

University West's Focus for Working with Gender Mainstreaming 2023–2025, daybook nr HV 2022/520

The following planning documents provide some background to and contain priorities and measures for gender mainstreaming at University West during the years 2023–2025. These focuses and priorities are preliminary. The actual plan for working with gender mainstreaming will be established in accordance with the university's management system after the management meeting on our work with sustainability, which according to the annual operating plan is scheduled for the middle of September. The focus will then be established as an appendix to 'Strategy for Sustainable Development', daybook nr 2020/700.

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Introduction

University West has been working with gender mainstreaming since 2017. Gender equality is now a part of the university’s sustainability strategy and our work with gender equality as well as ensuring a level playing field are both seen as central areas of the of the social sustainability dimension. These are thus important tools for fulfilling the university’s vision, core values and focus for reaching the goals of Agenda 2030, the political goals for gender equality, and the Non-Discrimination Act.

In the university’s expanded vision, sustainable development has been raised as a central directive for the university. The new vision reads: ‘We are a vital force in society, working with the surrounding community, toward a more sustainable world by creating knowledge and making knowledge accessible to more people’.

Sustainability is also highlighted in the university’s values that are grounded in and defend the principle that all human beings are of equal value where democracy and diversity contribute to social welfare, justice, and sustainable development.

The overarching goal for University West’s work with gender mainstreaming (abbreviated GM elsewhere in this text) is to create equal opportunities for women and men throughout the

Political Goals for Gender Equality

The goals for political gender equality are that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. There are six milestones along the way to the overall goal of political gender equality:

1. **An even distribution of power and influence.** Women and men should have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape standards for decision making in all sectors of society.
2. **Economic fairness in society.** Opportunities and standards should be the same for women and men in questions of paid employment, providing lifelong economic independence.
3. **Equality in education.** The same educational opportunities and standards for choice of study programme and personal development should apply to women and men, girls and boys.
4. **Evenly divided responsibility for unpaid housework and childcare.** Women and men should take the same responsibility for housework and have the same possibility to be caregivers and receive care on equal terms.
5. **Health on equal terms.** The same standards for healthcare should apply for women and men, girls and boys. Healthcare should be provided on an equal basis.
6. **Men’s abuse of women must stop.** Women and men, girls and boys should have the same right to physical integrity.

university and the work we do here (for example: education and research) and for those we exist to help: our students, colleagues, and partners in the surrounding community. By viewing gender equality as a dimension of quality and gender mainstreaming as a tool for reaching gender equality, we are convinced that better quality is generated through our core tasks. The government has given all institutions of higher learning the task of working strategically with gender mainstreaming with the goal of realising our gender-political goals as well as their overarching goals. This strategy means that a gender perspective will be introduced into decisions and all processes at all levels. Every university and institution of higher learning should continue working on this, based on an

individual plan for work with development needs, goals, and activities that the institution intends to carry out. In addition, it should be described in what manner gender should be mainstreamed and become part of the institution's ordinary business, such as its governance processes. Measures and results based upon the plan will be presented in conjunction with the annual report. Institutions of higher education are to provide a presentation of the way they take gender equality into account when distributing research funding (Directions for Appropriation – Annual Budget for 2020 with reference to institutions of higher learning). In this plan it is specified how University West will continue to develop its work on gender mainstreaming to reach the gender mainstreaming goals laid out by the government (Skr. 2016/17:10) regarding the issues of equality in career opportunities, choice of study programme, and throughput, for example. The plan describes priorities, specifies goals, milestones, and offers suggestions for measures to be taken. Work with gender equality and a level playing field is coordinated and these two projects are integrated, since for the most part they deal with the same or similar questions; hence, there is a parallel between our ambition is to live up to the statutes laid down in the Anti-Discrimination Act and the goal-oriented GM project.

Gender and intersectionality

Institutions' work with gender mainstreaming is based upon legal gender, which can neglect and exclude those who define themselves as outside the norms of a binary gender system. To maintain awareness of this and the fact that groups of women and men are not homogeneous, we apply an intersectionality perspective to our work. This perspective clarifies how other dimensions, such as class, age, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation can work together with gender and thus point to differences between not only gendered groups, but differences within these groups.

Summary of gender mainstreaming work 2017–2022

During the most recent three-year period of gender mainstreaming work, the university has focused primarily on further improving the organisation and systematisation of our work, examining victimization and biases in the current distribution of research funding and other necessities for equality of career paths, as well as developing measures for remedying inequalities in these areas.

Organising our work with gender mainstreaming

During 2020 the university initiated a more unified organisation to more clearly integrate our work with sustainability into the ordinary business plan. Our ambition was to integrate work with developing a functioning environmental management meeting, work with a level playing field (based upon provisions in the Anti-Discrimination Act), gender mainstreaming, and the work- and study environment, including the climate framework for institutions of higher education, since all of these touch on issues of sustainability. For this reason, our work with gender mainstreaming since 2021 has been a central part of our university's strategy for sustainable development to reinforce work with, and collaboration between, various aspects of sustainability, in accordance with Agenda 2030, the United Nation's Global Goals for Sustainable Development. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are central areas of focus and strategies for change in this context. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency (2020) calls attention to the fact that 'sustainability cannot be achieved without gender equality' and therefore gender equality

issues should be integrated into all 17 global goals of the agenda, based on the concrete problems concerning equality that a community or organisation aims to resolve. Gender equality should thereby be seen as a means, a tool, to be used actively in analysing and remedying the inequalities that can hinder the realization of each milestone and in Agenda 2030, to the extent that they lie within the university's reach and framework.

To counteract any risk that the work with gender mainstreaming could become less extensive and less visible, some organizational measures have been taken. The advantages of coordinating the dimensions of sustainability are that the work becomes more clearly linked to other related problem areas, such as maintaining a level playing field and general work environment issues. This has also been strengthened by a new effective organisation, the Sustainability Board, with representatives from all sections and specific specialist functions. This work has, for instance, been reinforced through the appointment of local collaborators to all departments/sections. Furthermore, a smaller group with responsibility for gender mainstreaming remains. The Centre for Sustainable Development here at the university has also been tasked with providing adequate competence and support for knowledge activities.

The gender mainstreaming scheme has also been reinforced by becoming an integrated part of the university's management system and strategic year wheel, which is the foundation and the guarantor for the university's quality assurance project, which means that the university management always discusses and prioritises these issues, that more sections of the university actively participate in the project, and that continuity is ensured.

Mapping and analysing the work-study environment

During this period the university has also carried out and participated in several surveys and studies with a focus on gender-based victimization and abuse. Examples of such are the national study 'Sexual Abuse and Gender-Based Victimization', initiated by Karolinska Institute, the Royal Institute of Technology and Malmö University; the European Unisafe-Studies that focus on the same problem areas as the local surveys on work-and-study environment did. Local studies of resource distribution and victimization connected to ethnic background/racialization have also been initiated. Taken together, these studies have contributed an in-depth view of the problems we have in assuring a level playing field at our university, and they constitute an important basis for prioritization and measures to be taken.

At present, the university is working toward the distinction of 'HR Excellence in Research'. To succeed, we need to show the EU Commission that we meet the demands regarding roles, responsibility, and rights for employers and researchers that have been declared in the 'European Charter for Researchers' and the 'Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers'. The university has support for this effort through HRS4R (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers). Several areas relate to our work with gender equality and will result in a development project during 2022.

In what follows below you will find short summaries of the activities that have been completed in core areas of the university: educational programmes, research, and support processes for the entire university.

Educational programmes

During 2021 the university has focussed on the need to broaden both knowledge and ownership of gender equality issues internally, and we have therefore dedicated extra resources to educating those responsible and to evaluating the processes that have to do with the distribution of resources and levelling the playing field for all co-workers. This is primarily a question of continuing professional development and education.

A new course in higher education pedagogy has been designed and covers sustainable development. It is offered to all employees. After a pilot course was given during the spring of 2022, we began offering the course regularly in the autumn of that same year. The purpose of the course is to create competence in the way various dimensions of sustainability – social, ecological, and economic – can be related to one another in educational programmes.

Previously we began work on introducing a gender equality perspective into courses and programmes, and this continues, as the process varies between different departments. The qualifying course in norm-critical pedagogics offered in higher education pedagogy continues to be developed, with the purpose of strengthening inclusive teaching methods on the programmes. Today, approximately 60 educators have participated in this course. Furthermore, students' influence and participation on the programme's content and design have been secured.

Moreover, we have taken the initiative to begin developing a package of courses to further strengthen competence in the use of inclusive teaching methods and linked this with efforts to broaden recruitment. To begin with, we are planning a combination of programmes that will meet the need for help with academic writing and vocabulary, respectful and inclusive conduct, and workshops with exercises in how that can be translated into pedagogical practice.

Research

Several measures have been taken more clearly to establish a gender equality perspective within research and third-cycle programmes. A series of workshops about gender equality in research have been run with active, responsible educators in the area. This series of workshops dealt with possibilities for women and men to conduct research at University West, with special focus on issues of research funding, working conditions, career paths, and organisational culture. The purpose was to increase awareness and competence among management, researchers, and heads of research projects so that there is progress in the university's work toward equal opportunity and equality in the choice of career paths.

A more detailed and specific gender equality strategy for research and third-cycle programmes is being developed to further reinforce these efforts. Special focus will be placed upon securing equal opportunity in doctoral students' choice of career path.

Over and beyond these efforts, two internal research projects have received funding approval to map the distribution of research funding between women and men and to analyse work distribution between the genders in relation to research at the university. The studies aim to describe and analyse the consequences of resource, task, and assignment distribution, from a gender equality and intersectional perspective, to thereby contribute to research-based documentation prior to the continuation of our efforts.

Prioritised areas - 2023–2025

Based upon experience and the compiled evaluations from the previous programme period for work on gender mainstreaming as well as results of the studies that have been done, the need for continued prioritization and more projects has been identified. Taken together, the results show that during the next two years, the university needs to focus on gender mainstreaming in the following areas:

- *A work and study environment free from gender-based victimization: intimidation, violations, and sexual harassment*
- *An equal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities between the genders*
- *Undergraduate and post graduate programmes that support gender equality*
- *Support of processes and tools that bring about change*

To further reinforce schemes for and the effect of our efforts, it is important to introduce gender equality issues and methodology into development projects that are ongoing or will be offered in the future at the university, and to do so on a regular basis. This applies to projects involving the whole university as well as limited or local projects. During the upcoming period, our work on gender mainstreaming will primarily be focused on the following projects:

- *The design of complete academic environments (including research and educational programmes)¹*

University West is now developing two of the university's strongest research and education areas – Work-Integrated Learning, WIL, and Production Technology – into complete academic environments. The plan is to have this completed by 1 January 2023. In a complete academic environment, studies begin at the undergraduate level and are followed all the way through to doctoral studies and research. Gender equality must therefore be a naturally integrated dimension of the complete environments so that we have quality research and education while also providing for the possibility of skills supply and professional development for those working in the environments. Our work here is also linked to the European strategy HRS4R described above.

- *The development of the university's management*

The development of the university's management is an umbrella term for activities such as the management programme, continuing professional development, and the introduction of new colleagues in management positions. Gender equality should be integrated into the knowledge dimension, and gender mainstreaming should be a tool that managers learn to work with.

- *The Campus Expansion Project and Societal Impact Hub*

In 2019 the University Board approved a ten-year plan to improve the campus. The plan was developed in a collaboration between University West, the UW Student Union, the city of

¹ Högskolan Väst utvecklar just nu två av högskolans styrkeområden inom forskning och utbildning, Arbetsintegrerat lärande, AIL, och Produktionsteknik, till kompletta akademiska miljöer. Planen är att dessa är på plats 1 januari 2023. I en komplett akademisk miljö bedrivs verksamhet hela vägen från grundutbildning, avancerad nivå, utbildning på forskarnivå till forskning. [Högskolan Väst - Två kompletta akademiska miljöer \(hv.se\)](https://www.hv.se/om-hogskolan/vast-tva-kompletta-akademiska-miljorer)

Trollhättan, the proprietor, Kraftstaden, and the Municipal Housing Company. The aim was to create an environment in which academic studies and working life could meet, and where students, colleagues, collaboration partners, and the general public would want to spend time creating knowledge and development. It includes both physical remodelling and the creation of new places for collaboration and development of context, such as starting up the Societal Impact Hub West. This hub aims to develop an arena for increased social influence and societal stake holding and to do so in new innovative ways. The goal is to implement a meeting between the academy, non-profit actors, and businesses. Adding an inclusive, gender equality perspective to the design of these different environments and contexts is key.

- *Broadened recruitment and participation (inclusive teaching)*

Projects that deal with broadening recruitment are partly about developing course packages that will build up competence in terms of inclusive teaching methods (see above under Educational Programmes), and partly about more clearly linking this to other projects for a strong project about broadened recruitment.

Above all, it should be pointed out that the relationships and requirements for third-cycle students need to be taken into account during the development of various projects since the group is often especially vulnerable, due to their special position as both students and employees, among other reasons.

1. A work and study environment free from gender-based victimization: intimidation, violations, and sexual harassment

Since gender bias in the academic world is often hidden and subtle, it is necessary to do a critical review of formal as well as informal processes that steer promotion and the filling of posts, the distribution of resources and tasks, as well as every-day encounters (SULF 2022). The informal hierarchy that is created by positions of power and status leads to a structural stratification and relations of dependence that result in differences regarding access to resources and experiences of insecurity (ibid.). This means that among other things, women to a greater extent work in an environment that can cut off their involvement in a subject due to less access to resources such as time, money, security, and respect. Instead, women's work is more often than men's work characterised by higher demands, less influence, and less social participation (SULF 2022). The problems also affect certain academic men, but women run a systemically higher risk of having to deal with worse conditions, and thereby a higher risk of poor health and obstacles to career opportunities (ibid.)

The mappings and studies that deal with relations at University West show a need for better focus on informal processes and structures that run counter to an equal, inclusive, and respectful work and study environment. The results have made it clear that there is a relatively large problem with internal relations and encounters that is expressed through, among other things, bullying, threats of violence, sexual intimidation, and other forms of gender-based abuse. The organisation should therefore invest more resources in identifying and applying relevant methods for changing informal power hierarchies that contribute to maintaining inequality in terms of work and study environments.

The question is related to the strong imbalance between the genders at universities in terms of the distribution of tasks, contract education, research funding, as well as the composition of posts and the system for pedagogical qualification, which tend to reproduce the power structures that result in inequalities for students choosing a career path. In sum, the gender-based access to time, funding, and security needs to be reviewed and if necessary, measures should be taken to achieve long-term, sustainable gender equality.

To get to the bottom of problems like gender-based victimization and sexual harassment, research shows that it is necessary to create well-integrated work environments and equality of working conditions (for example, Bondestam & Lundqvist 2019, Simonsson 2020). Qualitative aspects – such as homosocial relations and access to networks, as well as collegial encounters, spaces for talking, deciding, and taking action, dependencies, and loyalty structures – need to change.

Based on the pilot project on third-cycle students' situation that was carried out during the last period, and the third-cycle student barometer that was carried out during 2020 and 2022, we can also see that for this group at our university there are a number of obstacles to gender equality in terms of career paths. The study indicated that women seldom feel like a part of a research group and feel that they are not treated well during their studies. Certain problems relating to gender, ethnicity/country of origin, religion, and age were noted, as well as vulnerability to threats and unwelcome touching. They experience the psychosocial environment as tough, and the norms and hierarchical structures are viewed as problematic (*Doktorandbarometern* [The Third-Cycle Student Barometer] 2020 and 2022). The local results are supported by national research like the so-called prevalence study on sexual harassment and gender-based victimization in universities that was conducted in 2021. The study shows that female third-cycle students run an especially high risk of being harassed due to the power structures that exist in universities; even certain men have to deal with this. These results also follow the patterns and structures that have been shown to exist by other studies of academic working conditions and work environments and this can therefore influence all groups of employees (Kalm 2019, SULF 2022, Wahl et al. 2008).

The issue we have prioritised is a work and study environment free from various forms of victimization as this relates primarily to the following political gender-equality goals: an even distribution of power and influence; economic equality; equality of healthcare; eliminating male violence against women.

Against this background, proposals for goals, and measures to be taken are provided in this planning document. In the appendix there is a separate activity plan in which activities are broken down into concrete activities:²

Overall goals:

A work and study environment, free from gender-based victimization: intimidation, violations, and sexual harassment.

Employees and students should treat one another with respect, and as equals.

² Varje område specificeras ytterligare i en särskild handlingsplan (se separat bilaga)

The organisation should have an open, conversational climate and be inclusive.

All employees and students should have knowledge of and competence in identifying victimization as well as preparedness for stopping harassment or any other form of exclusion.

Leadership has an especially important role to play; they should prevent situations in which any individual feels victimized and take responsibility for handling these situations when they do occur.

Goal 1: An organisation culture that is aware and prevents employees' and students' feelings of victimization

Measures:

- Systematically identify behaviours that create and maintain relationships of dependence, gender inequality and any other inequality
- Continuously reinforce professional competence regarding inappropriate behaviours so as to increase awareness of victimization as well as increase preparedness when someone has been victimized.
- Active participation and utilization of results from the collaborative programme on sexual harassment and gender-based victimization in universities as well as in Unisafe
- Develop and improve schemes for signalling victimization (reporting, whistleblowing scheme), continuous follow-up on these schemes as well as improved support to those who have been victimized.

Goal 2: Improved support systems for combatting and handling gender-based victimization

Measures:

- Improved communication, information on the website and in the employee portal, as well as internal collaboration
- Analysis of identified problems relating to gender inequality and other inequalities that have been identified as problem areas, such as absence due to illness
- Further develop work with facilitating parental leave (for employees and students)

2. An equal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities

An equal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities is a long-term project and there is much left to do. Focus should be placed on the way leadership and distribution of resources affects women's and men's working conditions and work environment (SULF 2022) at a structural level, so that responsibility is not shifted to an individual's ability to handle injustices and destructive treatment. Instead, it is a matter of ensuring that resource distribution processes are mapped out, reviewed for inequalities, and when necessary, revised. This applies as much to salaries, annual planning/work distribution and career-development funds as to internal and external research funding. Other relevant issues are: access to continued professional development, supervision, networks, and other formal and informal support systems that make career-path progress possible, and a good work environment. Gender equality awareness in assessment competence needs to be developed to avoid bias, which should also apply to external reviewers and assessors. All work with the budget should be reviewed for gender equality and when necessary be revised. Furthermore, there is in the government's Directions for Appropriation (2020) a sentence that deals with research funding in particular: 'Institutions of

higher learning must also account for the way they have taken gender equality into consideration when distributing research funding' (Directions for Appropriation, annual budget 2020, with reference to institutions of higher learning). This goal has direct bearing on two of the political goals for gender equality regarding a fair distribution of power and influence as well as economic gender equality.

The university's research is key to our special focus on this problem area. Professorships are the category of employment where the gender imbalance is greatest. National figures show that during 2021, 32 percent of professors were women and 68 percent were men. In the other categories of employment, the proportion of women varies between 45 percent among career development positions and other research and teaching staff with doctoral degrees, to 60 percent among lecturers without doctoral degrees (The Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2021). Moreover, the number of women who have been recruited to fill professorships has decreased.

University West has, in accordance with the Directions for Appropriation, a goal of increasing to at least 48 percent the proportion of women recruited to fill professorships as well as the proportion of women who are promoted to professorships in 2021-2023. There is, however, a negative trend when it comes to the number of recently recruited/promoted female professors. During 2021 the university reached 17 percent, 2 women and 10 men were hired during that year. The majority of professors are hired in Production Technology, a male-dominated research field, for which not a single woman was recruited. A similar but reverse problem can be found in Health Sciences, where only one male professor has been recruited. These two extremes need, however, to be seen in context.

An important area that is partially tied to the above is the matter of distribution of research funding. Bondestam & Grip (2015) point out that there can be biases in the review scheme that systematically disadvantages women and other groups. To ensure gender equality and quality in the recruiting and resource distribution processes, even informal power structures need to be reviewed. It should be added that in general, there are fewer professorships in female-dominated fields. Women are generally given fewer possibilities to have a career and do research (SULF 2022, *Vetenskapsrådet* 2021).

Other important results to consider are the proposals for measures from the annual follow-up on equal pay in the mapping out of salaries and in conjunction with the Jämix³ at University West. From Jämix, the university has identified a pattern in which differences in median salary between women and men have increased every year (to women's disadvantage) since these measurements were initiated in 2018. An external reviewer was hired in the spring of 2022 (*Lönelotsarna*) to dig deeper into these differences in salary.

The reviewer concluded that there is an increase in the gender-based difference in median salary that is the result of women and men working in different positions and thus earning different salaries, and that those working in areas that are dominated by females have lower salaries than those in other similar jobs. The differences are reinforced by percentual increases in salary reviews as well as the fact that men are more often in positions deemed to be more subject to

³ Jämställdhetsindex JÄMIX® från Nyckeltalsinstitutet: Indexet kartlägger jämställdheten i organisationer genom 21 nyckeltal varav nio av dessa sammanställs till ett jämställdhetsindex som visar hur jämställda arbetsvillkor, arbetsmiljö och anställningsvillkor är i organisationen. Indexet har tagits fram tillsammans med den tidigare Jämställdhetsombudsmannen och används av många myndigheter och lärosäten vilket gör att högskolan förutom att kartlägga jämställdheten i sin egen organisation kan jämföra sig med andra lärosäten.

markets (which organisations pay more for). 'Lönelotsarna' suggest improvements in the mapping of salaries so that the results become comparable over time, and that market-based salaries are reviewed. Another explanation that has been noted by 'Lönelotsen' and that is important for countering the stark gender segregation in the majority of professions one finds at our university, especially in the areas of technology/administration. Only two of seventeen groups are quantitatively equal (40–60% distribution women/men): management and third-cycle students.

Finally, it is important that University West have transparent, qualitative, equal systems in place for research, even such that is in a European context. Our university lives up to the EU-Commission's demand that we pursue an effective project that aims to achieve gender equality by working on a Gender Quality Plan, and to do this by developing processes and ways of working in accordance with HRS4R (Human Resource Strategy for Researchers), where gender equality is an important dimension for creating a good work environment, stimulating research environments, and developing and applying open, equal, and comparable systems for assessment.⁴

It is against this background that suggestions for goals and measures are made in this planning document. An extra activity plan in which measures are broken down into concrete activities can be found in the appendix.

Overall goals:

An equal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities

The goal is a balanced gender distribution of 40-60% women/men in all professions/categories and in management positions/in management groups.

The university will ensure equal pay, and otherwise must present an explanation, formulated in concrete terms, as to why an imbalance exists.

Opportunities for professional development will be the same for women and men and for other groups.

It is also important that the distribution of other financial resources (such as research funding) is analysed for gender parity and the situation is remedied in cases where unsubstantiated differences are found.

The university will also work toward greater inclusion and diversity based on other grounds for discrimination linked to the goals.

Goal 1:

A transparent and fair distribution of resources in which gender equality and a level playing field have been taken into consideration

Equal pay for equal and similar work

Measures:

⁴ För detaljerad beskrivning av jämställdhetsaspekterna i dessa dokument se Gender Equality Plan för Högskolan Väst [Högskolan Väst - Gender Equality Plan \(GEP\) \(hv.se\)](#) samt Action plan för HRS4R [Högskolan Väst - Human Resources Strategy for Researchers \(HRS4R\) \(hv.se\)](#)

- Examine, evaluate, undertake measures for and follow up on the system used for distribution of monetary resources

Goal 2:

Equal opportunity and a level playing field relating to professional development

Tasks will be distributed in an equal and similar way.

Measures:

- Examine, evaluate, undertake measures for and follow up on the systems used for distribution of monetary resources and continuing professional development

Goal 3:

Gender equality in hiring, recruiting, and promotion processes (for all categories of employee)

Increase in the number of female professors

Measures:

- Examine, evaluate, undertake measures, and follow up on hiring, recruiting and promotion systems.
- Work toward a gender balance of 40–60% in all the university’s departments and administrative sections
- Increase the number of female professors. The departments that have fewer than 40% female professors have an annual goal for the period.

Goal 4:

Even representation and equal opportunity in relation to influence on all steering and decision-making bodies.

Increase internal democracy

Measures:

- Examine, evaluate, undertake measures, and follow up on recruitment to internal bodies and contracted education
- Gender balanced management groups of at least 40% women and men in all management groups, including department level groups

3. Gender equality in education and third-cycle studies

For more than two decades, institutions of higher education around the world have attempted to counter the imbalance between male and female students, educators, and researchers. According to a report from UNESCO-IESALC, ‘Times Higher Education’ (2022), this effort has been partially successful, since female students have now surpassed male students in number. Despite this tipping of the scales in favour of women recruited to higher education, on a national level, men are still a step ahead in terms of continuing academic careers after third-cycle studies (Berg et al. 2012).

Furthermore, there is a particular bias contained in this partially improved picture: the so-called ‘Humanities bias’. This means that specific disciplines or subject areas are dominated by a specific gender, where women constitute the majority of students in the humanities, while men dominate

in the science and technical fields of study. This gender segregation in the academic world is an indication of the gender-based stereotypes that are linked to education and work, and that persist in Sweden. Stereotypical notions about gender are reproduced through the continued gender coding of professions on the labour market as well as by institutions of knowledge where a lack of gender equality and power structures are not actively opposed (The Swedish Higher Education Authority 2016). Gender constrained study and career choices are thus closely related to the strongly gender segregated labour market in Sweden, where women and men deal with different circumstances and opportunities in their professional and private lives. In the report *Kvinnor och män i högskolan* [Women and men in higher education] (2016) the Swedish Higher Education Authority described this ‘Humanities bias’ as one of the most significant challenges that universities have to deal with in programmes at the 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-cycle levels.

Horizontal gender segregation at University West is manifested in women and men working in different areas of knowledge. In the natural sciences and technology, men dominate greatly, while women do so in the fields of nursing and social sciences. When it comes to third-cycle programmes, the most recent ‘Third-cycle student barometer’ (2022) from University West shows that third-cycle students are particularly vulnerable in terms of lacking gender equality. This is particularly due to the fact that they have two roles to play: they are both students and colleagues. Even though there are minimal differences between the two genders, men describe a higher degree of satisfaction than women in questions about studies and work. Moreover, it is worth noting that women report more problems than men when asked about an even playing field and show less confidence in the way these issues are dealt with by the university, educators, and other staff on their programme.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency emphasizes that gender equal education includes the entire educational system, from preschool up to university, adult education, and vocational higher education (Jämy, 2021). To achieve gender equality throughout all educational levels, established structures and routines in the field of education – as well as assumptions and behaviours of the over-represented gender – need to change (Dahlerup 2010). To have success requires that even the programme content and design are placed under review: the reading lists, forms of instruction, educators’ and students’ knowledge and notions of the way societies understand and reproduce female and male identities (ibid.) By doing a review of gender equality and adjusting the systems driving higher education, while also introducing the perspective of gender equality into programmes and research, it should be possible to point power structures within education and research in a positive direction. In the government’s white paper entitled *Makt, mål och myndighet – feministisk politik för en jämställd framtid* [Power, goals, and authority – feminist politics for a gender equal future] (2016/17) it is made clear that the new political goals for gender equality in education are related to underscoring women’s and men’s, girls’ and boys’ right to the same opportunities and circumstances when it comes to their choice of studies and programme.

Also related to this issue, is the importance of further reinforcing the collaboration between the Student Union and the postgraduate section, since all students should have a very strong interest in the design and the quality of their programmes.

Prioritising a gender equal education and third-cycle studies is primarily related to this political goal of gender equality but can also be linked to the goal of evenly distributed power and influence, as well as the goal of economic gender equality.

Against this background, the proposals for measures and prioritised efforts are the following:

Overall goals:

A gender equal undergraduate education and third-cycle programmes

The perspectives of gender equality and an even playing field are introduced into all programmes

All educators adopt inclusive methods of instruction

Goal 1:

All students on programmes at all levels have knowledge concerning gender equality and the importance of creating an even playing field as well as the competence to understand and meet the challenges of ensuring gender equality that are relevant for their programme, future profession, and for society at large.

Measures:

- Integration of gender equality and equal opportunity in all programmes.

Goal 2:

All educators, researchers, and supervisors must have competence in gender equality for the purpose of integrating knowledge into the programme on which they teach.

Measures:

- Continuing professional development of educators, researchers, and supervisors

4. Support systems for gender equality

Sufficient resources are a key requirement for ensuring that our work to ensure gender equality goes forward, develops, and is improved throughout the organisation. This applies to resources in the form of competent personnel, time for these resources, and allocated funding for the implementation of various projects, as well as the design of support and tools. Personnel, time, and funding must be prioritised both in terms of the work involving the entire university and within the different sectors. Work that involves the entire university deals especially with ensuring that resources are made available for coordination, strategic work, and communication. Also important are educational projects and collegial expertise for supporting programmes and research (such as through higher education pedagogy and the creation of centra). There also needs to be funding for different types of continuing professional development activities and other projects for development in which external expertise needs to be hired. Work units need to have prioritised resources in the form of competent personnel who both have the time and the qualifications to support local management and projects. Local resources and competence should also be linked to the work involving the entire university so that all work units can be supported in their projects and offer support to others. Skills supply is therefore also key to ensuring that personnel with competence in gender issues, equality, and norm awareness are found in all of the university's work units.

Regarding continuing professional development, gender/norm competence should be systematically introduced into all educational programmes and relevant courses. Continuing professional development should be offered continuously to those in management positions, administrative personnel, researchers/supervisors, third-cycle students, and representatives of committees, with a focus on their area of responsibility. The course entitled *Normkritiska perspektiv inom högre utbildning* [Norm critical perspectives in higher education], or a commensurate course that covers all perspectives, needs to be more comprehensive so that there is time to develop sufficient theoretical and pedagogical competence. More support needs to be developed for different types of prioritizations and decisions that are taken in the organisation. This can be anything from guides to measures regarding competence in avoiding various types of bias, especially gender bias. The university must also further develop systematic follow-up so that it is possible to follow the effects with regard to gender equality in all relevant processes used for resource distribution issues.

Other important efforts are systematic review of routines, guidelines, and approaches to ensure gender mainstreaming (should occur continuously). It should be clearer when internal and external communication has to be checked for gender equality and more tools for integration need to be generated for all sections of the university. Similarly, work with gender equality needs to continue to be connected to and together with management processes, quality assurance processes, and systematic efforts to improve the work environment.

Overall goals:

Ensure strong support and sufficient resources to carry out the prioritizations stated above

Measures:

- Continued development of educational training (adding new efforts when needed) and integration of continual introductory and continuing professional development regarding gender equality for all categories of personnel and students (students, co-workers, management, etc.) in the current continuing professional development structures.
- More and better information, tools and support on the Web and through the university's communication channels as well as continued development of more inclusive and gender neutral internal and external communication.
- Ensure and reinforce competence in coordination and strategically (in the administration, the academy and management support)
- Ensure and reinforce academic expertise through the creation of Centra and the sector for Higher Education Pedagogy (in SPIB Study Support, the library and pedagogical development)
- Ensure and reinforce competence in gender equality for the sectors to support the local as well as all-university projects. In addition, increased and improved collaboration between sectors. Recruit competent personnel where they are needed (locally and centrally)
- Increase the number of researchers/educators in the field. Examine the possibility of joint funding to hire lecturers in gender to be shared between departments.
- Continued development and improvement of systems support, follow-up, statistics, etc. Connect this work (where possible and justifiable) to the university's management systems, quality assurance, and the projects for a systematic work environment and equal opportunity.

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