



## **Guidance for managers, HR officers and programme directors in situations of war and conflict that affect the University's work or study environment**

Various wars and conflicts around the world affect staff and students at the University. Many people are deeply engaged in issues related to war and conflict for various reasons and in various ways. This includes making demands on Lund University to distance itself clearly from one party in a war. There have also been cases where staff or students have used – or wanted to use – the University as an arena for demonstrations or the dissemination of political messages. Concerns have also been raised about the negative impact on the work and learning environment and the risk of people being exposed to anti-Semitism or Islamophobia, for example. All in all, this means that managers and leaders risk being placed in very complex situations where academic freedom and freedom of speech are to be safeguarded while the obligation to provide a good and safe work and learning environment must not be compromised.

In order to clarify the meaning of the regulatory framework surrounding these issues, the Vice-Chancellor set up a working group in February 2024. The working group consisted of faculty office heads Veronica Gummesson (LTH) and Karin Salomonsson (HT), professor of public law Vilhelm Persson, HR specialist Anna Sjösten, communications director Johanna Sandahl, general counsel Annette Nilsson, security coordinator Håkan Jönsson, pro vice-chancellor Jimmie Kristensson and the chair of Lund University Student Unions Linnea Landegren. This document is aimed at managers, HR officers or people with management responsibilities for

programmes and courses. The points listed below are to be treated as a guide.

## **1. Lund University's core missions are research, education and external engagement – academic freedom is to be promoted and protected**

Academic freedom is fundamental to democracy. The University can make the biggest difference to people and communities through its core missions of research, education, and external engagement. Lund University is committed to academic freedom that resists political pressure and financial interests.

The Swedish Instrument of Government affirms the freedom of research, and the Higher Education Act clarifies that in practice, this means that research problems and research methods may be freely chosen and research results may be freely published. Research, therefore, enjoys strong legal protection. Education is not equally protected, and the overall content of education is laid out in frameworks such as: programme and course syllabi, learning outcomes and requirements related to fair assessment. Within these frameworks, it is essential that thoughts, questions, debates, conversations and opinions can be freely shared.

Research and education across a variety of disciplines are the most important tasks of the University. This includes topics for research and education that may be perceived by some as sensitive or offensive. It is not the role of the University to protect staff or students from potentially sensitive or offensive topics per se. However, the University's activities must always be planned and implemented in such a way as to maintain a good and safe work and learning environment. It is up to every member of staff and each student to contribute to this. This means that topics themselves are not to be avoided because they may be perceived as sensitive or offensive. However, potentially sensitive or offensive topics may require staff and students to take extra care in planning, implementing, communicating and responding within the framework of the University's activities. This also includes reflecting on any dependent relationships that may cause staff or students to feel uncomfortable sharing thoughts or opinions.

The University is also to promote research and education in political, social, emotionally charged or ethically difficult issues. It is not the role of the University to pursue policy issues outside its core activities of research and education. This means that staff or students cannot demand that the University, whether as an employer, education provider or public authority, manifest the political views of students or staff. Nor can they expect the University to take a position on issues outside its core missions. In practice, this means that the University will not honour requests for public statements, flags, demonstrations or events that involve such statements. Lund University has a flag policy that specifies which flags are used and in which contexts flags are to be raised.

***Summary:***

- Academic freedom is fundamental to democracy. It is through our core missions of research, education and external engagement that the University can make the biggest difference to people and communities.
- Research problems and research methods may be freely chosen and research results may be freely published.
- Within the established frameworks for education, it is essential that thoughts, questions, debates, conversations and opinions can be freely shared.
- The University's activities must always be planned and implemented in such a way as to maintain a good and safe work and learning environment. It is up to every member of staff and student to contribute to this.
- It is not the role of the University to pursue policy issues outside its core activities of research and education.

## **2. Freedom of speech for students and members of staff is – and should be – far-reaching**

Freedom of speech is a foundational principle of academic freedom and is also essential to democracy. Staff and students have wide scope to express their opinions freely and Lund University emphasises the importance of freedom of speech and opinion as protected by the constitution. Freedom of

speech applies to oral and written communication, but also to images, etc. Staff and students are not to suffer any form of reprisal for exercising their freedom of speech. In principle, freedom of speech may only be restricted when Parliament considers it necessary for a functioning democracy. It is illegal, for example, to defame or incite hatred against a group of people. Suspected violations of freedom of speech are investigated by the judicial system.

The University has a major responsibility to ensure that the knowledge we produce benefits society and is passed on to politicians or other decision-makers so that they can make informed decisions. Lund University, therefore, encourages staff and students to take part in public debates and welcomes their participation in discussions that take place in wider society. However, it is important that the University stands for scholarly quality and expertise in public discussions. Advice on how researchers can relate to the media has been developed to support researchers who want to contribute quality and expertise to wider public debates.

An important point of departure is that the University is never to have any opinion on or interfere with what students or staff think, say or do as private individuals. Every citizen has the right to influence society through advocacy or activism. Therefore, staff and students can expect the University to defend that right. This does not mean that Lund University endorses the actions of, or opinions expressed by, staff or students. The University never supports the expression of anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, or other offensive statements about people, or anyone who commits a crime. Nor can staff or students expect the University to offer support in dealing with situations that may arise from actions, views, or opinions expressed in their free time.

The University is, however, obliged to intervene in the event of more serious disruptions of its activities by staff or students, difficulties in collaboration, or if the work or learning environment is adversely affected. This has nothing to do with the opinions or views of individuals. Even if problems arise that are in any way related to the private statements or opinions of individuals, it is important that these are not treated as problematic in and of themselves. The focus is to be on managing the

consequences arising in terms of the University's activities, while respecting the individual's freedom of speech.

***Summary:***

- Staff and students have wide scope to express their opinions freely and the University emphasises the importance of freedom of speech and opinion as protected by the constitution. Staff and students are not to suffer any form of reprisal for exercising their freedom of speech.
- The University encourages staff and students to take part in public debates. The University stands for scholarly quality and expertise in these public discussions.
- The University is not to have any opinion on what students or staff think, say or do as private individuals.
- The University is, however, obliged to intervene in the event of more serious disruptions of its activities by staff or students, difficulties in collaboration, or if the work or learning environment is adversely affected. The focus is to be on managing the consequences arising in terms of the University's activities, while respecting the individual's freedom of speech.

### **3. Lund University is a public authority, which involves certain rights and responsibilities**

Lund University is a public authority, and therefore, employees work for the government. This involves certain rights but also responsibilities. Public authorities must work on the basis of the government's core values, which consist of six principles: democracy, legality, objectivity, freedom of opinion, respect, efficiency and service. It is the responsibility of each member of staff to act professionally in the performance of their duties. This includes, for example, performing their work duties in a satisfactory manner and with good quality. Respect means, among other things, showing respect for the individual and their privacy (for example, in the handling of personal data) and by not discriminating. Objectivity means that as a public authority, we do not take positions on political issues that are not linked to our core mission and we carry out our work duties objectively. This is why, for example, employees are not allowed to have any secondary employment

that could damage credibility and why there must be no conflict of interest in decision-making processes. The principle of objectivity also means treating people with respect and maintaining an appropriate tone in the performance of their duties, both internally and externally. The University has confidence in the ability of its staff members to carry out their duties in a professional manner regardless of the views or opinions they express in private. If an employee does not act objectively or impartially, the employer may need to take measures necessary to ensure the good and fair performance of duties.

***Summary:***

- The University is a public authority, which means that it is the responsibility of each member of staff to act professionally in the performance of their duties.
- If an employee does not act objectively or impartially, the employer may need to take measures necessary to ensure the good and fair performance of duties.

#### **4. The University is a place of work and study**

Lund University is to provide a good work and learning environment that is inclusive, welcoming, stimulating, fair and secure. All staff and students at Lund University have a responsibility to contribute to a positive work and study environment. Respect and consideration are to apply to all relationships, and responsibility for the University's core values, mission and goals is shared. It is important to note that workplaces are made up of people and human relationships. Context is important for how the work environment is perceived, and what may be considered acceptable in one context may not be so in another. There must be room for differences of personality, interest and opinion in a workplace. As part of the regular work environment management periodic dialogues are to take place with employees about what can be considered a good work environment, what characterises good collaboration and how everyone can contribute to a good work environment.

Behaviour that interferes with the performance of work, disrupts operations or threatens the work environment may be restricted.

Work and study at the University are characterised by a high degree of freedom and responsibility, yet staff are expected to carry out their duties and students are expected to participate in teaching within the frameworks provided. The University is obliged to intervene if difficulties arise in collaboration, if someone mismanages their work, disrupts teaching or other activities, or if deficiencies arise in the work or learning environment. If an employee spends time on political activities during working hours to the extent that work duties are neglected, there may be reason to limit those activities.

Students are not allowed to disrupt teaching or examinations to spread political opinions. It can be difficult to determine what constitutes a nuisance. To ensure fairness, a student suspected of disrupting teaching must, therefore, be reported to the Disciplinary Board for further review.

***Summary:***

- Staff are expected to carry out their duties and students are expected to participate in teaching within the frameworks provided.
- The University is obliged to intervene if collaboration difficulties arise, if someone mismanages their work, disrupts teaching or other activities, or if deficiencies arise in the work or learning environment.
- Students are not allowed to disrupt teaching or examinations to spread political opinions.

Premises are to be used for research, teaching or other regular activities.

The University's premises are not public places, but rather are to be used for research, teaching or other regular activities. The University decides who can use the premises and how they are to be used. This includes office spaces.

There are a number of restrictions in place linked to the use of premises. For example, smoking, children, staying overnight, pets or organising parties without prior permission are not allowed on University premises. With

regard to the use of University premises for political meetings or the dissemination of political information, the rules can be summarised as follows:

- Democratically organised student associations (associations with statutes and annual meetings) have the right to use the University's premises, including for political meetings. The University decides which premises can be used and gatherings must not affect security. The security implications are assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Other political organisations are not allowed to use the University's premises for meetings, dissemination of information, expression of opinions or similar.
- The University's premises and the land adjacent to the University's premises may not be used to sell or market services or products to staff or students. The ban covers all forms of sales or marketing carried out by external non-profit organisations, such as putting up posters or similar on notice boards, distributing flyers or setting up temporary or permanent equipment such as stands, magazine racks, counters, etc. There are exceptions, which are specified in the regulations on the sale or marketing of services or products on University premises. Each faculty decides whether other types of posters are allowed on its premises.
- The University does not rent or lease the land outside the premises. Anyone wishing to organise activities outside the premises must therefore seek permission from the property owner or the police.

***Summary:***

- The University may, with certain exceptions, deny staff or students the use of University premises for political purposes that take the form of meetings or dissemination of political information.

The work and learning environment is to be safe and secure

- Lund University has a zero-tolerance policy towards threats, violence, victimisation, harassment and sexual harassment. It is important to consider the following:



- Threats are never acceptable. Lund University is responsible for taking the necessary measures to ensure a safe work environment. Lund University is not responsible for investigating criminal offences. This is handled by the judicial system. A member of staff or student who feels threatened must file a police report. The Security and Environment Division can assist with making a report, but this is predicated on the voluntary participation of the reporting party. In cases of suspected threats, the University Security and Environment Department is always to be contacted for a security assessment. Threats constitute serious work environment incidents. They are to be reported and notification is to be sent to the Swedish Work Environment Authority based on current guidelines.
- Suspected victimisation, discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment is always to be investigated by the University. Investigations are to be initiated promptly based on the University's guidelines.
- Staff or students who, for various reasons, suffer from work or study-related health issues and require support are always to be advised to contact the Occupational Health Service or the Student Health Service. Staff can also talk to their line manager, health and safety representative or trade union representative.
- When challenges in the work or study environment are identified, a risk and impact assessment with an associated action plan are always to be drawn up according to Lund University's guidelines. It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that a plan is established. It is important that it is drawn up in collaboration with the health and safety organisation and involves the work environment coordinator and other support functions needed to implement the plan. The facts of the individual case determine the composition of the group. The University has support services in place that can provide guidance. It is important that the staff and students involved are treated in a professional and compassionate manner. It may be helpful to establish a communication plan.

By assignment  
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## Examples of advice available and relevant regulations

Lund University's strategic goals

- Mission, vision and values  
<https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/about-university/university-glance/mission-vision-and-values>

Basic values of central government authorities

- Basic values of central government authorities – common principles for good administrative culture, the Swedish Agency for Public Management  
[https://www.forvaltningskultur.se/siteassets/skrifter-och-handbocker/pdf/vardegrund\\_eng\\_tillg.pdf](https://www.forvaltningskultur.se/siteassets/skrifter-och-handbocker/pdf/vardegrund_eng_tillg.pdf)

Freedom of speech and academic freedom

- Instrument of Government (Regeringsformen)  
<https://www.riksdagen.se/globalassets/05.-sa-fungerar-riksdagen/demokrati/the-instrument-of-government-2023-eng.pdf>
- Higher Education Act (Högskolelagen)  
<https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Swedish-Higher-Education-Act/>
- The Chicago Principles  
<https://provost.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/documents/reports/FOECommitteeReport.pdf>

Research communication

- Seven principles for good public research communication, Lund University  
<https://www.staff.lu.se/research-and-education/research-support/communicate-your-research/principles-research-communication>
- Ethical aspects of researchers' contacts with the media, Lund University Ethics Advisory Board  
<https://etikradet.blogg.lu.se/ethical-aspects-of-researchers-contact-with-the-media/>

### Using the University's premises

- Regulations on the sale or marketing of services or products on University premises (in Swedish)  
<https://www.medarbetarwebben.lu.se/sites/medarbetarwebben.lu.se/files/foreskrift-om-forsaljning-eller-marknadsforing-av-tjanster-eller-produkter-inom-universitetets-lokaler.pdf>
- Regulations concerning the temporary letting of premises for a democratically organised student association (in Swedish)  
<https://www.medarbetarwebben.lu.se/sites/medarbetarwebben.lu.se/files/lunds-universitets-foreskrift-angaende-tillfallig-upplatelse-av-lokal-for-demokratisk-uppyggd-forening-for-studenter.pdf>

### Student rights and responsibilities

- Student rights and responsibilities, Lund University  
<https://www.lu.se/studera/livet-som-student/rattigheter-och-ansvar-som-student>

### Disciplinary offences

- Handling of disciplinary cases, Lund University  
<https://www.medarbetarwebben.lu.se/forska-och-utbilda/stod-till-utbildning/disciplinarenden>

### Security

- Lund University's Security and Environment Division  
<https://www.medarbetarwebben.lu.se/stod-och-verktyg/sakerhet>

### Hate, threats and violence

- Information about dealing with hate, threats and violence, Lund University (in Swedish)  
<https://www.hr-webben.lu.se/arbetsmiljo/hat-hot-och-vald>

### Student health issues

- Student Health Centre, Lund University  
<https://www.medarbetarwebben.lu.se/forska-och-utbilda/stod-till-utbildning/studentstod/studenthalsan>

Work environment management, victimisation and harassment at Lund University

- Information about work environment management (in Swedish)  
<https://www.hr-webben.lu.se/arbetsmiljo>
- Systematic preventive work against discrimination (Swedish acronym SFAD) (in Swedish)  
<https://www.hr-webben.lu.se/arbetsmiljo/systematiskt-forebyggande-arbete-mot-diskriminering-sfad-pa-lunds-universitet>
- Reporting occupational injuries and incidents  
<https://www.staff.lu.se/employment/work-environment-and-health/reporting-occupational-injuries-and-incidents>
- Risks in the work environment  
<https://hr-pages.prodwebb8.lu.se/work-environment/systematic-work-environment-management/risks-work-environment>
- Misconduct (in Swedish)  
<https://www.hr-webben.lu.se/anstallning/misskotsamhet>
- Victimisation and harassment – Employer’s checklist (in Swedish)  
<https://www.hr-webben.lu.se/arbetsmiljo/krankningar-och-trakasserier/arbetsgivarens-checklista>
- Managing and investigating harassment and sexual harassment, as well as reprisals (in Swedish)  
[https://www.hr-webben.lu.se/sites/hr-webben.lu.se/files/stod\\_till\\_chefar\\_vid\\_utredning\\_av\\_trakasserier\\_201903.pdf](https://www.hr-webben.lu.se/sites/hr-webben.lu.se/files/stod_till_chefar_vid_utredning_av_trakasserier_201903.pdf)
- Occupational Health Service  
<https://www.staff.lu.se/employment/work-environment-and-health/health-and-wellness/occupational-health-service>