

Gender equal higher education institutions

Sweden has a feminist government. This means that gender equality guides Government decisions. The objective of gender equality policy is to ensure that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives.

Gender equal higher education institutions are key to building our society

In Sweden, there are 31 public-sector universities and university colleges, and some fifteen private education providers at which 400 000 people are studying. In 2015, these higher education institutions had a turnover of SEK 67 billion and employed 75 000 people. An activity that is so extensive and vital to society needs active and forceful gender equality efforts to ensure that everyone is given equal opportunities to conduct research and get an education, regardless of gender.

This is important for society as a whole, as the need to utilise the best skills is counteracted when gender-based and antiquated perceptions are allowed to take precedence. But it is also a matter of democracy and of



every individual feeling that they are free to make different choices and follow the path in life that seems the most rewarding and interesting.

Gender equality will be promoted in all activities at higher education institutions

Under Swedish law, higher education institutions should always promote and take account of gender equality in their activities. Gender mainstreaming is the strategy selected by the Government

to achieve the gender equality policy objectives. This means that all activities and all decisions at higher education institutions should have a clear gender equality perspective. The strategy has been developed to combat gender equality issues being neglected or being given lower priority in relation to other issues and activities in day-to-day work and decision-making.

In 2016, the Government tasked all public-sector universities and university colleges with producing a plan outlining their intended gender mainstreaming efforts and how gender equality will be integrated and become a part of their ordinary activities. This can include equal opportunities regarding research careers and combating gender-based study choices.

Objective of more women being professors

Despite world-leading figures regarding participation of women in the Swedish labour market, nearly three out of four professors in Sweden are men. In 2017–2019, the Government is raising its level of ambition regarding new recruitment of women professors, including by setting higher goals for this at Sweden's higher education institutions. The long-term national objective is that by 2030, an equal number of women and men will be recruited as professors.



A gender-equal research policy

In its research policy bill, Collaborating for knowledge – for society's challenges and strengthened competitiveness, the Government has a new focus for research policy, with several important measures for increased gender equality. The Government emphasises the importance of higher education institutions monitoring the allocation of funds to research from a gender perspective. The Government will also improve career conditions for young researchers by abolishing the doctoral grant in favour of employment, and through a number of measures aimed at facilitating the acquisition of qualifications. This will strengthen gender equality, as it is often crucial that there are attractive and clear career

paths if young researchers are to choose to continue their career in higher education. There is otherwise a risk that many, not least women, will choose not to pursue a career of this kind. The Government will also instruct all government agencies that allocate more than SEK 100 million per year to research and development to gender mainstream their activities and promote gender equality when allocating funds to research. It should not be your network of contacts that determines whether you become a professor, but what you have accomplished.

If Sweden is to be a leading knowledge and research nation, our higher education institutions must be more gender equal. The Government has therefore chosen to increase the pace of gender equality efforts.

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