

Goals for work environment and equal terms 2023–2024

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Description:

Based on the Working environment and equal conditions policy, a number of general goals have been defined – goals that the university must always strive towards. This is the part of the systematic work environment and equal terms work. The goals are divided into five areas and within each area there are sub-goals. The overall goals and the sub-goals apply to the entire university, and must be broken down and worked on respectively department/equivalent. The overall goals will be followed up in the autumn of 2024.

Disclaimer: In case of a discrepancy between the Swedish and the English version of the plan, the Swedish version will prevail.

Introduction

Stockholms university's strategy with work environment and equal terms measures aims to create a safe and inspiring environment to work and study in.

The Council for Work Environment and Equal Conditions (RALV) is Stockholm University's safety committee, and it, together with the local councils/groups, forms the university structure for its systematic work with work environment and equal conditions issues. Stockholm University has the ultimate responsibility for the work environment and equal terms work based on two perspectives: As employer vis-à-vis the employees and as education provider vis-à-vis the students. However, every manager, employee and student is expected to take personal responsibility for the common work and study environment and contribute to a positive working climate.

Based on the Working environment and equal conditions policy, a number of overall goals has been defined – goals that the university must always strive towards. To get there these need to be broken down into sub-goals. The selection of these sub-goals is based, among other things, on various surveys – for example the employee survey – but also from problem descriptions and needs raised from the core operations, the protection organization, the unions and the Student Union. This action plan divided into five areas:

- Systematic work environment and equal terms work
- Organizational and social work environment
- Equal terms
- Physical working environment
- Study environment – the students' work environment

The goals and a description of the area can be found under each heading in this document. The overall goal and sub-goals apply to the entire university, and must be broken down and worked with at the respective department/equivalent. The sub-goals will be followed up autumn 2024.

Systematic work environment and equal terms work

The Council for Work Environment and Equal Conditions - RALV - is Stockholm University's safety committee, and the structure that Stockholm University has chosen as for its systematic work environment and equal terms work. It is important that all managers, employees and students are aware of this and that everyone actively contributes to constantly improving the work and study environment. The employer has the main responsibility for the work and study environment, and to ensure this, the responsibility for the implementation of

work environment and equal conditions tasks is distributed to managers in the organization. In order to succeed in these tasks, managers must have sufficient knowledge and prerequisites for the assignment.

Cooperation and collaboration are a prerequisite for creating a good work/study environment. In order to create a forum for local collaboration, all departments/equivalents have a local council where collaboration takes place between the employer, work environment representatives, study environment representatives and doctoral student representatives. The local councils are also an important part of ensuring that work environment and equal terms work is carried out systematically, time-planned and documented.

During the autumn of 2022, information and tools were published to support the university's managers in the systematic work environment and equal terms work, and the training courses aimed at managers have been developed. But there has been a need, both from managers and the protection organization, to get additional practical support in how to work systematically with these issues in the local councils, as well as how to ensure participation and collaboration. There has also been a need for support in how to integrate equal terms issues into this work.

An important part of the systematic work environment and equal terms work is to carry out risk assessments before major changes, in order to prevent risks of ill health and accidents arising. Based on one of the sub-goals in the previous Goals document, risk assessments were carried out in the years 2020–2022 before the introduction of new administrative systems. Above all, the focus was on how the introduction of new IT systems is planned and the employees' participation in this work, as well as what support the employees were given in the form of, for example, skills development and help to redistribute/prioritize tasks during intensive implementation phases. The work with these risk assessments has essentially worked well, but needs to be evaluated and analyzed more thoroughly to identify which parts can be developed further.

General objective

Heads of departments/managers must have sufficient knowledge and prerequisites to conduct active and systematic work environment and equal terms work, and employees must have knowledge of how the systematic work environment and equal terms work is conducted and participate actively in this work.

Objectives 2023–2024

1. The work in the local council shall promote collaboration and contribute to the systematic work environment and equal terms work at the department/equivalent. It must be known to the employees how to work with work environment and equal conditions issues at the department/equivalent.

2. Risk assessments carried out prior to the introduction of new administrative systems in the years 2020–2022 must be analyzed, and proposals for improvements to the process must be drawn up.
3. Equal terms issues and active measures must be included as a natural part of the systematic work environment and equal terms work.

Organizational and social work environment

As a tool for systematically examining and following up the organizational and social work environment, Stockholm University has chosen to regularly conduct employee surveys. The latest employee survey (autumn 2022) shows that the percentage of employees who experience a workload they are comfortable with has increased slightly compared to the 2017–2020 measurement. However, close to 30% of the respondents (just over 1,000 people) stated that they are not satisfied with their workload, which can be a risk of ill health. When breaking down background variables, it can be deduced that female teachers and female teachers/researchers are the least satisfied with their workload, and mainly those in the age range 41–60 years. There were also relatively low results linked to the possibility of recovery at work and clear assignments with reasonable conditions. This may indicate a risk of unhealthy workloads, which in turn may lead to employee ill-health.

Research also shows that an unhealthy workload can lead to a deteriorating work climate, which in turn increases the risk of conflicts and, in the worst case, victimization or other forms of abusive actions. In other words, a healthy workload is also an important component of a good working climate, and an important issue to work on in order to ultimately also prevent employees from feeling exposed to various forms of abusive actions.

In order to prevent the risk of unhealthy workload, it is necessary to work with both organizational and psychosocial work environment aspects in parallel. To succeed in this work, you need to balance the needs of the core operations with the individual conditions of the employees, and this requires knowledge and competence on the part of both managers and employees.

One aspect of the systematic work environment and equal terms work that needs to be developed is the follow-up and investigation of the digital work environment. In the previous Action plan (2020–2022) there was a goal that the digital work environment should be clearly included as part of the systematic work environment work. One measure was that questions about the digital work environment would become part of the annual safety rounds. However, this proved not to be a suitable research method for these questions, and therefore a review needs to be done. Before choosing an investigation method, it is important to first clearly define what a digital work environment is and what it is that you want to investigate and

follow up. However, the goal remains that the digital work environment should be included as a natural part of the systematic work environment and equal terms work.

General objective

As an employee at Stockholm University, you should experience that you have a good organizational and social work environment. Everyone must take joint responsibility for constantly improving the work environment and everyone actively contributes to this work.

Objectives 2023–2024

1. Increase the knowledge of managers regarding how to prevent an unhealthy workload and how to catch early signals of ill health in your employees as a manager.
2. Increase the knowledge of employees in what they themselves can do to manage and influence their work situation, as well as how to identify and discover their own signals of ill-health.
3. Knowledge and competence regarding the digital work environment must increase, and must be clearly included as part of the systematic work environment and equal conditions work.

Equal terms

In order to be able to identify and work preventively with risks of discrimination and offensive actions, it requires systematically active measures at both local and central level. Work environment and equal terms issues must be included as a natural part of the core operations, and sub-goals relating to this can be found under the headings Systematic work environment and equal terms work and Students' work environment.

The Discrimination Act's regulations on accessibility and the discrimination ground disability have a connection to the employer's obligation according to the work environment legislation to adapt the work to the different conditions of the employees (read more about this under the heading Physical work environment). At Stockholm University, it is important to develop the work with disability study support for students and work adaptations for employees. It is also important that managers have sufficient knowledge of personal aids and work adaptations in the form of coordinated support. Sub-goals regarding special educational support aimed at students can be found under the heading Study environment - students' work environment.

At Stockholm University, there is zero tolerance towards offensive actions. In order to be able to support employees and students who feel exposed to abusive actions, it is a prerequisite that everyone knows where to turn for support and where to find information about this. Another important prerequisite is that the university has a clear process regarding how these issues are handled and what the employer/education provider's responsibilities are in this work. In the

Discrimination Ombudsman's (DO) review of, among other things, the university's routines regarding harassment and sexual harassment linked to students, attention was drawn to certain wordings in the routines that led to a certain lack of clarity, for example regarding the obligation to investigate and remedy harassment and sexual harassment regardless of whether the complainant wants proceed with a report or not.

Within the framework of Stockholm University's work with gender mainstreaming, there are a number of measures and activities aimed at increasing equality between men and women.¹ This work has a connection to the work environment and equal terms work in that it increases the knowledge of employees and managers, primarily linked to the basis of discrimination gender, but also contributes to raising, discussing and reflecting on risks of discrimination in our operations.

General objective

The work and study environment must make use of the resources that employees and students with different backgrounds, life situations and skills bring to the university. Everyone must treat each other in a respectful manner and at Stockholm University there is zero tolerance towards discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and offensive differential treatment.

Objectives 2023–2024

1. Produce clear information regarding accessibility and personal aids for employees.
2. All employees and students must know where to turn if they feel exposed to harassment, sexual harassment or offensive discrimination.

Physical work environment

Physical work environment is part of the systematic work environment and equal terms work. With clear guidelines on physical work environment regarding where the work should be conducted and where support is available, negative health effects of a lack of physical work environment among employees and students can be prevented.

An important part of the preventive work is to investigate, take measures and follow up work-related injuries and accidents. Core operations representatives, the unions and the protection organization have highlighted that they perceive the current handling of work-related injuries and incidents as unclear regarding responsibility and that it creates difficulties during

¹ Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming 2023–2025, ref. no. SU FV-3040-22.

investigation and follow-up. To be able to work preventively with these work environment issues, routines, tools and system support need to be developed.

According to the Work Environment Act, working conditions must be adapted to people's different conditions in physical and psychological terms. Physical accessibility is about minimizing obstacles in the work environment so that as many people as possible can use the workplace on equal terms. Different aspects of the work environment – physical, psychological, cognitive and social – need to interact in order for there to be conditions for doing good work. In addition to accessible premises and work tools, employees with disabilities may need personal work aids.

Work environment work within laboratory operations is particularly challenging where there are many more risks in the work than in normal workplaces. In addition, they have come a long way in their systematic laboratory safety work. Stockholm University strives for a common way of working for the systematic laboratory safety work where the University administration must be active support and provide the right conditions for the operation to achieve the common goals.

General objective

Stockholm University must be a safe and secure place for both employees and students.

Objectives 2023–2024

1. Stockholm University must work preventively and systematically with occupational injuries and incidents. It must be clear who is responsible for investigating work injuries and managers must have knowledge of responsibilities and obligations linked to the legislation.
2. Support and information regarding physical accessibility and personal aids must be available to managers and employees at Stockholm University. Managers and employees must know where to turn in case of questions.
3. All core operations at Stockholm University must work in the same way regarding laboratory safety to prevent accidents and ill health.

Study environment – the students' work environment

The Higher Education Ordinance establishes that the higher education institutions are responsible for ensuring that students have access to health care, especially preventive health care that aims to promote the students' physical and mental health. Furthermore, the universities also have other responsibilities regarding student welfare such as supporting students in their study situation or facilitate the transition to working life and for the students to generally have a good study environment.

Mental illness is the most common reason why students apply to a student health clinic. Universities and colleges are an important arena for reaching students with initiatives that promote health and prevent ill-health. At Stockholm University, several groups work with study environment issues.

The section for Student support and Study and career counselling are some that work within the study support activities. Succeeding with the study environment issues requires good cooperation within the departments; between departments, the Student Services and the Student Union.

General objective

Stockholm University must work actively to promote students' health in the study situation.

Objectives 2023–2024

1. Increase managers' knowledge of the systematic work environment and equal terms work linked to students' work environment.
2. Investigate the possibility that study support activities can be present in Athena.
3. Carry out a review of the process for special educational support.
4. Investigate the possibility of examining students' study environment through, for example, the degree survey.
5. Ensure that spaces where students stay maintain a good working environment.