



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Board of Education
Chair

DECISION

SLU ID: SLU.ua. 2020.1.1.1-2319

8 June 2020

Distribution list

New instructions for teaching and examination at first- and second-cycle level in light of the Covid-19 pandemic

Decision

The chair of the Board of Education has decided

to apply the instructions in annex 1 to this decision as of 15 June 2020 and for as long as the decision by the SLU Board of 26 March on particular authority granted to the vice-chancellor et al because of the corona pandemic applies;

to repeal, on the same date, the decision of 25 May 2020 (SLU ID: SLU.ua. 2020.1.1.1-1283) with previous instructions for distance teaching and examination that apply as of 8 June 2020;

Presentation of the matter

Owing to the current Covid-19 pandemic, on 17 March 2020, the Public Health Agency of Sweden prescribed that all higher education institutions in Sweden transition to distance teaching and examination as of the following day. The purpose of this binding recommendation was to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. On 30 March, the vice-chancellor adopted a decision on the transition to distance teaching which was later followed by instructions for implementation, adopted by the chair of the Board of Education.

Reason for the decision

The Public Health Agency of Sweden issues binding recommendations to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se). As of 15 June, the regulations, advice and recommendations that apply to society as a whole also apply to higher education institutions.

The vice-chancellor's policy decision of 8 June 2020 asks the chair of the Board of Education to draft new instructions for teaching and examination based on these new conditions, as follows from the present decision.

Significance and foreseeable consequences of the decision

This decision means increased opportunity for campus-based teaching and examination. It is important to SLU that all students and staff feel safe taking part in all aspects of teaching and examination. Activities in groups of up to 50 people can take place on campus. Those involving larger groups should be offered as distance teaching. Some student groups should be offered alternative teaching arrangements.

This decision requires adaptations to ensure that we comply with the recommendations from the Public Health Agency. Increased student presence on campus makes it important to put in place conditions for minimising the spread of the virus. For this reason, not all courses will be taught on campus at the same time. Digitally-based teaching forms that have been conducted with good quality, may continue to be conducted digitally, in many cases it will be necessary.

As the SLU campuses differ when it comes to the number of students and the size of teaching spaces, including examination halls, the number of courses that can be taught on campus will vary.

The academic introduction, welcome weeks and other activities organised by the student unions are important aspects of student life. For this reason, first-semester courses on degree programmes will be prioritised when deciding what courses are taught on campus. Students need to be motivated to move to their respective campus and take part, on campus, in the activities of their choice.

From students who plan to travel on exchange, but for covid-related reasons need to cancel the exchange at short notice, late registrations for courses are handled flexibly so that no student stands without a relevant course opportunity at SLU.

Study trips are possible to undertake within Sweden if measures are taken to limit the spread of infection. On June 8, 2020, the Vice Chancellor (SLU ID: SLU.ua.2020.1.1.1-2319) made a university-wide orientation decision regarding business trips from June 15, 2020.

These instructions apply until further notice but no longer than 17 January 2021. This is provided that the binding recommendations from the Public Health Agency do not change and the vice-chancellor's policy decision is not repealed. These instructions will, if necessary, be updated during the semester. If nothing else is communicated, the spring semester 2021 should be planned and will be carried out according to the regular syllabuses and the guidelines in the Education Planning and Administration Handbook.

The vice-chancellor's decision of 08 June 2020 states that the responsibility for the work environment rests with the head of department, for all activities at the department. This is why the heads of department have been instructed to guarantee that the delivery of courses, if needed, is adapted to the recommendations and instructions in force. The university administration is responsible for pool teaching rooms, including examination halls. For those planning courses, this means that restrictions at both course and campus level will set boundaries for activities.

As a result of repealing previous instructions for distance teaching and examination, the special delegation to the chairs of the programme boards to decide on temporary adaptations due to the pandemic no longer applies.

This matter has been decided on by the chair of the Board of Education, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Karin Holmgren, after a presentation by Education Officer Johan Torén. The content of this decision has been prepared by the SLU crisis management team together with the chairs of the programme boards. Head of Division Maria Orvehed and Academy Secretary Sune Lindh also contributed to finalising the preparation of the case. Vice-Chancellor Maria Knutson Wedel, Sluss Chair Tuva Wrenfelt, becoming Chair Marie Petersson and the staff organisation representatives have been informed about the contents of this decision.

Karin Holmgren

Johan Torén

Annex

1. New instructions for teaching and examination at first- and second-cycle level in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. Teaching rooms availability, practising social distance

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Annex 1

**Annex to the decision by the chair of the Board of Education, 08 June 2020,
SLU ID: SLU.ua.2020.1.1.1-2319**

New instructions for teaching and examination at first- and second-cycle level in light of the Covid-19 pandemic

A. The following exemptions from programme and course syllabuses are allowed:

- The examiner may decide on formats for assessing student performance. If the examination is significant for the learning objectives for a professional qualification, the programme director of studies concerned must be party to the decision.
- The examiner may decide on the format for teaching, ensuring that the intended learning outcomes are attainable regardless of the teaching format chosen, but also taking into consideration item B.
- The examiner decides on any adaptations of compulsory components.

B. For the use of for pool teaching rooms, the following applies:

- Teaching rooms, including examination halls, must be used in a way that makes it possible to practise social distancing. No more than 50 people may be present in a room at the same time. For groups of 50 or more, distance teaching is still required.
- To maximize the use of pool teaching rooms excluding examination halls the booking option is limited to 2-hour modules.
- First-year students need to get off to a good start and familiarise themselves with student life at their chosen destination. In case of a shortage of rooms, first-semester courses on programmes will be prioritised over other courses. This applies to both first-cycle and second-cycle programmes.
- In case of a shortage of rooms, examinations will be prioritised over teaching, in particular exams that cannot easily be redesigned as take-home exams and consequently cannot be offered online. Examinations a student must pass to remain on a course/programme will also be prioritised. See also item C.
- In case of a shortage of rooms, seminars, exercises and other teaching that requires high interactivity will be prioritised over lectures.
- To maintain social distance and minimise the risk of flows crossing between teaching rooms and in shared indoor and outdoor environments, sufficient breaks (at least 30 minutes) must be scheduled between groups. Using

different start and end times for sessions makes it easier to maintain distance when travelling to and from campus.

C. Written examinations:

- Take-home examinations must be organised per the rules for take-home exams in the Education Planning and Administration Handbook (section 8.4, Other types of examination (tests)).
- Examinations may take place in examination halls on campus provided that at least 1,5 metres between each table and person (including invigilators).
- Special learning support needed for some students, see item F.

D. For the teaching and examination of practical components, the following applies:

- Components that are particularly difficult to deliver online and at the same time ensure that learning objectives are fulfilled, such as laboratory sessions, can be taught on campus, provided that the prescriptions by the Public Health Agency are practised.
- Course components taught in the field and study trips may be carried out provided that necessary precautions have been taken to prevent the spread of the virus. The requirement to perform a risk assessment and take measures to reduce the spread of the virus also applies to trips to and from the field site/destination.
- Students doing their degree projects can perform experiments at a department or in the field provided that necessary precautions have been taken to prevent the spread of the virus.

E. In addition, the following rules apply to placements and clinical training:

- Clinical-practical training and placements may be carried out provided necessary precautions, as prescribed by the Public Health Agency, have been taken to minimise the spread of the virus.
- Placements should continue to the extent possible. If there is a shortage at other clinics, placements at UDS are allowed, to the extent the UDS can manage.

F. Special adaptations:

- Students who belong to a Covid-related at-risk group¹, or who cohabit with someone who belongs to an at-risk group, must be offered alternative teaching arrangements for compulsory components as well as the option of taking exams in a room adapted for this purpose. The examiner can request that the student provides a certificate confirming that they belong to an at-risk group.
- Whether international students (who do not have a Swedish personal identity number) can apply for a residence permit or not depends on the teaching format. If studies will primarily take place on campus, they can apply for a residence permit for studies even if some of the teaching will be distance teaching.
- International students who due to travel restrictions or other unforeseen Covid-related difficulties cannot start their studies on-site must, if possible, be offered the option of taking part e.g. through audio and video recordings.

G. Information and consultation:

- Consultation with the student representative (s) from the affected student union (s) shall take place during the preparation and decision of an individual official regarding the study environment. Guidelines can be found in section 3.14 of the Education Handbook and apply also to issues handled within the university administration. SLU should utilize the students' experiences of the initial covid-related adaptations while planning forthcoming teaching activities.
- Departments responsible for courses must, where applicable, document and promptly inform the students concerned of decisions on temporary adjustments to teaching and/or examination.