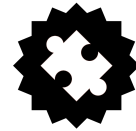


Equality Policy

Established by the Representative Assembly 2023-12-02



SOCIAL SCIENCES
STUDENT UNION

Introduction

The main purpose of the Social Sciences Student Union at Lunds University, hereafter called the student union, is to monitor education and advocate for student interests in educational matters at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University. In order to represent the students' interests in a fair and correct manner, it is of utmost importance that the student union is an organization characterized by equality, equal treatment and diversity.

The equality policy's purpose is to guide the student union's equality work, standpoints and procedures. This policy gives the reader tips and information that are useful during meetings and social events. The policy should be taken into consideration in every part of the organization. A list of terms relevant for the student union's equality work is available in Appendix A.

The Swedish Discrimination Act (2008:567) includes the following grounds of discrimination: sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation and age. The student union also recognizes socio-economic background as a basis for discrimination. Discrimination can be expressed as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, inadequate accessibility, harassment, sexual harassment and instruction to discriminate.

The equality policy shall be raised for revision in the Representative Assembly at least every other year to work optimally. New members shall be informed by fulltimers of their respective area when beginning and are encouraged to read the information when becoming an active member.

Strategy

Inclusivity and representation

The student union should be an open and inclusive organisation that is able to justly represent the students at the faculty. This requires that the recruitment of active members is contributing to diversity amongst the elected and involved. To prevent tendencies of skewed representation, the student union encourages diversity within group constellations.

The student union should support students and student organizations that contribute their time and energy to improving equality at the university. The student union uses social media to market the student union. On social media, the same biases regarding discrimination exists and need to be counteracted.

Because of this, the Social Sciences Student Union shall:

- especially encourage students from underrepresented groups to candidate to positions of trust, committees and project groups,
- work especially to spread knowledge about the student union to international students, students at free-standing courses and students in programmes that lack a programme association,
- ensure that the nominating council chooses people according to their competences and encourages diversity within the group constellations.
- especially contribute, through project funding, to projects aiming to strengthen gender equality, equal treatment and diversity,
- Let student organisations or groups of students who work for gender equality, equal treatment and diversity and/or who organize minority groups and who lack sufficient funding rent Samvetet for free,
- not tolerate offensive expressions* in our own writings or in comments in our channels,
- use picture material in a norm critical way, preventing a homogenous and normative idea of the student union and our active members from being spread,
- always use both English and Swedish in marketing.

(*Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name-calling, physical assault or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures.)

Work environment and accessibility

The work environment at the student union is of utmost importance since active members invest their free time outside of regular studies. The student union should be a welcoming, open and safe place. The fulltimers and board members are especially affected by the quality of the work environment. The student union shall always take physical accessibility into consideration when planning events and meetings.

Because of this, the Social Sciences Student Union shall:

- work actively to achieve an internal culture that reduces stress and promotes physical and psychological well-being,
- actively work to make all members feel included and have access to the student union house (Samvetet),
- ensure a safe physical work environment at Samvetet through safety inspections each semester,
- always ask about participants' need for accessibility and support in sign-up forms, and plan the event according to those needs,
- always use microphones in auditoriums dimensioned for more than 50 people or where more than 50 people are participating.

Meeting climate

A big part of the student union's operations is run through the many meetings that are held to plan and follow up the activities. At meetings, it is important that everyone feels safe, included, and welcome to speak, as well as that there is an equal balance between the speaking time of the participants. Detailed information on master suppression techniques and counter-strategies is available in Appendix B.

Because of this, the Social Sciences Student Union shall:

- ensure that the meeting information and documents are understandable and available,
- ensure that the work environment is accessible and adapted to the attending members,
- hold meetings in English when non-Swedish-speaking participants are attending and allow for participants to speak Swedish and get help with translation when English is used,
- ensure that everyone is heard, and prevent and shut down the use of master suppression techniques.

Procedures

The student union shall work preventively towards discrimination and actively promote an environment of equal treatment, safety and inclusivity.

Discrimination and (sexual) harassment

If discrimination occurs in a situation that relates to the student union, members are encouraged to follow the steps below. Members can always contact any fulltimer or board member with their concerns.

1. Contact the presidial responsible for student welfare matters - or another fulltimer that you feel comfortable with
2. Pass on as much information as possible about the situation, such as time, place, situation, organisational body, process and/or sequence of events

If it concerns discrimination or (sexual) harassment *inside* of the student union, the matter will be handled by the board, which makes decisions about actions such as annulling a decision, mediation, suspension, etc. If it concerns discrimination or (sexual) harassment *outside* of the student union, the matter will be handled by the presidium, which makes decisions about contact with the university. Sexual harassment is recognized as a violation of Swedish law. If you choose to report the incident, the student union can act as support before and during the process.

If a process, policy or similar practice contributes to discrimination or (sexual) harassment, errands shall be reported and brought up to the board by or with the assistance of the presidial responsible for Student Welfare matters.

The fulltimer is responsible for documenting the incident, preferably written down and stored in a way to ensure that this is in line with the GDPR guidelines. It is crucial to remember that this information is strictly confidential and shall not be shared with others that are not involved. Therefore, it is good to keep the person in question anonymous. After the incident has been reported to the board, make sure that the person in question is updated on this to ensure that they are aware of the status of the case.

Safe participation

If a member is causing other members to feel unsafe at an event hosted by the student union or one of the sections, the fulltimer, board member or section board member that is responsible for the event can ask the member to leave. If a member needs to be banned from attending future events, a central decision shall be made by the student union board and the section board. The decision should be taken after a thorough investigation and serious consideration.

APPENDIX A

Below follows some central terms and the Social Sciences Student Union's interpretation of these:

- **Equality** means that everyone has the same obligations, rights and possibilities.
- **Equal treatment** is admitting and respecting people's differences and means that all people have an equal value no matter their sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. Equal treatment does, however, not mean that everyone should be treated in the same way but instead to take people's different starting points into account and then offer equal treatment.
- **Diversity** means that people with different identities, from different backgrounds and/or other compositions are represented in a certain forum. The term is sometimes perceived as unclear and the student union wants to emphasize broad representation as an important part of diversity.
- **Gender equality** means that all genders have equal obligations, rights and possibilities. In a society based on gender equality, people have equal power to form society and their lives.
- **Preferential right of interpretation** means the right to define a problem or an experience. It can for example manifest itself through giving a person who belongs to a marginalized group the priority in defining how this marginalization is shaped, what is condescending against this group and how it should be treated.
- **Heteronormativity** means that heterosexuality is assumed to be the standard and that one assumes that everyone is heterosexual. This also means that everyone is assumed to be either women or men. A society that is permeated by heteronormativity limits all people, no matter their gender or sexual preferences.
- **Gender order** refers to the hypothesis that the male gender is superior to all other genders. Things that are coded as feminine are subordinate and things that are coded as masculine are superior.
- **Gender** is a term that is used to distinguish what shapes people's social behavior. Gender is often used as an analytic tool instead of sex to highlight that one is referring to the social construction of male/female and/or masculine respectively feminine.
- **Gender expression** Gender expression is how a person outwardly shows their gender identity. It includes physical expressions such as a person's clothing, hairstyle, makeup, and social expressions such as name and pronoun choice. Some examples of gender expression are masculine, feminine, and androgynous
- **Gender identity** is the sex/gender that a person identifies with. It does not need to be the same sex/gender that other people expect said person to identify with.
- **Whiteness norm** refers to white people being perceived as the norm, whereas people of colour are seen as a deviation.

APPENDIX B

The first five master suppression techniques that are presented are based on Norwegian psychologist Berit Ås' definition of the classical master suppression techniques and the following is a selection from Vi Unga's 'Ageraguiden'.

- **Making invisible** often refers to non-verbal actions that are taken to silence or marginalize people through ignoring them or showing no interest in them.
- **Ridicule** means that someone, in a manipulative way, portrays the arguments of, or their opponents themselves, in a ridiculing fashion.
- **Withholding information** means to shut someone out or marginalize someone's role through withholding information from them.
- **Double bind** means to put someone in a situation where one is unappreciated and punished no matter what action it takes, and to make that person feel that all its decisions are wrong.
- **Shaming** is to make someone feel ashamed of itself and to give someone bad conscience or to mean that what someone is exposed to is their own fault.
- **Objectification** happens when a person's look is commented or discussed in a context where it is not relevant and in that way contributes to reducing that person to an object instead of a subject.
- **Violence or threats of violence** means to use one's physical strength to get what it wants, or to show that the possibility exists.
- **Rushing a decision** means consciously not giving stakeholders enough time to take or prepare a decision.

Counter-strategies

If you have been subject to suppression techniques, there are a number of counter-strategies you can use. The student union would however like to put emphasis on the fact that it is not you who are expected to take responsibility for the suppression techniques. We are only listing these strategies as a way to spread knowledge.

- To ensure that others are **made visible**, you are encouraged to be observant, try to lift others up and listen actively to what others are saying.
- To ensure **transparency** you are encouraged to ask for more information and ask questions when you deem this necessary.
- To ensure that others feel **heard** you can try to acknowledge the ideas of others.
- To ensure a **healthy working climate** it is recommended that you try to speak up when you notice toxic behaviour (e.g., the master suppression techniques) towards others (or yourself).