

April 2020

Education provider's guide to working with the four steps

All education providers are obliged to counteract discrimination and promote equal opportunities in education. To fulfil the applicable legal requirements, the department must work actively with all grounds of discrimination in the following areas:

- admission and recruitment
- forms of instruction and organising courses and programmes
- examinations and assessments
- study environment
- combining studies and parenthood.

This document describes a process the department can use to systematically, in four steps, work against discrimination.

A student representative must be involved in this work, which you must also document continually. This applies to all four steps. These measures can usefully be coordinated with systematic work environment management.

You are recommended to take the e-training available on the Equality Ombudsman web before you start: <http://e-utbildning.do.se/hogskolan/> (Only available in Swedish).

Organising work

Heads of department are responsible for the students' work and study environment. The four steps are a part of this responsibility, with the Discrimination Act as a starting point.

You are responsible for appointing a working group. You can assign this task an existing group such as the department coordination group. You also need to allocate time and resources. The gender equality and equal opportunities officer at the faculty can help.

Active measures must be continually documented. Once a year is not enough. All four steps, that is investigation, analysis, taking measures (including planning) and follow-up, must be documented. Your consultations with students and other

stakeholders must also be documented. SLU now has a template for such documentation, which will facilitate the departments' work.

Step 1 – Investigate

Investigate whether there are any risks of discrimination or reprisals, or other obstacles to the students' equal rights and opportunities. Document the investigation.

You need to cover all seven grounds of discrimination in the areas of recruitment and admission, forms of instruction and organising courses and programmes, examinations and assessments, study environment and the possibility of combining work and parenthood.

There are various ways of mapping and investigating the risk of discrimination and reprisals. Some examples:

- carry out student surveys
- analyse course and placement evaluations
- organise regular talks with students, students' unions and teachers
- review procedures to see how they are applied and if there is any risk of discrimination
- analyse incident reports
- review the content of course books, teaching materials and reading lists
- review course and programme syllabuses
- review timetabling and when compulsory components are scheduled
- see how the study environment can be adapted to students with disabilities.

Admission and recruitment

The selection criteria and entry requirements must be designed in a way that does not involve any risk of discrimination against someone. Admission to courses and programmes at undergraduate and Master's level is done centrally, admission to doctoral studies is done at the departments. Look into how this is done in practice, and how the department interacts with applicants during the recruitment process.

The university must investigate and, if necessary, take action to ensure that our courses and programmes can attract applicants regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation and age. This includes how courses and programmes are described in marketing and information material and contacts with potential applicants.

Forms of instruction and organisation

Forms of instruction and organisation include how SLU delivers courses and programmes; lectures, seminars, distance teaching, online courses etc. Other aspects to consider are when and where instruction takes place.

This phase is about investigating if the way teaching is delivered and organised risks having a negative effect on a particular group of students and if there is a connection to one or more grounds of discrimination.

Examinations and assessments

The university must ensure that course syllabuses and other rules for assessments do not risk giving some students poorer opportunities, regardless of the ground of discrimination. It is also about investigating if, in practical work or the application of rules and procedures, there is a risk of the assessment of study performance being consciously or unconsciously influenced by factors related to a ground of discrimination. Do you apply the SLU rules for anonymised written exams? Training staff in these issues also belongs here.

Study environment

The concept study environment refers to both the physical and the social environment. The physical study environment includes e.g. premises, tools and equipment. The social study environment includes issues relating to treatment, address and forms of socialising. Another component of this work is investigating the risk of harassment or sexual harassment.

The investigation can also look at the jargon among students and teachers and whether there are racist, sexist or other derogatory comments or jokes. When discussing the study environment at the department, you can ask yourselves these questions:

- What opinions do we have about students and how do these opinions influence how we treat them?
- Do students find the study environment safe, open and inclusive?
- What risks of exclusion are there?
- Do students know how to report harassment or sexual harassment?
- Do staff know how to handle harassment or sexual harassment should it occur?
- What jargon do students and teachers use? Does it include sexist, racist or homophobic elements? Are master suppression techniques used?
- Is the study environment accessible? Are special measures required to ensure that the study environment is accessible for all, regardless of impairments such as reduced vision or hearing, dyslexia or neuropsychiatric disorders?
- How do we experience culture and norms in our study environment? Are there norms we need to highlight and change to counteract discrimination?

Combining studies and parenthood

The university must investigate what measures are needed to make it easier to combine studies and being a parent. It is not about making it easier for students to bring their children to class (this is normally not allowed at SLU), but to make it possible in other ways for those responsible for caring for someone to study. It could concern how teaching is organised, when classes are scheduled, whether

some components can be taken as distance learning or if there are special needs when it comes to premises.

Step 2 - Analyse

When the investigation and inventory are finalised, it is time to analyse the material and discuss the causes of any risks and obstacles you have identified. Document your analysis.

Examples of questions you can ask:

- What is the cause of these differences?
- Are the risks and obstacles linked to one or more grounds of discrimination?
- What does the ideal situation look like?
- What measures can we take to reduce or eliminate these risks and obstacles?

Step 3 – Take measures

The next step is to determine what measures need to be taken. This needs to be determined based on the risks and obstacles you have identified in your investigation and analysis, there are no general recommendations. These measures should be taken as soon as possible. You need to decide:

- What measures do you need to take?
- Who is responsible for implementing them?
- By when do they need to be implemented?

Taking any measures that can reasonably be taken is a legal requirement. What is reasonable may vary from case to case, depending on operational needs, taking into account the options and resources available and other circumstances. Remember that you must act on all the problems you have identified. Also, the measures you take must result in real change.

If your investigation does not identify any risks of discrimination or other obstacles to equal rights and opportunities, you do not need to take any measures. You still need to document your work.

Step 4 – Follow up and evaluate

Have you achieved what you wanted – have you eliminated the risks and obstacles you identified in your investigation?

- Have you implemented all measures?
- Did they have the intended effect?
- Were any of the measures less successful?

- Are further measures needed?

The results of the follow-up and the evaluation are a good starting point for the next cycle of active measures. Use it to identify new risks and obstacles, and to see if previously identified risks and obstacles have been eliminated.

Document your follow-up. You can use the SLU template for documenting active measures for the follow-up and evaluation as well.