

May 2018

Dear department heads and office managers,

During 2018 Stockholm University will formulate new central strategies for the period 2019-2022. In connection to this strategy work the university is involved in an international pilot project concerned with academic core values, which is organized by the Magna Charta Observatory in Bologna.

Universities stand for higher education and independent knowledge development around the world, thereby fulfilling an important role in society: financially, politically, culturally and socially. However, the pressure on and challenges for universities are growing; that universities rest upon common core values will strengthen us in meeting those challenges.

The Magna Charta Observatory has identified four fundamental *academic core values*:

- Autonomy
- Academic freedom
- Equity
- Integrity

In addition, through broad academic participation Stockholm University also agreed upon three of its own *institutional core values* about ten years ago, that delineate what Stockholm University stands for:

- Openness
- Innovation
- Willingness to cross boundaries

As part of the pilot project we would like to invite all departments/equivalent to discuss these academic and institutional core values. Our wish is that you discuss this in a form of your own choice, and that the result of the discussions is in some way reported back to your dean and the director of administration, respectively. The results from the pilot project will then be made part of the comprehensive strategy work by the university senior management team.

Professor Caroline Parker from Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) is Stockholm University's appointed ambassador in the pilot project. [In this film](#) she explains how and why GCU has worked with academic core values. At su.se/strategies you will find more information and background material on the university's work with these strategies and core values.

On the following two pages you will find short definitions of the core values mentioned above, and also some questions that could be used as starting points for your discussions.

Best regards,

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Jessica van der Sluijs, Dean, Faculty of Law
Elisabeth Wåghäll-Nivre, Dean, Faculty of Humanities
Eino Örnfeldt, Director of Administration

Definitions of core values

Autonomy

This includes the university's ability to conduct its affairs without external restriction. The extent of autonomy can e.g. be regarded within the following areas:

- Academic matters
- Organization
- Financial and physical resources
- Human resources

Academic freedom

This includes the possibility to freely conduct research and education, both in terms of choosing areas for research and education and the methods for conducting them. As for research it also includes the possibility to publish and spread the results.

As opposed to the core value of autonomy constraints to academic freedom can be both external as well as internal.

This value may seem obvious to us but in an international context threats are for real, and academic freedom is therefore for many reasons worth defending and protecting.

Equity

This core value can be said to cover the university's ambition for equality and justice. It is often connected to the university's role as a public authority, for example regarding a just exercise of authority towards different target groups:

- prospective students (e.g. widening participation)
- students (admission and degrees)
- staff (employment, working environment)
- the public (the principle of public access to official records)

Integrity

Integrity should characterise all functions within the university, both in research, education and administration. Of particular importance is integrity in the area of research, since research expands the borders of knowledge and research can only be properly assessed by other researchers.

- Integrity in the area of research includes:
 - the use of honest and verifiable methods in all aspects of research - in applications, implementation and evaluation.
 - reporting results in accordance with accepted rules and norms.
 - following the rules and norms accepted by the research community e.g. regarding research ethics.
- Integrity within the area of education means that education should be research-based.
- The university's communication shall be
 - true and correct
 - accessible and open
 - reliable and understandable

Openness

Stockholm University is a generous and welcoming place. Close contact and an active exchange of experiences and knowledge with the world around us has characterised the university since its foundation. The university takes an active part in external relations on a broad front in society: in its education and research and through research communication, as a referral body, through investigations and participation in media as well as through national and international cooperation partners and networks.

Innovation

Stockholm University is characterised by innovation. Stockholm University College was founded in 1878 with the ambition to renew the traditional universities in Sweden, and it recruited inter alia Sweden's first female professor. Stockholm University contributes to the development of society and to an individual's progress of knowledge through education and research. The university acts, in cooperation with others, on the international frontline in the areas of human science and science.

Willingness to cross boundaries

With a solid basis in traditional disciplines Stockholm University strives to develop broad and cross-boundary cooperation. The university's profile areas are in many cases department, faculty and area wide. Research centres and institutes span all these boundaries and contribute to the interdisciplinary profile of the university.

Questions for discussion

1. To what extent does Stockholm University live up to its core values, both fundamental and institutional? If possible, give concrete examples of deficiencies and conceivable improvements.
2. What role do Stockholm University's institutional core values have today? What role should they have? To whom?
3. Are there any other values that Stockholm University should pay regard to, as part of the work with the strategies for 2019–2022?