution and can contribute to both education, research and the institution's interaction with the surrounding society. This requires the right conditions in the form of skilled and committed teachers and a management that recognizes students as an asset.

For those programmes where there is a well-known and clear connection to working life, there should be collaboration between the higher education institution, students and working life to maximise the usefulness of the programme. However, it is important that the higher education institution provides information regarding the overall work opportunities available to the student to counteract vested interests from parties within working life.

3.1 Higher education institutions' governance of education

Higher education institutions shall offer the education at basic and advanced levels that students demand as long as the education meets the criteria for higher education. Higher education institutions are responsible for ensuring that their education is academically relevant and of high quality. Development and review of the educational offering shall be carried out continuously and with good anchoring in order to create good conditions for future planning and to be able to offer relevant educational alternatives to students. In this way, a balance between long-termism and renewal is sought.

It is the obligation of higher education institutions to ensure student influence in the institution's dimensioning and offering. In addition to student influence, higher education institutions have a responsibility to discuss dimensioning issues for all levels of education with a variety of actors in society. This may include non-profit organizations, business and the public sector. With broad collaboration, higher education institutions decide what belongs to higher education and what is left to other forms of education. The formal decision on the institution's dimensioning and offering should always be made by the higher education institution itself in order not to risk threatening the independence, freedom and scientific or artistic basis of academia.

Higher education institutions should be very cautious about using forecasts of the needs of society or specific stakeholders as a basis for their sizing. Such forecasts should only be used for those programmes where the need for competence has proven to be very easy to predict.

In order for teaching staff to have the conditions to be skilled in both research and education, conscious steering from political sources and from the management of the higher education institution is required. Among other things, a well-functioning resource allocation system for education and research is needed both from the state and within the higher education institution, access to skills development for teachers, clear career paths and

functioning security system for the institution's staff. To ensure commitment and competence within the framework of education, there must be systems that qualify pedagogical skills for teaching staff.

Sizing and selection

SFS believes that all education should maintain high quality regardless of whether a program has a high or low number of places. A certain number of places within a program should not be a prerequisite for the higher education institution to be able to provide high quality education. How the education is structured in relation to the number of places ensures that all programs, regardless of the number of places, are required to maintain high quality.

The education must never be dimensioned in such a way that other aspects of a high-quality education suffer. The higher education pedagogical competence of teaching teachers and supervisors must never be classified as secondary to an individual teacher's research.

In order for all people to have the opportunity to freely choose their education, the geographical distribution of each education is important. While cooperation and collaboration between higher education institutions is important in achieving good regional access to education, the state has a central role in steering higher education institutions to achieve this. This steering must be based on student demand and the conditions for achieving high quality in education. An analysis of student demand should play a central role when higher education institutions are required to grant a degree permit. Such an analysis should also include the conditions for efficiency and quality in education.

It is of great value that there is a wide range of education. There should be a variety of both subject areas and forms of education, including program education and independent courses. In the academic environment, there should be opportunities for exchange between students who are studying different types of education with different purposes. SFS believes that there should be a varied range of education throughout the country.

Research affiliation

The exchange between education and research, so-called research linkage, is central to higher education and to the quality of education. SFS believes that a higher education institution should only be able to increase the number of places available within a demanded education if good research linkage can still be guaranteed. It is therefore important that environments with strong demand for education have the conditions for research to be conducted so that an imbalance does not arise between education and research and thereby risk the quality of education.

Research education is a central part of higher education, just like undergraduate and graduate education. For the quality of research education, it is necessary that it is linked to a high-quality research environment, which, among other things, gives the research student the opportunity to discuss their research with other junior and senior researchers.

senior researchers in their research area. There should be broad access to postgraduate education throughout Sweden to ensure a strong connection between research, education and society, and to make postgraduate education widely available.

It is the responsibility of the higher education institutions to decide which places for doctoral studies are to be advertised. The dimensioning of doctoral studies should be guided by the needs of academia and society for researchers. A particularly important aspect of this is the long-term perspective of academia, where the dimensioning of doctoral studies should satisfy the academy's need for doctoral graduates for high-quality education at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Massive Open Online Courses

SFS sees that Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have the potential to drive educational development forward, but that it is not justified to take money from formal education to conduct such development work. Therefore, SFS believes that higher education institutions should not be allowed to finance MOOCs by taking money from education appropriations. SFS believes that a national strategy is needed to create a consensus on how MOOCs should be developed and financed.

3.2 Prerequisites for starting higher education

In order for people to be able to participate in higher education, potential barriers must be overcome and there must be a mutually beneficial attitude between the public and academia. This requires that a number of concrete conditions be met for the possibility of starting, completing and completing higher education.

Broadened recruitment and participation

Broadened recruitment is about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity and conditions to apply for and be admitted to higher education. To achieve this, higher education institutions' recruitment of students from groups that are underrepresented in must be improved. However, it is in the interest of society as a whole to have a well-educated population with different life experiences, which requires an active policy that encourages studies and makes it possible for everyone to have the choice to study in higher education. SFS believes that the student group should reflect the composition of society. Through reflection, experiences, perspectives and skills are utilized in the development of the knowledge society and knowledge is made available to more people.

It is important that higher education institutions provide information about the courses they offer, not only about their content but also about the ways in which the courses can be useful. Among other things, it is important that a course that is advertised as

Campus-based courses should also be so, the same applies to courses that are advertised as distance learning. This is to provide clarity to prospective students.

It is important that there is good study information for prospective students that includes more than just quantitative measures per education. Study and career guidance fulfills an important function in informing about the usefulness of higher education. SFS believes that study guidance should be available at upper secondary schools, adult education, employment services and municipal libraries and offer information and discussions about the possibility of higher studies. Education should be easily accessible and adapted to students' different circumstances, needs and educational cultural backgrounds. In this regard, student guidance plays a particularly important role in ensuring that more people pay attention to higher education.

Broadened participation is about designing the education so that everyone who has been admitted has the opportunity to complete it, including through pedagogical development and the right to support measures. An inclusive education system safeguards free tuition and accessible teaching materials. A broad and heterogeneous student group places high demands on treatment and a varied education system that guarantees an inclusive study and work environment. In a heterogeneous student group, there is varying knowledge of academia and its language - a language that a student needs to know in order to participate in the development of academic knowledge. Foundation year education is an important key to the work of universities with broadened recruitment.

Education accessible to all

Higher education is a human right that should be independent of citizenship status. Therefore, people who have not yet had time to obtain a residence permit should be given the opportunity to study in Sweden. Higher education contributes to the individual's inclusion in Swedish society. Full-time studies should, in the same way as work, be a path to permanent residence. Foreign education is a competence and asset for both academia and the Swedish labor market. Knowledge should not be wasted, which is why clear and effective validation of foreign educational qualifications is needed. It is not enough to provide funds to various authorities; there must also be a uniform, functioning and legally secure system to base the validation process on.

Education should be free of charge for all. SFS is strongly opposed to fees for higher education and distances itself from higher education that is financed through tuition fees. However, in cases where fees are charged to the student, these fees must never cover more than the costs that are directly linked to the education that the student is undertaking. Higher education institutions should also clearly report how the costs are calculated. If fees are still charged, there should be alternatives to make higher education more accessible to fee-paying students. Such alternatives include scholarships that can be applied for by fee-paying students.

3.4 Access and selection

Admissions issues involve how students are admitted to higher education. The admissions system distinguishes between eligibility issues and selection issues.

Eligibility is about what qualifications a person must have in order to be admitted to a program.

Selection is about which of the eligible applicants are admitted to the program.

Access to education at undergraduate and graduate levels

The level of qualification for a higher education must be able to be justified based on what is required to be able to benefit from the education. The requirements for qualification must be absolutely necessary, which means that they must be able to be justified based on the goals and content of the education. The requirements must be designed as achieved learning objectives, and be meaningful in relation to the content of the education. There should be no requirements for a certain type of thesis or fees, since the form does not in itself constitute a competence.

Eligibility requirements should be described in terms of basic and specific eligibility.

In the case of special qualifications, a description of the area qualifications must be provided so that the applicant can easily overview the qualification requirements. Work experience may only be used as a qualification requirement in specific cases. Suitability tests should not normally be used because they are not legally secure and risk preventing people with the right qualifications from studying. Instead, the selection should be made based on the applicant's knowledge and skills. The education should provide the conditions for all qualified applicants to meet the objectives of the education based on the qualification requirements.

SFS believes that everyone who has the right skills should be granted access to higher education, regardless of which education system they have studied in and regardless of whether they have had the opportunity to study in higher education. All applicants should have the right to have formal educational qualifications validated in order to be eligible for Swedish higher education. All applicants should also be entitled to an assessment of their real skills and whether the skills correspond to basic or special qualifications. Real skills refer to, among other things, skills from working life, non-formal education and informal learning. Assessments should be expressed in such a way that they can be used to apply for various education programmes within the regular admissions system. Therefore, there should also be legally secure national criteria and procedures for assessing real skills.

The basic qualification level shall be harmonised with the qualification objectives for all upper secondary school programmes. It is the state's responsibility to ensure that the education chain is coherent and that there is no gap between upper secondary school and higher education. Although not all upper secondary education programmes need to provide all subject area qualifications, all upper secondary school programmes should provide basic qualification.

Otherwise, students' high school choices may exclude them from higher education, with consequences for the openness and representativeness of academia.

The entry requirements for advanced studies should be designed so that applicants with different bachelor's degrees can be admitted, unless specific prerequisites are required. This means that a basic level degree should normally provide entry to advanced studies in related subject areas where the students have sufficient prerequisites to complete the course.

The qualification for advanced level studies should reflect that knowledge and skills within higher education should be general.

Qualifying pre-training, such as a foundation year, should be able to provide a guaranteed place in one of the programs for which the program provides eligibility. Qualifying pre-training is an important tool for broadening recruitment to certain programs.

Access to postgraduate education

Places for doctoral education shall be advertised publicly and assessed against a clear description of the programme and the position and shall be available to all prospective doctoral students. The application process shall be transparent and legally secure. The decision on who is admitted and/or employed as a doctoral student should never lie with a single individual. When announcing admission as a doctoral student, it shall always be clear whether the admission concerns a licentiate degree or a doctoral degree. It is important that higher education institutions actively work to counteract the presence of individuals who are active as doctoral students.

but who have not been accepted to doctoral studies, so-called 'shadow doctoral students'.

SFS believes that anyone who has completed an advanced degree or has equivalent qualifications should be eligible to apply for postgraduate studies in their field of study. Admission criteria for postgraduate studies should be clear, transparent and reasonable. For admission to postgraduate studies, it should never be a requirement that the applicant should have conducted research together with the research group in which the postgraduate study is located. It should also not be a requirement that the applicant should have published articles in scientific journals.

However, this may be of merit.

Doctoral students who are enrolled at a foreign university but who during a time visiting researchers at a Swedish higher education institution should be specifically included in a research group. The higher education institution should be aware of the existence of these research students and be clear about the mutual expectations that exist between them and the higher education institution. Even if these research students are not admitted to a research program at the higher education institution they are active at, they should, to the greatest extent possible, be treated in the same way as admitted research students.

Selection for undergraduate and graduate education

Selection is about which of the eligible applicants are admitted to higher education. Within the selection system there are various selection instruments such as

grades, university entrance exams and alternative admission forms. The purpose of the selection system is to choose which students are admitted when there is competition for places in a program. It is important that the selection for higher education is perceived as legitimate by society, regardless of which admission system is used. Therefore, the system must be transparent, predictable and fair. The admission system is built on a meritocratic basis and is intended so that the most meritorious students are the first to gain access to education. This applies to both Swedish and international students. It is therefore important that all students are admitted based on the same requirements and in the same admission process.

To be perceived as legitimate, the selection system must be competitive and based on the students' merits. Separate admission quotas for fee-paying students are something that SFS strongly opposes. In order to be able to admit people with different backgrounds, experiences and types of merits, several different selection instruments are needed. The outcomes in a competitive system with different selection instruments are not comparable. Since the system cannot take into account individuals' different conditions for creating competitively advantageous merits, all selection instruments must be free of charge for the applicant. This creates predictability in the selection system. Despite this, SFS believes that a competitive system with several ways of measuring merits is the most reasonable to use given the large number of education places, study locations, education programmes and applicants.

The selection process should aim to hire those with the best qualifications, but the training places should be distributed between selection groups in a way that promotes broad recruitment.

Grades from upper secondary school should be an important selection instrument. The reliability of grade merits is based on the grades being clearly goal-related and on the examination in upper secondary school being legally secure. Since selection should be based on equal merits being valued equally, grades from supplementary upper secondary education should be valued equally as regular upper secondary school grades. All upper secondary school grades should have the same merit value in order to make the system transparent, efficient and to avoid unnecessarily controlling students' study choices. Therefore, SFS believes that there should be no merit points system.

The Higher Education Entrance Exam is an important instrument for broadening access to higher education, especially for people without competitive upper secondary school grades. The Higher Education Examination shall be a study skills test that tests the student's ability to study based on their knowledge. The test shall be adapted to examine study skills for the wide range of higher education offerings in a relevant way.

The university entrance exam must be an opportunity for everyone. This can be achieved by offering the same opportunities for educational support measures during the university entrance exam as admitted students can receive. There should also be no fees associated with the university entrance exam.

Some programs require special tests to measure relevant prior knowledge.

Such tests should be made as legally secure as possible, for example by anonymization.

SFS believes that selection in the form of a lottery, continuous selection or open admission with selection later during the education are resource-inefficient and unpredictable.

3.5 Student learning at the center

Responsibility for the student's learning process is shared between the student and the person who teaches or supervises. The role of academic teacher entails special requirements linked to the purpose of higher education. In order for a student to receive the best possible education, it is important that the knowledge is conveyed by scientifically or artistically qualified teachers. It is just as important that the person who teaches or supervises has solid higher education pedagogical competence. All learning activities and the teaching and supervision that takes place must be rooted in science and proven experience of learning. In order to ensure the necessary competence, SFS believes that higher education pedagogical training must be mandatory and recurrent for teaching and supervisory staff.

It is important that the teaching methods used are relevant to the education and are varied so that all students can best absorb the knowledge. Teaching methods and higher education teaching methods should also be adapted to whether the education is on campus or distance learning. The education needs to maintain the same quality regardless of where the education is carried out. Self-study without sufficient supervision should never occur, as it gives students fewer opportunities to develop the analytical and critical thinking that higher education requires. For education at the basic and advanced levels, except in the case of independent work, self-study may never constitute the main part of the education.

Research students employed at the university have a special status as both students and academic staff. As students, they undergo training and meet academic staff in various roles, while at the same time, in their role as researchers at the beginning of their careers and in their encounters with students in teaching, they are also academic staff. As part of this dual status, research students employed within academia are therefore covered by the rights and obligations that apply to both of these roles.

Examination and public defense

In order for students to achieve the learning objectives, it is important that the education and examination are designed in a clear way in relation to the objectives. All education leading to a degree must also be planned and implemented with a clear anchoring in the national degree objectives. Examinations should be designed so that it is possible for the student to account for the achievement of the objectives. Higher education institutions should strive for a variety of examination forms.

Student learning should always be the primary starting point when designing examination structures. In addition, legal certainty must always be ensured.

During and before examinations, transparency, predictability and anonymity are important legal security issues for the student. PhD students should never be responsible for financing or quality-assuring their dissertation.

Students must be given the opportunity to plan their daily lives in accordance with the scope of their studies according to the study pace established in the course syllabus. Therefore, the times should

for examination elements should be placed within the scope of the study pace. A course that is taken during the day should be examined during the day on weekdays, just as a course that is taken in the evening should be examined during the evening.

The grading system applied must be appropriate for the education in question and facilitate mobility.

Examinations and grades should always be re-examined.

When designing educational programs, knowledge and skills that are crucial for progression must be ensured through examination.

Time for recovery

Recovery time must be taken into account in the planning of educational programs by higher education institutions. There must be security systems that enable students and doctoral students to have longer continuous periods of recovery and time for recovery between semesters or study periods throughout their education.

There must also be structures in place to ensure that doctoral students' ability to take vacation cannot be restricted by their supervisor. In addition, it is of great importance that student health and occupational health care have the resources and expertise to assist students and doctoral students in matters of recovery.

3.6 Quality assurance

Quality work should secure and strengthen the opportunity for students to benefit from high-quality education at all levels of higher education. Through quality work, a high minimum level is to be guaranteed, but primarily quality work should strengthen the development of the content and implementation of education regardless of whether the education is campus-based or distance-based. Universities and colleges are run in an international context, which means that quality work also does so.

The higher education institution is responsible for implementing quality work. The higher education institution is responsible for independently developing quality work based on the scientific nature that should characterize all parts of the academic activities. Furthermore, SFS believes that the higher education institution is responsible for developing its own definition of quality that is based on the conditions and characteristics of the higher education institution. The definition of quality must be based on the students' perspectives and interests. Students play a central role in all parts of the quality work and especially in its planning, implementation, analysis and follow-up.

Obstacles for students to participate in quality work

There are several obstacles that can affect students' opportunities for student influence.

Student influence is largely limited to those students who have an understanding of the Swedish language. In line with the increasing internationalization of Swedish higher education institutions, international students must be offered equal access to information and equal opportunities for student influence.

There should be

opportunity for both students and research and teaching staff who do not speak Swedish to learn the language effectively. Higher education institutions should be organizationally inclusive also for non-Swedish speakers regardless of any requirements for official language, this includes that all students should be able to be student representatives at all levels.

In order for student influence to be accessible to everyone, SFS works to ensure that language barriers never stand in the way of non-Swedish-speaking students actively participating in student influence at their Swedish higher education institution. Therefore, SFS must work for the universities to make use of bilingualism in bodies where non-Swedish speakers are to be represented. Through bilingualism, participation in student influence becomes more equal for both Swedish-speaking and non-Swedish-speaking students. Furthermore, the higher education institutions must provide at least the summary of all important documents that concern non-Swedish-speaking students.

A large proportion of the country's students study remotely. A barrier to participation can be the inability to physically attend meetings at the university.

Therefore, distance student influence should be in the awareness of higher education institutions and also be taken into account in the planning of operations.

3.7 Learning environments

The premises of higher education institutions shall be dimensioned and designed in such a way that they are appropriate and promote a good working environment. The management and ownership of the premises shall be carried out in such a way that it benefits the operations. Higher education institutions should also be given the opportunity to own and manage their own premises. This includes both forms of ownership where higher education institutions indirectly own their own premises via other companies and when the higher education institution directly owns the premises. Furthermore, demands for profit or other costs that exceed the actual operating and investment costs for the premises shall not burden the higher education institution. This requires that staff and students are involved and represented in decisions concerning the higher education institution's premises.

The opportunity to study together is a quality issue. Exchange of experiences is one of the academic pillars for creating new knowledge. A learning environment refers to a place where learning takes place and a learning environment can be both physical and virtual.

SFS believes that the learning environment should be adapted to the pedagogy used at each learning stage to stimulate knowledge development.

Some forms of education are characterised by physical learning environments. The physical learning environment may contain barriers to participation. Teaching should be on an accessible basis regardless of the student population. Similarly, students with children should not be excluded by the lack of, for example, changing tables, breastfeeding places or study places where children are also welcome. In the same way that some education programmes need distance learning in order not to exclude parts of the student population, other education programmes need physical teaching in order to guarantee high quality of education and a good social situation for students. A

Campus-based education should generally be taught on campus. Digital elements may be present but should not replace campus teaching.

The digital learning environment should be satisfactory. This means that there needs to be space for discussion and exchange of experiences in a natural way via digital learning platforms. The digital learning platforms should be adapted for speech synthesis, be able to be translated into other languages and take into account.

Social and organizational work environment

Students, just like employees, should have the right to a safe social and organizational work environment. Therefore, it is of great importance that the state and its agencies have guidelines, laws and regulations that promote a good work environment for students.

A good work environment for students does not include exactly the same as for employees. Among other things, it is of great importance for students' work environment that there are well-designed and well-thought-out course and training plans that ensure a reasonable workload and coherent educational programs, as well as accessible, pleasant and safe physical environments.

In addition, there is a general need for support measures at the university for managing conflicts, both between students and between students and employees. It is also important to ensure the existence of mediation functions between students and possible supervisors, especially in positions where the risk of personal conflicts may arise.

It shall be the role of the student unions to appoint student safety representatives at each higher education institution. The student unions shall be given good conditions to be able to appoint and coordinate the functions of student safety representatives. The student safety representatives shall receive training that corresponds to the standard of safety representative training.

It is the responsibility of the higher education institution to provide quality training for student safety representatives. It shall be up to each higher education institution, in consultation with the respective student union, to decide which party will organise the basic training for student safety representatives. Student safety representatives shall have a position equivalent to that of safety representatives, regardless of whether they work with the physical or psychosocial work environment.

Students' living environments must meet the statutory accessibility requirements, and be a good physical and psychosocial working environment for everyone. A good study environment and place of study is a fundamental prerequisite for completing higher education.

The study spaces should be well designed according to the needs of the students and the content of the education. The study spaces should be dimensioned according to the needs of each campus. This is to ensure that all students have a good study environment throughout their studies.

A student representative or equivalent function must be available at the higher education institution to ensure students' right to support and advice in their study situation. It is the higher education institution that is ultimately responsible for enabling the financing of a student representative or equivalent function in some form.

3.8 Prerequisites for student healthcare

Studying brings with it factors such as stress and unsafe living conditions that can lead to needs for student health care. Student health care clinics, commonly referred to as student health, are important for giving students the right conditions to feel good throughout their studies. As a result of the erosion of the education budget, funds for student health in the country are being reduced, while students' stress-related problems are increasing. SFS believes that a student health service must not charge fees from students. Student health services must not be cut back as a consequence of higher education institutions being forced to make savings. It is also important that a good national standard is established so that students' well-being is guaranteed, regardless of their choice of place of study and education.

When a student becomes ill or suffers from mental or physical ill health, there is uncertainty about whether the student should turn to primary care or student health. In addition to this, there is also uncertainty about what the responsibilities of student health and primary care are. SFS believes that the preventive function of student health and its complementary role to primary care must be clarified by defining its function by the state. SFS also believes that the lack of collaboration is so serious that the state should actively promote collaborative efforts between the higher education institutions' student health, student unions and the respective regions to ensure that students are not stuck between authorities and regions while waiting for care. Student health and the preventive work of healthcare and higher education institutions is a crucial prerequisite for promoting good health among students.

3.9 Sustainable development in education and research

Within academia, teaching, research and collaboration take place that contribute to sustainable development. Higher education institutions should have goals for sustainable development at all levels of education and in all subject areas.

Relevant perspectives on sustainable development should be integrated into all education.

Various societal challenges can be addressed for the current subject area. Sustainable development should be integrated into the education based on a multidisciplinary approach, since the various societal challenges cannot be addressed in isolation. There should be systematic follow-up and development of the education where sustainable development is addressed.

The education should provide students with sustainability competence that is relevant to their subject area and the purpose of the education in order to make it easier for students to contribute to the transition to a sustainable society. The transition to a more sustainable society affects all areas of science. SFS therefore believes that all education can and should address relevant sustainability perspectives, which assumes that the necessary competence is present among the teaching staff. If competence is lacking, SFS believes that higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide it. What this competence is varies between subject areas.

Integrating sustainable development into education should be done by developing students' knowledge of sustainable development, their ability to contribute to sustainable development, and teaching in a sustainable and inclusive manner. SFS also believes that working with sustainability in education means working to a greater extent across subject-discipline boundaries to solve the ecological, social and economic societal challenges the world is facing.

The transition to a sustainable society requires research. This applies both to developing innovations and to implementing them. Here, higher education institutions have different conditions and opportunities, for example researchers and teachers with both knowledge and resources to work on these issues. Research requires resources and while all researchers should be able to choose research problems freely, the state, higher education institutions and other social actors have a responsibility to promote research that contributes to sustainable development.

3.10 Artificial intelligence in higher education

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), higher education institutions must embrace a use of AI that is forward-looking and sustainable.

Training university and college teachers in AI is crucial, and they should be equipped with the knowledge and tools to navigate this new technology effectively.

SFS will work to ensure that AI is used in a way that improves higher education.

Universities should have good procedures to stay up to date on developments in AI and ensure that education and research are only positively affected, not negatively. AI should not be used to replace important human interactions and a critical approach should be safeguarded. SFS's vision is to see a higher education where AI serves all students in a legally secure manner, and where integrity, inclusion, and innovation are the cornerstones of this digital development.

4. Prerequisites for studies

Prioritizing accessibility and adaptation to needs is a prerequisite for all students, regardless of background and needs, to be able to take part in higher education with equal study conditions. Legally secure admission and examination are crucial to ensuring equal study conditions.

Students bring varying prior knowledge and different preconceptions of academia into their studies. To enable everyone to gain knowledge of academic ethics and the art of both writing and speaking academically, there must be a national responsibility to ensure the provision of free courses in academic writing, speaking and writing workshops at the country's higher education institutions. Such courses must not be jeopardized by the financial conditions of the higher education institutions.

4.1 Studying with a disability

All higher education should be designed to be accessible to all. Examination forms, teaching environments and learning tools need to be developed beyond the norms of how teaching has traditionally been conducted. In addition to a developed and accessible higher education, there is a need for pedagogical support measures. Pedagogical support measures should aim to reduce or eliminate obstacles for students with documented disabilities so that everyone can study on the same terms regardless of disability.

A disability should never be an obstacle to applying for or fully participating in and completing higher education. Insufficient educational support measures or inaccessible premises should also not be reasons for a student to discontinue their studies. SFS therefore requires that there should be secured funding for educational support measures at the national level. SFS also requires that systems should be in place to check that these funds are used in educational support activities. However, support should be available for needy students who want to study or practice abroad, so that these students have equal opportunities.

Examinations are occasions when many students with disabilities are disadvantaged. In order for the assessment to be fair, students must receive the special support and aids to which they are entitled. It is not sustainable for students to have to prove themselves that they are entitled to support before each examination, as this means an increased workload and planning for the student. It also means that many staff members needlessly share sensitive personal data and that the possibility of being anonymous in, for example, a written examination is reduced. There should also be a national system that keeps track of what support students are entitled to and enables them to report their need for support at the same time as they register for the examination. The individual student's privacy regarding sensitive personal data must be strongly considered.

There are no national guidelines for what is meant by special pedagogical support measures. The lack of national guidelines contributes to an imbalance between Swedish higher education institutions in the supply and design of pedagogical support measures. There is also no minimum level for what a student can expect for support as admitted to a course. Therefore, SFS wants guidelines to be prepared for a national consensus. With a common definition, SFS wants to see a standardized basic supply of pedagogical support measures. The pedagogical support should then be able to be individually adapted to meet the needs of the individual student.

Information about available support functions should be clear to both prospective and admitted students. Lack of information about available educational support measures should also not prevent studies abroad.

4.2 Psychosocial health

Mental illness is a societal problem that also affects many students.

The student's mental health can affect the ability to complete their studies and

If fewer students complete their studies due to mental health problems, it will lead to increased costs for both society and the individual. Because mental health is more connected to the study situation and the work environment at the university.

Recovery Recovery

is an essential prerequisite for a long-term sustainable study situation. Workload is one of many factors that affect the need for recovery. The concept of workload includes the need for a balance between self-study and teacher-led time throughout the education with the aim of creating an even workload. Lack of opportunities for recovery can also affect health.

4.3 Student finances

A socially and economically secure existence during the study period is crucial for students' well-being and opportunities to undertake, complete and complete their studies. The opportunity to study must be equal for everyone. Therefore, financial obstacles to studies must be minimized. Students need to be covered by

comprehensive social security system and, in addition, should not need to work more than full-time to be able to live a decent life.

Social security systems

Access to financial and social security systems affects broader participation. Financial security through student financial aid systems reduces the need to work alongside full-time studies to make ends meet. The social security system provides support when a student becomes ill. During periods of illness, student health plays an important role. When the illness becomes more prolonged, students must be covered by a well-functioning security system in order to have time to rehabilitate themselves back to studies.

Likewise, parents and students must

covered by a well-functioning security system.

Students who become ill or unemployed should never be forced into poverty or have to abandon their education due to unfair and dysfunctional social security systems. All students should have the right to social security to the same extent as workers and be covered by a comprehensive social security system adapted to the needs of students.

A functioning social insurance system is a prerequisite for a fully-fledged social security system. Students should be able to take advantage of the insurance when they are sick. SFS believes that students should be able to be on sick leave part-time. They should also have the right to rehabilitation back into their studies after a period of illness if they so wish. The responsibility for students' rehabilitation lies with the education provider by law. It should be clear what measures the student is entitled to and what the education provider is

obliged to offer. Students' health insurance and compensation for caring for sick children should be linked to employment and studies instead of the study allowance to include all students. SFS believes that the waiting period for sick leave and caring for sick children should be a maximum of 7 days.

It is important that parental insurance is tailored to students. Students should be able to start a family without losing their employment and they should be able to resume their studies after parental leave.

Since housing costs vary for different students, housing allowance may be needed to ensure that the rent for the accommodation does not constitute too large a proportion of a student's income. SFS believes that the housing allowance should be designed in such a way that it is a real alternative for everyone who needs it. It is important that the housing allowance is adapted to different housing and life situations and that the regulations are clear.

Postgraduate students employed within the academy have a dual role in the academy as both students and academic staff. The security conditions for doctoral students vary depending on the form of financing and whether they are employed. SFS believes that all doctoral students should always have secure employment. Like other staff, doctoral students should have good, predictable working conditions from day one. For doctoral students who are employed at a place other than academia, the higher education institution must ensure that the doctoral student is insured through the other employer. A doctoral student representative or equivalent function must be available at the higher education institution to ensure the right of doctoral students to support and advice in their study and employment situation.

Student aid system

The student financial aid system is a basic prerequisite for an open and equal university. A state-funded student aid system is absolutely necessary for all people to have equal opportunities to apply for higher education. It needs to be adapted to a heterogeneous student group to guarantee that everyone, regardless of background, dares to take the step into higher education. For the student aid to serve its purpose, it must be adapted to society's cost levels. The general principle of the SFS is that the student aid should fully cover students' actual expenses and enable a reasonable standard of living with recreation and leisure.

The majority of the study funds should consist of grants from the state, but with the proviso that the distribution should be balanced.

The Bologna Process meant that advanced level education courses became one year longer. This has contributed to reduced opportunities to start more education and courses than a bachelor's program and a master's. The student aid system should be adapted to the length of the education. SFS believes that the number of weeks for which it is possible to apply for student aid should be sufficient for at least eight years of full-time studies. That the weeks with student loans are limited is also a direct obstacle to lifelong learning and Sweden as a knowledge nation. The student loan system should be a dynamic system where a student who has paid back a certain number of weeks on his student loan can again use these to finance studies. SFS also wants

The grant and loan weeks of study funds should be able to be divided and thus used separately.

Students with children are a group that is particularly vulnerable financially. There should therefore be satisfactory subsidy systems to enable student parents to cover the extra costs that result from being a student parent. It is important that all student parents who have extra costs are entitled to the additional subsidy, regardless of the family situation in general. Other circumstances, such as where the child is registered, should also not affect the possibility of receiving the subsidy.

Working alongside your studies should be an opportunity and not a necessity to be able to finance your studies. SFS is fundamentally positive about a tax-free amount, as it guarantees that it will always be possible to finance your studies with student loans and without the need for a side income. However, the tax-free amount should not, for example, constitute an obstacle to selling a home or moving capital between accounts.

It must also be taken into account that as an employee or contractor it is not always possible to predict or plan when payment will be made. Students should not be required to repay due to unforeseen or unplanned income. SFS also believes that the exemption should only apply to the weeks in which the student receives study funding.

Costs related to studies

Learning materials or learning tools are instruments that the student needs to be able to achieve the learning objectives of the course. Higher education in Sweden must be free of charge by law, but if students need to pay for learning materials and learning tools to achieve the course objectives, higher education is not free of charge for the individual student. Study materials and learning tools that are required to prepare the conditions to achieve the course objectives must therefore be paid for by the higher education institution and not the student. A list of which learning materials and learning tools are needed for students to be able to participate in a course must be published no later than two months before the start of the course. Regardless of whether a student needs to read the study material or plan to complete the course, the individual student must know the conditions well in advance and be able to plan their participation.

Initially, funds should be allocated to the libraries of higher education institutions to increase the availability of course literature. This also means that the higher education institution needs to broaden the range of, for example, open course literature and licenses for digital editions. Since not all education is characterized by course literature or campus-based learning, the software required for an education needs to be made available to all students. The material required for practical elements of the education should be available to students at the higher education institution.

Since there are many hidden costs for students participating in work-based learning, it is important that students are compensated for expenses they incur in connection with work-based learning. Thus, students should receive

full compensation for all costs associated with internships or VFU, including travel and accommodation.

4.4 Student housing

Access to housing is a social right. Lack of housing is a major societal problem that hits economically weak and otherwise vulnerable groups particularly hard. All students should have access to safe housing during their studies. Lack of housing also makes many hesitate to study in a certain location. This contributes to increased biased recruitment to the country's education systems, and the state, municipalities, regions and higher education institutions have a responsibility to contribute to student safety.

Starting points

The student population is a heterogeneous group and has different needs. These needs should be met in the same way as other citizens of society. It is therefore a very important starting point that no lower requirements are placed on student housing than on housing for others. Furthermore, it is important that students have the same good access to community services, infrastructure and recreation. SFS represents the idea of a mixed development and housing for students should therefore not be concentrated in certain areas.

A group with special housing needs are students with children who often need larger apartments. It is important that the housing supply is adapted to the mixed student group with housing in different forms. SFS therefore urges housing operators to provide housing with different types of housing. Few students can afford to buy a home. Therefore, it is important that there is an increase in the availability of housing for students to rent.

A good standard of housing is important for students to feel good and be able to complete their studies. Housing that is built should maintain a high standard and meet accessibility requirements so that the housing stock is accessible to everyone. Housing should be accessible so that all students can live in the housing regardless of functional ability, and meet the same standard requirements as other housing. To facilitate housing construction, SFS sees value in continuously reviewing whether there are rules that can be relaxed or reformulated without impairing either accessibility or the quality of life in the housing. It is therefore important that operation and maintenance are not neglected. SFS believes that the same rules and taxes should apply to maintenance regardless of the form of housing. When reviewing rules and requirements for housing, it should be fundamental that students are not treated differently in the proposed changes.

To meet urgent housing needs, SFS is cautiously positive about housing construction on temporary building permits. It is also very important that housing on temporary building permits meets the same standard as permanent housing. Temporary

Building permits should only be granted on land that has already been detailed planned. Rental conditions for housing under temporary building permits should be clear and create security for tenants.

The responsibility of public institutions for the student housing situation

The state must take responsibility for ensuring that all groups in society have access to good housing. It is clear that a joint responsibility is required between the state, region and municipality to create a good housing situation for the country's students. SFS sees the housing shortage for Sweden's students as a problem that is linked to a general housing shortage. Students are one of the groups that are affected when there is a housing shortage because students generally have a strained economy and often have to move to new locations to study. Many students are young and have therefore not had the opportunity to stand in a housing queue for a long time. In a situation with a housing shortage, it is therefore important that there is housing dedicated to students, where students can live throughout their studies.

SFS is positive about investment support for the construction of smaller rental apartments. Smaller rental properties fulfill an important function in society and should therefore be prioritized. Investment support must be designed so that it is long-term, predictable and creates incentives to build more housing for students. It should also be linked to requirements for lower rents. A rent that students can afford is central to the possibility of being able to pursue studies. Therefore, SFS has as a starting point that the rent should not exceed 30 percent of a student's income in the form of study funds. For this reason, SFS also opposes the introduction of market rents because SFS believes that this would disadvantage students. It is also important that the housing companies' income requirements for tenants are reasonable and adapted to the students' situation.

SFS believes that the municipalities' housing supply responsibility should be followed up with national targets for housing construction and that the state should clarify the requirements placed on regions and municipalities. There is also a need for clearer requirements for municipalities to plan the use of land. Through the municipalities' exclusive right to decide how the land within the municipality is to be used, the so-called planning monopoly, their actions become a key to creating the conditions for housing supply for the entire population in the municipality. The public sector plays a special role in providing housing for students. SFS believes that it is important that the municipal housing companies take special responsibility for the construction of housing and that public sector housing is not sold off. It is not only the municipalities that have higher education institutions within their borders that should take responsibility for ensuring that there is housing for students, but also surrounding municipalities.

It is important to strive for a good balance between citizens' ability to influence the planning process and society's need for an efficient process. SFS believes that the planning process should be reviewed to investigate whether it is possible to shorten the time between decision and construction. However, this must be done with due regard to ensuring that democratic influence is not compromised.

When the detailed plan is adopted and building rights are granted, municipalities must set time limits for the implementation of the plan. An important tool for putting pressure on construction companies

Truly building on designated land means not having an unnecessarily long implementation time and a way of taking responsibility for avoiding long lead times.

The housing market is complex and as a newly arrived student it can be difficult to know which housing companies are available in a location. It must be clear to students moving to a municipality or geographical region what housing options are available and how the process for applying for housing works. It is important that all students are treated equally in the housing queues. However, special rules may apply to students with children as they are often in a particularly vulnerable position.

The secondary market should be seen as a complement to the regular rental market. SFS believes that there should be safe and legally secure conditions for those who rent secondhand, a contract with a reasonable rent should be in place. It should not be possible to live insecurely and be forced to pay unreasonable rent for a dwelling. In order to increase security for the occupant, there should be a requirement for a written contract. SFS believes that increased regulation of the secondary market is needed to strengthen security.

Housing guarantee serves a function to solve the housing shortage for students in the short term. To meet SFS's definition of housing guarantee, housing must be available within 30 days of the start of the course or throughout the entire study period. The long-term solution is to eliminate the housing shortage for the entire population.

Consideration of student housing issues in educational dimensioning

SFS believes that higher education institutions should have a responsibility to have a good dialogue with the municipality and region about how the student population is expected to develop, and to work to ensure that the municipality provides students with housing. Higher education institutions also have a responsibility to provide information about the housing situation in the location(s) they are in, and to ensure that the information provides a fair picture of the situation to both prospective and existing students.

However, it is not the responsibility of the higher education institutions to provide their students with housing by acting as housing brokers or housing managers. However, the higher education institutions must take their responsibility and ensure that housing is provided to international students who, according to agreements, have the right to housing in Sweden.

International students are a particularly vulnerable group because it can be difficult to understand how the Swedish housing market works. It is important that higher education institutions provide information about the situation in the local housing market in their marketing. The higher education institution should also offer international students assistance in their housing search. In cases where higher education institutions have committed to providing housing for international students, it is their responsibility to ensure that the housing is available. Higher education institutions should not delegate this responsibility to student unions or other student-run organizations.

Some programs may include mandatory internships where a student is placed in a location so far from the place of study that it is not possible to commute during the day.



SFS believes that no one should be forced to pay double housing costs in order to benefit from their education. It should be the responsibility of the higher education institutions to provide housing if they cannot offer an internship to which there are reasonable connections from the place of study.