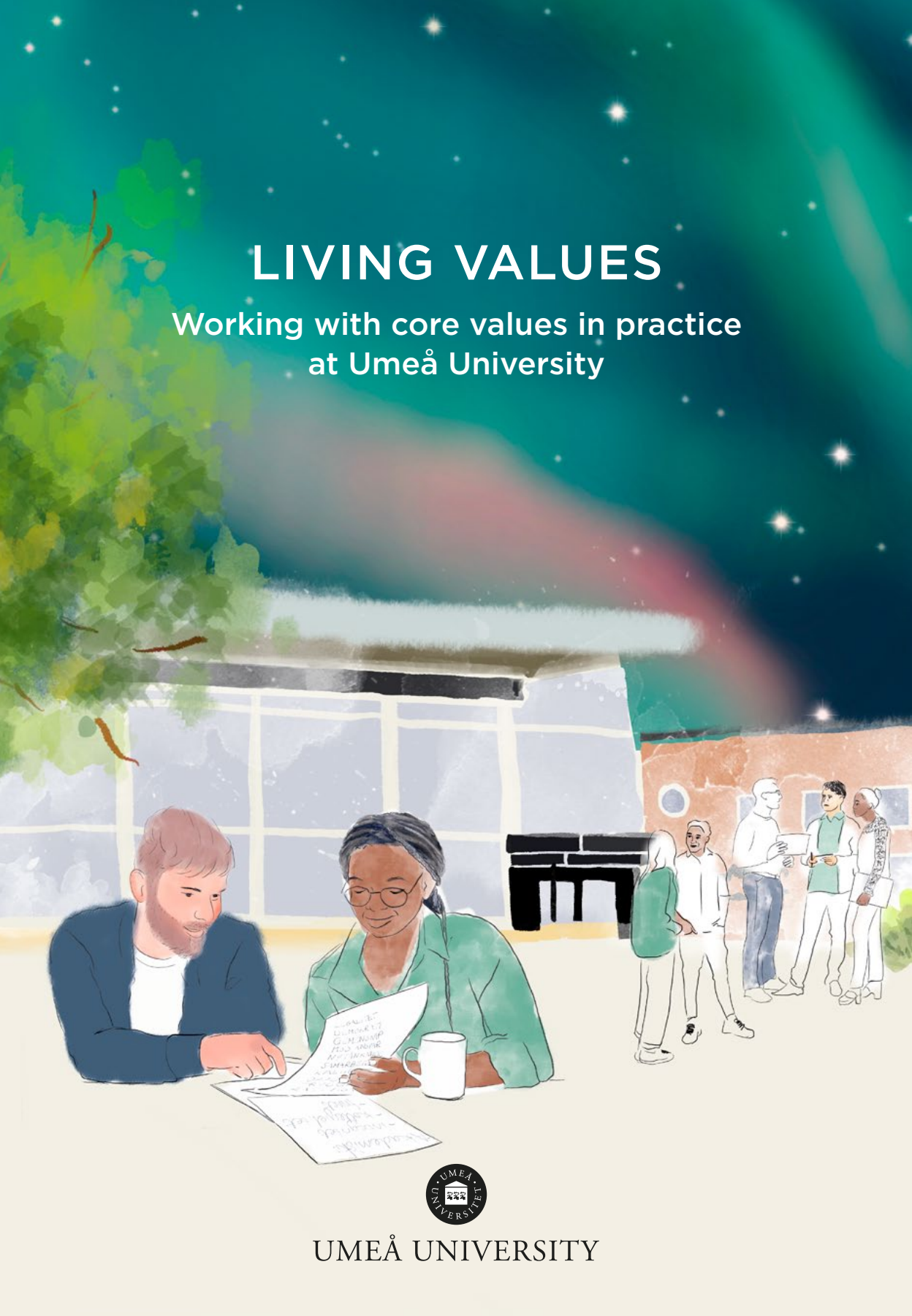


# LIVING VALUES

Working with core values in practice  
at Umeå University



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

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# Foreword

Academic core values are the foundation of Umeå University's mission. Academic freedom, institutional autonomy and collegiality are fundamental in academia.

The University can and should promote the use of democratic values as a lodestar within every aspect of society and be an active force for countering unscientific and fact-resistance arguments through critical analysis. Adherence to the academic core values thus strengthens society's and the scientific community's confidence in our work. These core values are the culture we strive to create to ensure our research follows good research practices and to ensure a good working environment and equal opportunities for all.

Umeå University is also a central government authority that is regulated by the Swedish Higher Education Act, the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, other higher education-specific legislation and rules, and the principles of the central government's basic values. The University is funded through taxes, and we serve the public interest. The actions of staff and students influence the confidence taxpayers have in the University.

Our work with core values is a never-ending task and must always be kept living. Our hope is that this book inspires discussions on core values at the University's departments and units for many years to come.



Hans Adolfsson, Vice-Chancellor  
Umeå, 30 September 2024



Katrine Riklund, Pro-Vice-Chancellor  
Umeå, 30 September 2024



# Living Values

At Umeå University, we have been working with our core values for many years, but this work is never complete and we need to continually re-examine them. There are always new crises, problem areas and dilemmas. The University's core values need to be regularly discussed and explored. For us, developing and maintaining our core values helps establish shared approaches and identify key elements and what Umeå University stands for.

Regular discussions in committees, at workplace meetings and on planning days about our core values allow us to improve how we respond to difficult situations and promote a good workplace culture. By reflecting together and discussing different dilemmas, we become better prepared to manage situations as they arise at the workplace.

Between 2017 and 2019, we included University employees in discussions about our core values. Focus was on the basic values for central government employees and how these can be made concrete. The results of this work included the book *Everyday dilemmas – Working with basic values in practice at Umeå University*. This book described all the basic values for central government employees and what they entail for us at Umeå University. It included 47 dilemmas built around suggestions submitted from throughout the University.

In 2023, the *Living Values* project began with the aim of encouraging and developing a long-term discussion on Umeå University's core values and our shared approach. The overall objectives of the project were:

- to continue developing the University's academic core values while clearly defining their significance and practical meaning
- to continue developing and renewing our toolbox for core value discussions.

From November 2023 to June 2024, a committee with broad representation from throughout Umeå University worked to revise and improve the University's academic core values. Their objective was to formulate these values and clearly define their significance and practical meaning for Umeå University. Their work was also able to draw on support from the *Living Values* project, which Umeå University participated in as a member of Magna Charta Universitatum.

In spring 2024, staff from every faculty, the Umeå School of Education, Umeå University Library and the University Administration submitted dilemmas to us. This resulted in 19 new dilemmas that challenge our core values.

This process led to revision of our academic core values, support material in the form of core value dialogues, the Living Values game, and a revised edition of the book with new and relevant dilemmas directly from the organisation for use in discussions. You can find the new dilemmas under the heading: New dilemmas 2024.

The following describes the University's revised academic core values and the basic values for central government employees, and what they entail for us at Umeå University.

# Umeå University's core values

As a higher education institution, the mission of Umeå University is to conduct education, research and public outreach in service of improving society. Our core values are characterised by three academic core values: academic freedom, academic collegiality and academic integrity. The University is also a government authority, meaning the central government's basic values apply to our activities.

For us, working with living values is important for creating a shared approach and for showing what is important and what Umeå University stands for.

## ACADEMIC CORE VALUES

The academic core values – academic freedom, academic collegiality and academic integrity – are fundamental for enabling fulfilment of our mission with quality and credibility. They enable us to take our societal responsibility. Our starting point is that academic freedom requires collegial responsibility and the integrity of our staff.

### Academic freedom

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of a democratic society and a prerequisite for enabling higher education institutions to achieve their mission with quality and credibility. At its core, academic freedom encompasses both research and higher education and is based on institutional autonomy for higher education institutions. The role of self-determination for higher education institutions is to ensure that research and education are free from undue control and that teachers, researchers and students are given opportunities to freely seek, generate and disseminate knowledge. Exercising this freedom is both a right and an obligation. With freedom comes great responsibility and many conscious, professional considerations. Academic freedom must be exercised with integrity, wisdom and collegiality to allow us to jointly contribute to a better society.

### Institutional autonomy

For academic freedom to work in practice, higher education institutions need to have an appropriate and clear independence from state and political influence and functioning self-governance. As an organisation, Umeå University is an independent voice and serves as a critically reflective force in society. Our collective expertise contributes to the further development of an open society characterised by a fact-based and research-based debate that is conducted with mutual respect. As a university with autonomy, we impart credibility and legitimacy by using our collective expertise and energy to help bring about important social changes. We can do this through the independence of our education and our research.

## **Educational freedom**

Academic freedom enables teachers and other department staff to continuously develop and conduct education grounded on a scholarly or artistic basis and best practices in both its content and form. National qualitative targets, curriculums and programme syllabuses allow the flexibility necessary for faculties, departments, teachers and students to shape content, implementation and testing of goal attainment that best enables learning. Our academic programmes reflect the wide range of subjects offered at the University and give students the freedom to explore and acquire relevant knowledge for their future careers. Our programmes are characterised by an openness to different ideas and perspectives. This, in turn, promotes the personal and intellectual development of students which, in addition to subject-specific knowledge and skills, is central for higher education.

## **Research freedom**

The freedom researchers have to select research questions and research methods and to formulate, publish and communicate their results is central to the quality, credibility and progress of research. The strength of the scientific method lies in its freedom from dogmatic or external constraints that dictate what questions may be asked or what results are acceptable to generate. In science, all knowledge is considered preliminary and subject to questioning and reconsideration in the light of new questions and insights. Umeå University strives to manage its resources in such a way that gives researchers the opportunity to explore new questions and test new approaches in research.

## **Freedom to communicate knowledge**

Academic freedom also includes the freedom for teachers and researchers to participate in knowledge-based communication and discussions with colleagues, external parties and the broader society. Umeå University encourages staff to participate in public discussions on issues facing society and to ensure that science-based knowledge is used to advance society and our understanding of it.

## **Freedom and responsibility**

The purpose of academic freedom is to ensure a democratic and knowledge-based society. The free search for knowledge is not a freedom that can be opted out of, but rather a duty that rests on both the University as an institution and each individual employee. We encourage dissenting opinions and challenges to conventional wisdom in debates discussing what is established knowledge and science while rejecting unscientific and unethical behaviour. This responsibility encompasses respectful discussions that support an inclusive and creative environment, that promote gender equality and that encourage the free search for knowledge and a diversity of perspectives. This assumes exercising academic freedom with integrity and through collegial discussions.

## **Academic collegiality**

Umeå University's core values include academic collegiality, which means employees and students participate in and take joint responsibility for developing the activities of the organisation and the University's educational, research and work environments. Academic collegiality can thus be compared with academic citizenship, where we share responsibility for improving the quality of our collective work.

## **Collegiality as a form of governance**

At Umeå University, collegiality is an important form of governance in combination with trust-based line management. Collegial management of operations and activities and collegial decision-making rests on scientific knowledge and is based on shared responsibility, probing and critical discussions and a leadership that draws its leaders from among staff and that have the trust of staff. Well-functioning collegial planning and decision-making bodies are important at all organisational levels and guarantee well-grounded decisions, where the voices of staff and students are heard. This is ensured through participation by staff and students in various collegial bodies, boards, councils and committees and by participation of staff in workplace meetings.

## **Collegiality in quality enhancement and assessment**

Academic collegiality in quality enhancement and assessment of educational and research activities is of great significance for a well-functioning academic organisation. Standards for academic quality and integrity are maintained, developed and tested in collegial processes. Peer review is a fundamental aspect of academic collegiality when assessing the merits of individuals and the quality of research and teaching. University staff serving as experts in various internal and external assessments and evaluations helps ensure that the best possible decisions are taken on a scientific, educational or artistic basis.

## **Collegiality that promotes breadth and diversity**

For staff at Umeå University, collegiality includes a curiosity for subject areas and perspectives beyond one's own. Collegiality is a way of supporting our role as a comprehensive university and demonstrates our respect for differing scholarly fields and for a diversity of ideas. It fosters the creation of meeting places to tackle shared problems and societal challenges across disciplines, higher education institutions and countries.

## **Collegiality as the basis for healthy work environment**

Umeå University promotes a healthy work environment through collegial presence and qualitative contributions at internal meetings and seminars, participation in discussions, and contributions to other organisations and activities than one's own. Showing academic care and support for the careers of others promotes collegial learning and development of the organisation and its activities. Being a good member of staff includes counteracting territorial approaches and unhealthy hierarchies and supporting equal opportunities. A sustainable healthy work environment is created by all of us, regardless of position, applying core values characterised by striving to support each other, growing together and celebrating each other's successes.



## **Collegiality as merit**

At Umeå University, taking collegial responsibility, including taking on leadership roles, is highly valued and is seen as a merit when recruiting and as part of an academic career. This means that we emphasise the importance of collegial merits in our internal documents and instructions and the role of serving as external reviewers for employment processes and processes for acquiring qualifications instead of considering collegial contributions as invisible academic housework.

## **Academic integrity**

At Umeå University, we build academic integrity on the values of ethical approaches, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. These values permeate our entire organisation and ensure education, research and administration are conducted in a safe environment with high quality. Academic integrity is also necessary for Umeå University to maintain the high level of trust it enjoys from society.

## **Ethical approaches and trust**

An ethical approach, including research ethics, is the basis for academic integrity and for Umeå University's mission to seek out and disseminate knowledge. Honesty and openness foster trust within the University among both students and staff and with the surrounding community. We can share thoughts, ideas and information with each other knowing that these will be treated respectfully. This enables good internal collaborations and strengthens our relationship with the public by maintaining its confidence in academic research and education.

## **Fairness and respect**

We conduct our work and treat those we meet fairly and with respect. Everyone should feel that they have opportunities to exercise influence. We do this by being transparent and clear in our methods and in our communication. At Umeå University, we listen to each other, are open to receiving feedback from others, and accept and value different opinions. We encourage respectful and forward-looking academic discussions, and when we do offer criticism, it is constructive and objective.

## **Courage and responsibility**

In our organisation, we dare to say what we think while taking responsibility for how and where it is said. Our students and staff have the courage to speak up when irregularities are discovered or if something violates our shared core values. We also support others who act in this way. As a student or staff member at Umeå University, we are aware that our words and actions impact our workplace, our work environment and our surroundings. We take responsibility for and are active in our community, and we lead by example.

## THE BASIC VALUES FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Umeå University's core values also derive from the basic values for central government employees. The basic values for central government employees were formulated in 2013 and, in turn, are derived from the laws and regulations that Swedish state authorities must follow. To best enable high quality administration that is democratic, effective, adheres to legislation and is free from corruption, it is important that all central government employees are aware of and understand the basic values. These basic values are the same for all state employees and are based on six legal principles:

1. **Democracy**  
We work for the citizens and we implement the decisions of the Riksdag and the Government.
2. **Legality**  
Everything we do must be supported by law, and we are familiar with and comply with the legislation applicable to our activities.
3. **Objectivity**  
We are objective and impartial and treat every case equally. We do not accept bribes.
4. **Free formation of opinion**  
Transparency and freedom of expression are pillars of democracy and everyone is entitled to insight into the operations of government activities. Employees are entitled to talk about what goes on at their government agency, with the exception of confidential matters.
5. **Respect for all people's equal value, freedom and dignity**  
We treat everyone equally and with respect.
6. **Efficiency and service**  
We provide citizens with correct and comprehensible information as quickly as possible. We work efficiently and conserve our resources.

## WHAT DO THE BASIC VALUES FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ENTAIL FOR US?

The previous core values project, which concluded in December 2019, discussed what these six principles entail for us at Umeå University. The project used submitted material from staff members, which was then reworked by the previous project group.

This section describes how we can relate to the basic values for central government employees here at Umeå University. The quotations under each heading are taken from the publication "Common basic values for central government employees – a summary from the Council on Basic Values".

## **Democracy**

*Democracy is the highest principle, in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 1, first paragraph of the Instrument of Government, which states that all public power in Sweden proceeds from the people.*

At Umeå University, this means that:

- the University is characterised by accessibility, openness, transparency and clear information regarding our activities
- we help increase the public's knowledge base by providing high-quality education and disseminating research results
- internal democracy is exercised by employees and students participating in common, collaborative, preparatory and decision-making bodies and being aware of decisions made
- external representatives are provided opportunities to exercise influence in relevant preparatory and decision-making bodies at the University.

## **Legality**

*Legality, in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 1, third paragraph of the Instrument of Government, which states that public power is exercised under the law.*

At Umeå University, this means that:

- employees read, have good knowledge of and comply with the laws, ordinances and other governing documents concerning the public sector, including the university sector. This also applies to local governing documents and decisions that are made at all organisational units of the University.
- employees are familiar with rights and obligations that are applicable to employees and students, both in relation to the employer and in conjunction with education and research
- the University has clear internal work, support and decision processes, which outlines the responsibility for interpreting laws and regulations and for establishing and managing internal regulations and guidelines.

## **Objectivity**

*Objectivity, in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 9 of the Instrument of Government, which states that courts of law, administrative authorities and others performing public administration should consider the equality of all before the law and should observe objectivity and impartiality.*

At Umeå University, this means that:

- employees are professional in exercising their duties, i.e. objective, impartial and treating everyone equally
- the University provides objective information, guidance and advice to society and individual citizens

- personal opinions may not influence decision-making and we act in a way that does not damage trust in the University
- decisions and decision paths are not dependent on the individuals involved, and the University has procedures to prevent, detect and manage irregularities
- employees do not accept bribes, and we consider conflicts of interest and investigate secondary employment to ensure that employees are impartial
- all employees strive to have an impartial and objective approach in teaching, research and administration, as do the opinions of colleagues and students on the contents, quality and implementation of these activities.

### **Free formation of opinion**

*Free formation of opinion, in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 1, second paragraph of the Instrument of Government, which establishes that Swedish democracy is founded on the free formation of opinion.*

At Umeå University, this means that:

- we encourage employees and students to participate in the public debate
- we value transparency and freedom of expression in education, research and collaboration
- we have a permissive climate and show respect for the opinions of others
- all employees and students are entitled to objectively and respectfully express their opinions on the teaching, research and administration of Umeå University, with the exception of confidential matters.

### **Respect for each person's equal value, freedom and dignity**

*Respect, in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 2, first paragraph of the Instrument of Government, which establishes that public power should be exercised with respect for the equal worth of all and the liberty and dignity of the individual.*

At Umeå University, this means that:

- we have a zero-tolerance policy toward all forms of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation
- we have high accessibility in education, research and administration, and we work actively to promote equal opportunities and diversity
- we are open and inclusive in our interactions with each other and with students, clients and other interested parties.

## **Efficiency and service**

*As a final point, the central legislation stipulates in regard to the public budget and administration that efficiency and service are fundamental values for central government employees.*

At Umeå University, this means that:

- we use our resources effectively to conduct our core activities of education and research
- we have clear processes, procedures and guidelines to ensure short turnaround times and high quality in all parts of Umeå University's work
- we have an efficient and appropriate administration and systems that optimise the conditions for the core activities
- students receive good service in accordance with applicable regulations for higher education
- research is conducted through efficient use of resources, and results are appropriately disseminated, for example through open access publication and collaboration with society
- we provide service by informing, guiding and advising those who contact us.

# Everyday dilemmas

As an employee at a workplace that is both a higher education institution and a public authority you must navigate between different values and expectations. At Umeå University, you are to follow relevant laws and rules, the central government's basic values and the academic core values on which we base our work.

But conflicts can sometimes arise between different principles and values. When this happens, how do you choose to act? Based on the law or effectively? How does objectivity align with free formation of opinion, and academic freedom with political governance? These are the types of conflicts we must each consider and resolve in our daily work.

By regularly discussing our core values related to conflicts of interest that can potentially occur in our daily work, we can improve how we respond to difficult situations and promote a good workplace culture. This makes it easier when dilemmas arise in reality.

This book has 66 dilemmas to discuss at gatherings, such as workplace meetings and on planning days. Nineteen of these are new and were added in 2024. Each dilemma comes with several questions to start the discussion. Any similarities with actual individuals are coincidental.



# RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

## 1. Researcher and politically active

Beata is a senior lecturer who is actively involved in a current local political issue, although she is not an active member of a political party. She has recently been seen taking part in demonstrations and she has posted some critical comments of the issue on social media.

Beata's head of department, Christopher, lives next door to Kristina, who is a municipal politician in charge of this matter. When they have a neighbourly chat, Kristina asks whether he thinks it is appropriate for a university employee to take up a position in the way that Beata has done. Should she not rather devote herself to her research?

Christopher feels uncomfortable and calls Beata to a private meeting where he asks her to tone down her engagement in the issue.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How do you feel about teachers and researchers being politically active?
- Is the head of department correct in having opinions on employees' commitments outside of work?
- What core value principles are being challenged?





## 2. Children do best at home with their parents

Johan and Malin have conducted a research project and have drawn conclusions from the findings about how public health can be improved. They are now actively disseminating their recommendations in the media and to the general public. Their research indicates that children who grow up in a nuclear family and spend less than 20 hours at preschool per week run a lower risk of developing obesity when compared with children who grow up with divorced parents and spend more than 20 hours per week at preschool.

Johan and Malin therefore recommend that society should enable parents to stay home with their children through, for example, childcare allowance and increased child benefits. In July, they present their findings at Almedalen. The journalists in attendance react to their message and start asking questions about their background and political agendas. One of these journalists subsequently does some digging and discovers that both Johan and Malin are active members of a political party that actively pursues this issue. The journalist contacts the head of department and asks her position on the research results. The head of department becomes hesitant and attempts to stop the publication of the article.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How do you think the head of department should act?
- Do the researchers have an obligation to be open about their preconceptions?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



### 3. Researcher and activist

Anna is an activist in Greenpeace and sometimes takes part in various actions. At work she is the project manager of a major research project that concerns food production and self-sufficiency. Anna's research group has produced results that point to significant deficiencies in prevailing methods within the food industry. The researchers draw the conclusion that Sweden should entirely reformulate its food policy and they use the faculty communications officers to achieve wide dissemination of their findings.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How is the requirement of objectivity challenged when research is used politically?
- How do we manage the risk that research perceived as critical of society is considered to violate the objectivity principle?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



#### 4. An exciting business idea

Marko and Julia's research has led to an exciting business idea and now they want to apply for an innovation grant from Uminova. They are also considering applying for a patent on their idea and therefore do not want to publish their research results. When they raise the issue with the head of department, he is very hesitant and wonders whether it is in line with the University's rules regarding secondary employment. He also points out that, according to the Higher Education Act, the researchers are obliged to make their research results available to the public.

Marko and Julia feel they are getting mixed messages from the University. On the one hand, they are to commit to third stream activities and contribute to innovation and enterprise. On the other hand, there are restrictions concerning secondary employment and significant requirements of transparency.

##### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How are individual researchers to relate to the conflict between engaging in collaboration and disseminating research information, and contributing to innovation and enterprise?
- What do you think of the actions of the head of department? Should he have acted differently?
- Can the desire to make money impact objectivity?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 5. Suspicions of research fraud

Benito is a doctoral student in the final phase of his thesis work. In recent months, he has had several indications that his supervisor has been involved in data tampering and perhaps even fabricating certain results. He now lies awake at night in anguish. Should he tell someone of his suspicions? But how will this affect the thesis and his defence thereof?

In the end, he decides to consult with his fellow doctoral student Linda, whom he trusts. He goes into Linda's room and asks if she has a minute. Benito shuts the door and starts to tell her about his suspicions and the indications he has had, but says that Linda must under no circumstance relay the information to anyone else. Linda is shocked and thinks Benito should report his supervisor, but Benito is afraid this will affect him negatively and impede the remaining work on his thesis.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How would you act if you were Benito?
- How would you act if you were Linda?
- Where is the boundary between information that should and should not be handled confidentially? When are we as employees obliged to bring matters to the attention of management, for example, in relation to suspicions of research fraud?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

# TEACHING ENVIRONMENT



## 6. Protests against the course literature

Tine is teaching a course. Recently a group of students has refused to read a book on the literature list saying that it portrays an antiquated view of a specific ethnic group based on current identity politics. The students have been vocal in their protest, not least on social media where they have gained the backing of students across the world. They have now written an appeal to the head of department where they threaten to boycott certain lectures. And that is not all. They have also contacted the University Library and demanded that the book immediately be removed from the library collection.

Tine is now considering changing the literature list out of fear of causing offence to the students and attracting negative publicity.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- To what extent should we meet the students' demands for politically correct literature?
- What responsibility do teachers have for the content of the course literature?
- How do we handle sensitivity or the questioning of material when it is associated with, for example, religion?
- How can teachers present and problematise the literature selection?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 7. The student teacher with controversial values

Robyn is studying on a teacher training programme. In an examination early on in the programme, Robyn expresses values that conflict with the requirements of the System of Qualifications. Among other things, she makes derogatory comments regarding certain groups in society. Ole is the course coordinator and examiner. He reacts strongly to Robyn's statements but is unsure how to act. The syllabus for the course in question does not contain any expected learning outcomes relating to judgement and approach. They are not assessed until the period that involves teacher placement.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How do you think Ole should address Robyn's opinions?
- Does the University, the department and/or examining teacher have any responsibility not to send out unsuitable individuals to teacher placement and ultimately to work with children and young people?
- Is it appropriate to have an advisory session with the student before beginning their placement?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

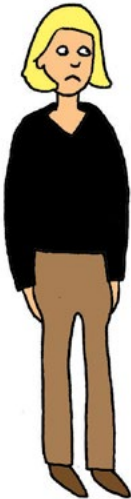
## 8. Late application

Kalle teaches on a programme and the course has just started. After a few days a new student starts, Siri, who has submitted a late application. Siri contacts Kalle and says she has a visual impairment and asks what help she can get with keeping up with the classes.

Kalle is at a loss as he has not received any information about a student with a functional variation starting on his course. He wonders how he will have time to best adapt his material and teaching and the situation is causing him stress.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How do you think Kalle should act?
- What core value principles are being challenged?







## 9. A Master's student with advantages

On a Master's course with many international students, Ionna from Ukraine is struggling with understanding everything that is said in the course language, which is English. Krystiyan, who is one of the teachers on the course, is also from Ukraine. Ionna asks almost all her questions in Ukrainian and is answered by Krystiyan in the same language. After class, Ionna often stays behind to have assignments explained to her. Krystiyan is willing to help her as he feels the teaching will be more effective when Ionna gets the help she needs, thus reaching the same level as the Swedish and English-speaking students.

Many of the other students feel that this is deeply unfair. Especially Tulin, a student from Bangladesh who also has problems with the English. A group of students headed by Tulin approach the director of studies and also contact the students' union. They claim that it is unfair that Ionna is receiving special advantages and that there is a lack of transparency since they do not know what advantages she is receiving.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Is the teacher right to give the student help in another language?
- Is the teacher being fair in his treatment of the students?
- What does equal opportunities mean in this case?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 10. The tone on social media

Maria teaches on a course and is invited by a student to join a Facebook group that discusses the course and the subject. When Maria starts following the threads in the group she discovers many condescending and disrespectful comments about students and teachers. One student in particular is writing disparaging and at times almost hateful comments. Maria is both sad and upset at the level of the discussion and is considering how to act.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Have you experienced something similar?
- How should Maria deal with the student publishing the most disparaging posts?
- How can she address the students and teachers who may have perceived the comments as abusive?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 11. Badmouthing at the student party

Yasmine has for many years taught on one of the longer programmes and she has now been invited to an end-of-programme party organised by the students. She talks to her head of department about whether she should go, and they agree that she should participate and represent the department.

Yasmine puts on a nice party dress and goes to the party. As the evening progresses, more and more students come up and start talking to Yasmine about their experiences from their time studying.

“Hey Yasmine, what’s up?” asks Isak, one of the students.

The students Irma and Jonatan join the conversation.

“That guy Johan... What qualifications does he actually have for teaching?” asks Irma. “He just drones on incoherently. It’s not easy to follow his nonsense.”

“And he shows pictures that feel super outdated. He’s probably used the same ones for the past twenty years,” continues Isak.

An increasing amount of beer and wine goes down as the evening goes on. The comments on Johan and other teachers become even more condescending and start sounding more like parodies rather than constructive criticism.

“Yeah, that Johan, what a bloody bore. He should be sitting in an archive sorting paper instead...” says Irma, and is rewarded with laughter.

Yasmine feels increasingly uncomfortable and does not know whether to stay or leave the party.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How would you act if you were Yasmine?
- What responsibility and authority does a teacher have at a private party?
- Where is the boundary between constructive criticism and badmouthing?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 12. A student questions their grade

Emil is very disappointed about the grade he received on the latest course. When he hears that several of his classmates have received significantly higher grades, he is angry. He knows that all documentation is public and decides to request access to all email conversations between the teachers on the course along with all the grading teacher's notes on each student on the course.

“Now they're going to get it!” says Emil to himself, with a smug smile on his lips.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Which documents is a student entitled to request?
- What should the teachers do?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

### 13. The open university or the elitist university?

The Admissions Office has worked hard for a full academic year with producing and disseminating information to broad target groups as part of the work with widening participation, that is to say, that all groups in society are to have equal access to higher education.

When the autumn term starts, Patrik, who is a professor, welcomes a crowd of new students on the Knowledge Programme (which is a little easier to get into than the Science Programme). The students are expectant prior to their first lecture and listen attentively to Patrik.

“Welcome to the Knowledge Programme!” says Patrik. “It will be three interesting and exciting years! Let’s see how many of you are still here at the end and will actually graduate, because this is a fairly demanding subject and it requires a certain capacity. It’s certainly not as hard as the Science Programme where the demands are much higher, but the Knowledge Programme also requires you to step up!”

The students Ghebremariam, Halasse and Julia go for a coffee after the lecture.

“I’m worried I won’t be able to make it,” says Halasse. “Do I have enough prior knowledge? I haven’t been to compulsory school in Sweden, just upper-secondary school.” Ghebremariam nods in agreement. Patrik’s words worried him too.

Julia feels a small lump in her stomach and wonders whether she will receive enough support or whether her dyslexia will throw a spanner in the works? Or if it is even worth doing the Knowledge Programme? It does not seem that great after all...

#### Discussion

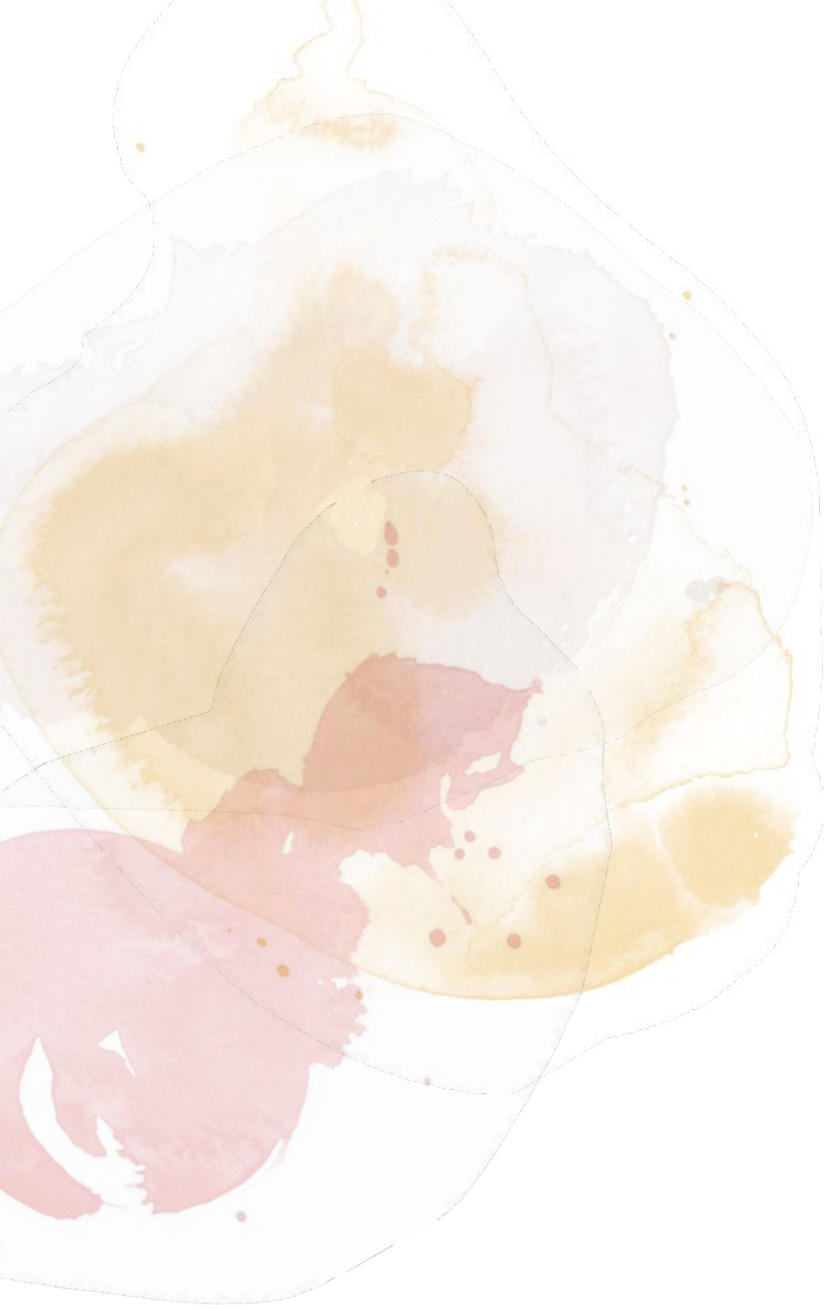
- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How should we welcome new students regardless of their background?
- How far should the University’s support extend?
- Should we more frequently help students with insufficient educational backgrounds move on to other programmes or professions?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 14. The student with a diagnosis

The student Linus has been diagnosed with dyslexia, which may be a reason why he is performing worse than his classmates in a course component that focuses on linguistic skills. Julia is the responsible examiner and has, before and after the exam, felt great uncertainty about how to deal with Linus and how much she should take his diagnosis into account. She decides to be lenient in her grading. He has a diagnosis after all.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How much do you think Julia should take Linus' diagnosis into account?
- How should Linus' work be assessed equally compared with other students in relation to set requirements?
- What core value principles are being challenged?





# RELATIONS

### 15. Do you want to be my reference?

Christopher teaches on a programme and is contacted via email by the student Sofia who is soon to be completing her studies. Sofia is looking for work and wonders if Christopher can act as her reference. Christopher is divided in his opinion of Sofia. He finds her sympathetic and talkative, but throughout her studies she has had problems meeting the set requirements, turning in assignments on time and passing her courses.

Christopher thinks the situation is problematic and is uncertain about accepting the request of being her reference. And if he does, should he be honest and refer to Sofia's shortcomings? Or should he instead provide an exaggerated positive picture so as to help her progress? Should he say no and risk offending Sofia?

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How would you handle this situation?
- Is it okay as a teacher to act as a reference for some students but not for others?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 16. An after-work with a bad aftertaste

Nearly the entire department has gone out for an after-work together. In the beginning, the mood is pleasant with intense discussions, a lot of laughs and witty exchanges. As the beers go down, the tone and manner of speaking gets increasingly sarcastic. In particular, Fredrik and Marianne are egging each other on and badmouthing their colleague Annika, who is not there in the pub.

“Have you seen how she sucks up to anyone in management?” says Marianne mockingly.

“Yeah, apparently that’s how to get a wage increase,” says Fredrik, rolling his eyes.

Barbara, Faustine and Olof react to the way they are talking but say nothing there and then. Barbara thinks that maybe they badmouth her too, when she is not around.

It is only during a workplace meeting many weeks later that they say that they took offence and have felt bad long after the, in their opinion, very unpleasant atmosphere during the evening.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- The situation arose outside of working hours but has affected the work environment. How can the situation be dealt with?
- Should the head of department do something, and if so, what?
- Should the group that reacted have acted differently that evening?
- What view should we have of socialising outside of working hours when alcohol is consumed? When are we private?
- Would the head of department’s responsibility and actions have been different if a similar situation would have occurred on a break at work?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



### 17. Do I dare report it?

Johanna and Petra are colleagues and also socialise privately. One evening during a friendly conversation over dinner at Johanna's place, Petra says that one of their colleagues had made unwelcome sexual advances on several occasions. Johanna was horrified and thought that Petra should report the incident, but Petra dismisses it. She absolutely does not want to, and asks Johanna not to tell anyone about it. The colleague she is referring to is respected and Petra is scared that it will be she who gets into trouble if she tells.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Where is the boundary between issues that can and cannot be handled confidentially? When are we as employees obliged to bring matters to the attention of the management, for example, with regard to discrimination, victimisation or harassment?
- How can we determine the boundary between information that can be kept private and information that should be brought to someone's attention?
- How would the situation have been different if Johanna had been a deputy head of department?
- Would you have acted differently if it had involved alcohol abuse or research fraud?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 18. The generous supplier

Birgitta has for several years suspected that the department's systems technician Anton has now and again been taken out to dinner by a supplier. During a coffee break, Birgitta hears Anton talk about the fantastic food he had with the supplier at one of Umeå's finest restaurants. Birgitta then noticed that he had posted pictures on Facebook from a weekend trip to Åre together with the supplier's representatives.

Birgitta contacts Kerstin, the head of department, and wonders how she views Anton's actions. Kerstin says it is probably not a big deal and says it is nothing that bothers her.

A few weeks later, Birgitta overhears Kerstin and Anton talk about the lovely weekend trip to Åre that they went on together. Birgitta is alarmed and understands why Kerstin dismissed her when the matter was brought up earlier. She thinks long and hard about what she will do. In the end she decides to send an anonymous tip to the local paper regarding the irregular goings on at the department.



A few days later, Birgitta is called to see Kerstin, who makes it clear that she knows it is she who tipped off the paper and that she views the behaviour as disloyal. The article in the paper starts a lively discussion at the department, but Anton says that the whole story is exaggerated and that he indeed paid for himself.

Birgitta is frozen out by Kerstin and some of the other colleagues who have taken Kerstin's side. Birgitta feels now that she is given fewer and more boring tasks and feels ill at ease. In the end, she goes on sick leave.

**Discussion**

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How do you think Birgitta should have acted?
- Where is the boundary between being loyal to the organisation and drawing attention to irregular goings on?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 19. Freedom of expression or a lack of respect?

Lennart, who has just become a docent, meets his colleague Kim, who has a PhD, in the corridor at the department. Kim congratulates Lennart and asks how it is going with the research.

“It feels amazingly good to have my qualification down on paper, that I can back up my claims, unlike the lecturers who work mostly based on their anecdotal evidence,” says Lennart.

“What do you mean?” asks Kim.

“Well, look at best practice for example. Without a link to evidence it’s just an example of what that specific person usually does,” Kim laughs.

Lecturer Amina, who is sitting with her door open, hears the entire conversation. She feels wronged, and during a coffee break she relays the conversation between Lennart and Kim to three of her colleagues who are also lecturers. It is not the first time these four lecturers feel attacked and belittled.

“We handle the teaching and do all the grunt work and get nothing but crap in return,” says Amina.

“The researchers don’t know anything about the reality of the teaching situation and are still always so disrespectful!”

The lecturers feel increasingly angry and bitter over being seen as less valuable by their colleagues.

**Discussion**

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Have you experienced something similar?
- Within academia, there are different views on professional competence and scientific methods. How can we create a constructive discourse on this?
- How can we work to ensure respect and tolerance for different occupational groups’ roles and competence in our meritocratic environment?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 20. A fun evening with colleagues

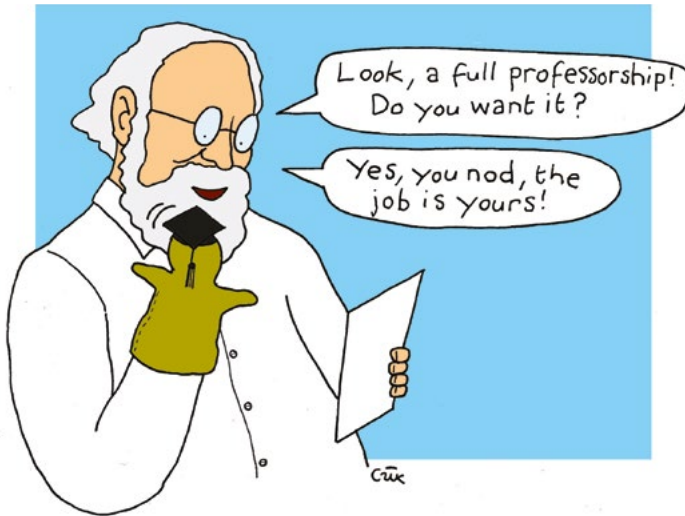
Anna is new on the job and naturally attends the nice staff party that her colleagues invite her to at Universitetsklubben. She thinks it fun to finally be at a workplace that likes to have a nice time together and takes care of the staff. Anna's previous experience of working in a public organisation was that the work duties were fun but the environment was quite reserved. When her new bosses are dancing and singing clever songs about this and that, she cannot resist the temptation to film the unusual phenomenon and post it with a happy comment on Instagram.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- What posts connected to work do you think are okay to put out on social media?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



# RECRUITMENT



## 21. Everyone knows everyone

A department is conducting research within a small research domain. There are a handful of professors in all of Sweden and a few more within the Nordic region. When a professorship is to be advertised, the department wants a recruitment process that is as fast, efficient and effective as possible. Subject specialists are appointed and it appears that they know the majority of the applicants well. They have collaborated on various projects and have met at scientific conferences, in addition to socialising privately in some cases. Three of the applicants are internal, of which two have family ties to other colleagues at the department.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- What can the University do to reduce the risk of conflict of interest in the review processes?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 22. Pragmatism versus laws and regulations

Senior lecturer Knut falls suddenly ill on the first day of term, which results in him not being able to give the course that has just started. So as not to negatively affect the students' situation, Head of Department Eva-Leena and human resources administrator Kristoffer try to find a quick solution.

Eva-Leena calls Isabelle who she knows can come in as teacher at short notice, and she is able to in this instance. They then quickly sign all necessary documents. According to applicable regulations and guidelines, the substitute position is to be advertised, but Eva-Leena and Kristoffer agree that it is most important that the needs of the students take priority.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Can one act pragmatically to resolve a situation even if it entails violating laws and regulations?
- How do you think the department should act?
- What core value principles are being challenged?





### 23. Handpicked employees

A department is going to hire a new administrator. Head of department Anita wants to hire Elisabeth whom she used to work with at another department, and she asks her to apply for the position. Anita then contacts Simon, who is the faculty's human resources specialist, and asks him to arrange it so that they can hire the person they want.

Simon is new as human resources specialist and is hesitant about the head of department's request, but at the same time he is eager to create good relationships with the heads of department and make a good impression in his new job.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How should Simon act?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 24. When you are ordered to violate laws and regulations...

Irina is the head of a department recruiting a researcher, and she is on the department's recruitment panel. The position has been advertised, and the external experts have ranked the candidates based on their merits and expertise. Sylvia is dean and chair of the faculty's appointment committee, which has decided that their first choice for the position is a researcher from the United States.

However, Irina has done a thorough check of references and has found out that the researcher has been prosecuted and convicted of a crime at his current workplace. She calls Sylvia and explains the information she has discovered.

"I hear what you are saying," Sylvia responds. "But I've already made my decision to go with the appointment committee's proposal. This person is a renowned researcher. He has significant external funding and will be a great addition to the University's research."

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Have you experienced something similar?
- Academic merits are sometimes weighed against personal characteristics, which can create a dilemma. Should we hire a researcher with high academic merits but low social merits?
- What is your experience with taking references? What weight should reference taking have in the process?
- How should Irina act?





# SERVICE AND SUPPORT

## 25. What is the most important thing to do?

Olof works as an administrator at a department and often feels stressed about all the duties he has and the fact that many colleagues expect him to prioritise their specific tasks. He attempts to examine his process and see how he actually prioritises things. Does he work his way through each case or task in the order they come in? Or does he try to assess what is most important or pressing?

Does he maybe prioritise colleagues with a high status or informal power? Or does he prioritise those he likes most because they are always nice? Or those he is most scared of, who get angry and go on about it?

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Have you experienced something similar?
- How do you think Olof should prioritise?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 26. The project ends up in limbo

A project group has been instructed to streamline, develop and coordinate an administrative process at the University. There are currently many infrequent users in this specific process. Through current situation analysis and scrutiny of the organisation, it is possible to identify how the process can be simplified and streamlined in several ways. The proposal elicits strong reactions. Many members of management feel that their organisation is special and that they have the right to independently organise and control their administration.

The management gets cold feet and the project ends up in limbo. No decision is made, nor is the project shut down.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How can the project group act?
- Many necessary reforms and development initiatives are put on hold when they meet resistance. Does everyone have to be on board for a streamlining initiative to be implemented?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 27. When the media wants “all” the information...

A journalist at VK approaches a department and asks to access all book-keeping of the employees’ travel and entertainment expenses for the past year. The journalist refers to the principle of public access and says she wants the information as soon as possible.

Head of department Håkan asks Peter, who is the department’s financial administrator, to produce the information. The journalist’s request entails a lot of work, and Peter, who is in the middle of working on the annual accounts, feels stressed. He asks the head of department if they really have to devote so much time to this? Can they not just say no?

The head of department says that they have to disclose the information and he mentions the principle of public access. However, he then asks Peter not to include the receipts from the department’s study trip to Budapest.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Have you experienced something similar?
- How should the financial administrator and the department act?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

# WORKING ENVIRONMENT

## 28. Do only senior academics have a right to influence?

Peter, Marina, Karim and Alexandra sit around the breakroom table and discuss the upcoming election of members to the Faculty Board.

“I don’t understand why I, as a lecturer, don’t get a vote,” says Peter. “I teach and I’m committed to developing our education. Why should my opinions and vote not count?”

“I think it’s natural that those of us with research qualifications get to vote,” answers Marina.

“Well we live in a democratic society where everyone has equal value,” says Alexandra. “Do you think that only certain people should get to vote in municipal and parliamentary elections too?”

“It’s not really comparable,” says Karim. “In scientific matters, those who are most qualified should get to decide!”

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- What do you see as advantages and disadvantages with only employees with a PhD getting to participate in nominating committees and voting in elections for the Faculty Board and teacher representatives on the University Board?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 29. Whose working environment is most important?

One department has invested in new creative environments for the students. On the floor there are soft rugs and the furniture is modern and inviting. The students are also really enjoying the pleasant environment. The cleaners and service assistants, whose work environment has suffered as a result, are less happy. The floor takes a lot longer to clean and the work also requires more physical exertion. Furthermore, the new furniture leaves ugly marks on the floor. The Service Office is disappointed that they have not been consulted in the discussions about the premises.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Is the working environment of the students and different staff groups equally important, or should one group be prioritised?
- How can we ensure that important target groups are given a voice in the planning of premises?
- Who should act and what should they do?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



### 30. Only half showed up...

The management of a department has invited all employees to an extended workplace meeting to discuss goals and activities relating to the entire department. The invitation has been sent out in good time, both orally and in writing, whereby the management has encouraged everyone to take part and has indicated that they have allocated department-wide time in the staffing plan. When the meeting starts, the management is very disappointed to see that only half of the employees have turned up. This is despite insistent calls for participation beginning some time back. A few have given valid reasons, but most have neither notified management of their absence nor given a reason for it.

“How is it that Johanna and Michel are never at our meetings?” wonders Maude, one of the employees who was at the meeting, while leaving the meeting room. “If I didn’t turn up I’d probably get an earful, but I guess they don’t...”

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Can the management of a department require that all employees prioritise taking part in work that concerns the common goals for the organisation?
- How can the individual employee balance their own goals and those of the organisation, for example, the requirement of research publication and the requirement of active participation in the organisation?
- How effective and valid are joint organisation-wide activities if the majority is not taking part?
- How do you think the management should act?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



### 31. The researcher who does not need to follow the rules

Anton is a popular and renowned researcher who, despite repeated requests and reminders from the University Library, has not returned borrowed books. There has been a queue for the books for a long time. Anton has now been suspended from borrowing further books and has also been billed for the books as these are now regarded as lost.

Anton storms up to the library reception, his face flushed with anger.

“What do you think you’re doing suspending me from the library?” he says angrily. “Don’t you know who I am and what I do?”

“Yes, of course we do, but the loan rules apply to you too,” says the librarian Elsa, trying to use a pleasant tone.

“You should know that my research domain is one of the most important here at the University. Of course I can’t follow your unreasonable loan rules! I need the books, and I don’t intend to return them or pay your stupid bill!” Anton says, almost shouting.

“We don’t give preferential treatment,” answers Elsa calmly. “Our rules apply to everyone!”

“I’m taking this further,” says Anton threateningly. “I’m going to contact the library director and my dean. They can help put a stop to this stupidity and have a serious talk with you.”

Elsa became unsure and at a loss for words.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Have you experienced something similar?
- How do you feel the librarian should act?
- Do we treat all occupational groups equally at the University?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/ HARASSMENT



### 32. Time to get these bastards out of Sweden!

Mats works at the University Library. One day while standing in reception, a man comes up to the desk. He is obstinate and loud and demands access to a private archive that is accessible for research purposes.

“Time to get these bastards out of Sweden!” says the man.

Mats knows that the archive contains information that may be sensitive if it ends up in the wrong hands.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How should Mats act?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

### 33. To be seen or not to be seen — on social media

Daniel teaches on several courses and often receives friend requests on Facebook and other social media from his students. The students are involved in placements at companies and in organisations during one of the terms, and Daniel sometimes also gets contact requests from their partners.

Daniel tries to be active and post interesting information on the course and on the department's research. However, recently he has felt some anxiety and a feeling of doubt has started to eat away at him. Increasingly he sees threads with condescending and disrespectful comments, and he wonders how he should react. Should he get involved in the discussion and introduce an alternative viewpoint? Does he have the time and energy for this? And if not, can this be perceived as him agreeing with this behaviour?

Many of his students also contact him via Facebook and Messenger and ask course-related questions. Is it unfair if he answers, considering that not everyone will get the same answer? Should he just interact with the students via the learning platform? Daniel feels stressed over the situation and is becoming increasingly uncertain.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- What counts as a public document? Is contact via social media the same as contact via email or phone? Has the media the right to request a conversation from a platform like Facebook?
- How would you act if you were Daniel?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

### **34. The study counsellor who does not want to be alone with male students**

Miryam is a devout Muslim and has recently been hired as a study counsellor. Prior to her first counselling meeting with a male student, she says to her superior Nils that, due to her religion, she does not want to be alone when meeting a man she does not know. Nils is surprised as he has taken for granted that Miryam has understood that her work entails providing guidance to all types of people. He says that they are unable to make an exception for her and that the role of study counsellor means that she will be counselling both women and men. Miryam is upset and reports Nils for discrimination on religious grounds.

#### **Discussion**

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- What rights has Miryam to refuse to counsel men?
- What rights has her superior in requiring her to counsel all types of people?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

### 35. A teacher feels abused

Yusef teaches on a programme. Recently he has encountered many condescending comments from a small group of students during class. He has also received abusive emails that refer to both his ethnicity and his teaching methods.

“Typical of your kind to be corrupt and allow yourself to be bribed in return for giving good grades,” reads the latest email.

Yusef is upset and troubled, and he wonders how he should act and where he can turn for support.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Have you experienced something similar?
- How do you think Yusef should act?
- Where should Yusef turn?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

### 36. Abuse in the classroom

A few weeks into term, the teacher Kim receives an email from the student Miguel. Miguel feels that one of the other students in the group cannot accept his sexual orientation, and he therefore wants to switch groups for the ongoing group work. Kim has thus far not received any information indicating that there is a problem in the student group, but she thinks it is a reasonable request and lets the student switch groups. When the group work is to be presented, Miguel contacts Kim again. He is reluctant to present the group work for the entire class as the students who previously made derogatory comments usually roll their eyes and do other things to express their criticism during the presentations.

Kim consults with her director of studies and is told that these problems are well known and that there have been discussions with the students involved during previous courses.

“Why has no one told me this?” says Kim, irritated. “Then I could have handled the situation much better.”

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How should one act in the classroom if a student is abusive in their speech or behaviour?
- How should the situation be handled in a more long-term perspective? The students might be on the same programme for several years.
- Who is responsible when the students continuously change departments and thereby also change course coordinators and directors of studies?
- Our students should be prepared for the workplace after graduating. How should we, as a university and authority that awards qualifications, deal with those students who will be working with people in their future occupations but who have shown a lack of respect for people’s equal value during their time at the University?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



# EXERCISE OF PUBLIC AUTHORITY



### 37. The big IT event

Anna, who works as a procurement officer with specific responsibility for the IT area, is invited by a major supplier of IT products to a very lavish event. The event includes performances by popular artists, good food, and all participants get a goodie bag full of IT products. Everything is free.

Anna is well aware of the university's policy that the University will only pay for and approve hours for external activities that benefit the organisation. She realises that the benefit of attending is negligible if not entirely non-existent, but decides that she can take a vacation day and attend the event privately. The press are covering the event and Anna ends up in a picture on the front page with a glass in one hand and the CEO of the IT company by her side.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- What would you do if you were Anna?
- When are we private and when are we public civil servants?
- What demands can we make regarding how a university employee acts in their free time?
- How do you think Anna's superior should react upon seeing the article?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

### 38. VIP treatment for big shots?

The University has procured a new mobile phone contract. The contract is viewed by many to be worse than the previous one, and it is heavily criticised. Among other things, the new operator cannot offer the same coverage as before. However, it is not possible to tear up the contract and find a new operator.

Some individuals with executive positions are among those voicing criticism, and they demand that they be exempt from the procured contract.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How should an individual civil servant act if they are ordered to break the rules by a superior?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

### 39. The international conference

Three colleagues at an office are invited to an international conference in Romania to present their organisation. The conference fee includes lunch and a conference dinner. Each person books their own trip via the university's travel agents.

Adam logs onto the travel agent's web service and books the cheapest trip, even if the times are not optimal. Britta and Sigurd also use the travel agent's web service but instead book a significantly more expensive flight with another airline, allowing them better flight times and a complementary lunch and wifi access.

All three are staying at the conference hotel in single rooms with breakfast included. Sigurd holds his presentation on the first day of the conference and disappears for the remainder of the conference, not even turning up for the conference dinner. Adam felt that the dinner was not filling enough so he went and had another meal at a restaurant later that evening.

On the flight home, Sigurd is clearly happy to tell his colleagues about how much work he got done. He has visited a colleague and planned a new course which will start next week. He thought the conference was mediocre.

When they return, each of them submits travel expenses. Adam adds the cost of a taxi ride and ticks that no meals were covered, even though he took part in the big conference dinner. Britta claims compensation for the airport bus cost. Sigurd states that he paid for all the meals himself.

#### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- When is it acceptable to book a more expensive trip?
- How much do you feel you have to participate in a conference to justify the trip?
- Is it okay to work with something else when at a conference?
- How should the travel expenses from conferences be checked, and by whom?
- How do you think a superior would react if informed of this?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

#### 40. Don't shoot the messenger

Jörgen is an administrator at a faculty office. He is often charged with implementing decisions made by someone higher up in the organisation. At times, these decisions cause dissatisfaction among employees and heads of department at the faculty, and Jörgen is left to take a lot of criticism and frustration. He then feels unfairly treated. He feels he is being blamed for rules decided by others and is told he is not service-minded when he is simply doing his job. Furthermore, he is unable to defend himself as it is his job to forward decisions and be loyal in doing so, even if he sometimes thinks they are wrong.

Jörgen feels caught between being loyal to the management in their decisions and measures and being receptive to the needs and expectations of the departments, an equation that never seems to add up.

##### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Have you experienced something similar?
- How can Jörgen handle the challenges in his situation?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



#### 41. It's cheaper to buy in town!

Peter is the head of an office and wants to buy a new sofa for the staff room. The old one is tattered and stained. He finds a nice and robust sofa at a good price in a local furniture shop. When he checks with Public Procurement and Purchase, however, this shop is not contracted, so instead Peter is referred to the contracted companies that sell office furniture. The sofas the company sells are significantly more expensive than the one Peter found. Peter is indignant and asks what his office and the University have to gain by buying a more expensive product.

##### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Sometimes the existing rules can be perceived as counterproductive. How do you think Peter should have acted?
- How should the public procurement officer act?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

# THE OUTSIDE WORLD/SOCIETY

## 42. The University — a real dump!

In recent years, the tone on social media has become increasingly aggressive. University employees are not exempt from this and they express themselves drastically and condescendingly regarding colleagues, competitors or other public institutions. In one example from Twitter, an employee referred to the University as a dump and said: “It doesn’t matter how many of us burn out or quit as long as the targets are reached.”

Another employee criticised his colleagues and superiors on Facebook and described them as dictators and worthless losers sitting on their fat asses and lying and abusing others while the taxpayers foot the bill.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Do we as university employees have the right to express ourselves as we wish when we feel unfairly treated?
- How should the executives at the department respond to this type of post on social media?
- Are you acting as a university employee or a private person if you express yourself regarding your workplace and your colleagues on social media?
- Is there a difference in what is acceptable to engage in on social media depending on what role/title you have?
- What core value principles are being challenged?





### 43. Researcher Anneli is often seen in the media

Anneli is a successful researcher who is often seen in the media. She is personable and pedagogical and has the ability to reach out through the medium of radio and television. She is also active on social media and has an Instagram account where she posts the latest developments in her research. In this way she has managed to reach out to a wide audience with her research findings. It has also made her popular among journalists.

She has therefore recently been asked about everything from climate change to geriatric care, areas outside her field of research. With regard to geriatric care, she talks about her experience with her elderly and frail parents not receiving appropriate care. In this context she is also referred to as a researcher. She has now been criticised by colleagues who feel she is mixing up her roles as a researcher and private person.

#### Discussion

- The free formation of opinion is of interest when researchers participate in a public societal debate. All employees have the right to express their opinions as private persons. But where is the boundary between being a researcher or civil servant at a university and being a private person?
- What problems can arise when
  - a researcher expresses an opinion within areas other than where they conduct research?
  - a researcher is a politician and researcher at the same time?
  - a researcher runs or has interests in a company or other organisation?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

#### 44. Public interest creates a heavy workload

A department is conducting research that relates to minority groups in Sweden. As the department is one of few with this research focus among Swedish higher education institutions, they receive many questions from other researchers and the general public. The questions can range from the very specific to the extremely broad and general. The employees at the department always try to answer questions that are relevant from the perspective of the organisation, and other questions are referred to other public bodies. For some types of questions, this is a simple process, but others require serious investigative work.

In recent years, public and media interest in minority issues has increased, and although the department wants to encourage this interest, it takes far too much time away from the other activities. The employees feel inadequate and wonder how they can prioritise.

##### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- How should the employees prioritise?
- Could the department be paid for the additional work, and if so, when and how?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 45. Fruitful collaboration?

A research group has received an assignment from a successful Swedish corporate group. The assignment will mean a large contribution to the budget for the next few years. The researchers are also offered workplaces at one of the offices and are invited to various employee activities. A close and fruitful collaboration between researchers and company leaders develop, and it turns out the people involved also have several private interests in common.

The first year has now passed and the first stage is to be presented to the corporate management. After the presentation, the most senior manager expresses his dissatisfaction with their, in his mind, incorrect conclusions and their unnecessarily severe criticism. He threatens to retract the research funding unless they reassess their results.

### Discussion

- What is problematic in this situation?
- How do you think the researchers' objectivity is affected in this situation?
- How do you think the researchers should act in this situation?
- How can we prevent similar situations?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 46. Employee tips off the media

Hasse is a registrar and best friend with Jonas who is a journalist at the local newspaper. In his role as registrar, Hasse comes across a lot of information that the media is not always aware exists, although they often look for news in the registry.

At one of the departments at the University, there is an infected work-related conflict that involves many employees, which results in calling in an external consultant to conduct an occupational health and safety investigation. When the expert delivers his results, Hasse contacts his friend at the newspaper and tells him that the investigation is now available as a public record. The friend immediately asks for a copy and the issue is covered in the newspaper the following day.

The faculty board is caught by surprise. They had invited all employees to a meeting the following day to present the results of the investigation and the planned measures. They now realise that the conflict at the department will be exacerbated after the employees find out about the content of the investigation from the newspaper rather than at the planned information meeting.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- Why does Hasse act the way he does?
- Could it sometimes be morally justifiable to release internal documents on unsatisfactory conditions to the media, or is it always unacceptable?
- Freedom of speech and protection of “whistle-blowers” relate to everyone. Should we still expect greater loyalty from certain occupational groups such as registrars, legal officers, human resources specialists and people in similar positions?
- What core value principles are being challenged?

## 47. Cut off at the ankles

Petra is an experienced coordinator at a faculty office. She has been entrusted with the task of running a faculty-wide project and is now presenting the results from the first part of the project to the faculty management. The faculty management is very pleased with the presentation, the results and the conclusions and expresses no objections. Ingrid is one of the members of the faculty management who does not participate in the meeting.

The next step is to hold the same presentation to the faculty board, which includes many influential professors. When Petra finishes her presentation, Ingrid asks to speak. She is very critical towards both the presentation and the conclusions and she conveys her opinions in a way that Petra finds both condescending and disrespectful.

None of the other members of the faculty management, who had previously been positive, supports Petra or mention that they had previously approved of Petra's work.

Petra leaves the meeting with a sense of failure and feels belittled. She has also lost interest in continuing to run the project.

### Discussion

- What do you think is problematic in this situation?
- What conscious and unconscious values do you find characterise the meeting?
- Do you find that administrative members of staff are treated with as much respect as academic staff?
- Is there anything Petra could have done - before, during or after the meeting?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



# NEW DILEMMAS 2024

## 48. When your colleague steals your research idea

Casper is a newly appointed associate professor who is taking part in discussions about a research project funded by his colleague Amanda. They write an article together, which inspires Casper to come up with his own question that could further develop the current research topic. He submits a project application, which is approved. Amanda now accuses Casper of stealing her ideas. She believes that Casper would not have come up with his question if he had not been invited to participate in Amanda's project.

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- How would you act if you were Amanda?
- What are your thoughts on Casper's behaviour?







#### 49. One for all – all for one?

Marcus is a senior lecturer but chooses not to get involved in anything other than his own work, as he wants to expand his qualifications and use his limited professional development time to develop his own research. He justifies his choice by saying that he must prioritise his time to have a sustainable work situation and points out that we all have academic freedom. He also argues that it is good for the department to have more qualified researchers.

##### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- What does his choice mean for colleagues?
- What does peer responsibilities mean to you?



## 50. When questionable wording is approved

A team of teachers is discussing how to develop the range of courses offered and Johannes makes a proposal that everyone likes. Johannes is tasked with writing the syllabus and is very pleased with the final version. When Kathryn, the director of studies, prepares the new syllabus for approval by the head of department, she reacts to some of the wording. Johannes is competent in his field, but there is some wording that could be misconstrued or even be offensive. Kathryn discusses some suggested revisions with Johannes, but he refuses to change the wording in the syllabus because he doesn't think it can be misunderstood.

The head of department decides to establish the course and the syllabus is approved. When the syllabus is published, Johannes, Kathryn, the head of department and the faculty's programme director are contacted by several colleagues who question the quality assurance of the department's education as the approved syllabus has such questionable wording. Johannes is upset by his colleagues' comments and doesn't understand why they want to change the syllabus. Do they want to cancel "his" course, perhaps? Kathryn's attitude is "I told you so..."

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- What do you think Kathryn should do?
- What do you think Johannes should do?
- What do you think the head of department should do?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 51. The impatient student

Joar is the director of studies for a programme with clinical placements throughout the region. Yesterday, he received feedback from the various clinical placements, informing him which students passed and which failed. Everyone passed except Victoria, and Joar decides to call the supervisor at the clinic to find out more about what happened.

Miriyam, who has been Victoria's supervisor, says that they really tried to make Victoria feel comfortable and enable her to develop, but that she has shown a lack of interest and been dismissive throughout the placement. She has found it difficult to listen and take instructions and has often become defensive. The most difficult thing to deal with has been Victoria's behaviour towards patients, as she has often been irritable, lacks patience and is sometimes perceived as rude.

When Victoria learnt that she had failed, she had also called Miriyam and more or less scolded her, calling her incompetent.

Joar decides to book a meeting with Victoria to talk about her experience from the placement. He is wondering how to have the discussion.

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- How should Joar handle the situation?
- How can similar situations be prevented?



## 52. The persistent student

Alice is fairly new to the role of director of studies when Linus, a teacher, asks to speak to her. Linus tells her about his student Kim, who has required a lot of time and energy throughout the semester. Kim constantly interrupts classes with critical questions and comments about word choice. “From the beginning of the semester it felt interesting and stimulating,” says Linus, but as the semester has progressed, both he and the other students have begun to tire. Many of the other students have come to Linus and told him that Kim does not contribute to group work, often expresses herself offensively to other students and is generally impossible to work with. Alice realises that she needs to have a conversation with Kim but doesn’t know how to go about it.

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- How do you think Alice should handle the situation?
- How can similar situations be prevented?

### 53. Just take your nose ring out!

Adam is on a nursing programme and has recently completed a clinical placement at a hospital in a neighbouring county. During his placement, Adam was repeatedly patronised by both colleagues and patients because of his brightly coloured hair and piercings.

Meanwhile, he was praised for his excellent treatment of patients.

Feeling sad and disappointed, Adam decides to talk to his teacher Solveig about how he has been treated and what he has been told.

Solveig listens but says that he should expect such comments if he intends to continue with his challenging appearance.

#### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- What do you think Solveig should do?
- What do you think Adam should do?
- What core value principles are being challenged?





#### 54. To be or not to be – politically correct

Elena is attending an academic programme. She has been asked to participate in an interview, which will be published on the University's website. Elena contacts her teacher Anna and shows her the questions she has been given to respond to in writing. One of the questions is about what inspires her during periods of intense studies. In Elena's response, she explains that her main source of inspiration is a well-known author and podcaster. Anna is familiar with the author, who is controversial and holds extreme conservative views and who often makes disparaging remarks in public about feminism and homosexuals.

##### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- What do you think Anna should do?

## 55. Totally ignored

Louise has been working at a department for just over six months. From the beginning, everyone was very welcoming and made sure she was included in various events. Lately, Louise has begun feeling increasingly excluded.

One day, a large group of her colleagues are having lunch together, but no one asks her to join them.

When she asks a question or makes a suggestion at a workplace meeting, no one listens. Some of her colleagues don't even greet Louise when they meet in the corridor. Louise is sad and wonders what she did wrong.

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- What do you think Louise should do?
- What responsibilities do her colleagues have?
- What responsibilities does her manager have?
- What core value principles are being challenged?





## 56. Our maid has quit

When Amanda enters the break room late one afternoon and see that the sink is full of dirty dishes and the dishwasher is full of clean dishes. She is dejected and fed up. In recent weeks she has emptied and filled the dishwasher many times. Is she the only one who cares? She loses her temper and puts up a note: “Our maid has quit! Who’s going to do the washing up now?”

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- What do you think Amanda should do?
- Is there a long-term solution to the situation?
- Who is responsible for ensuring that the common areas at the workplace are addressed, including the washing up?
- How are non-core work duties distributed in your workplace?



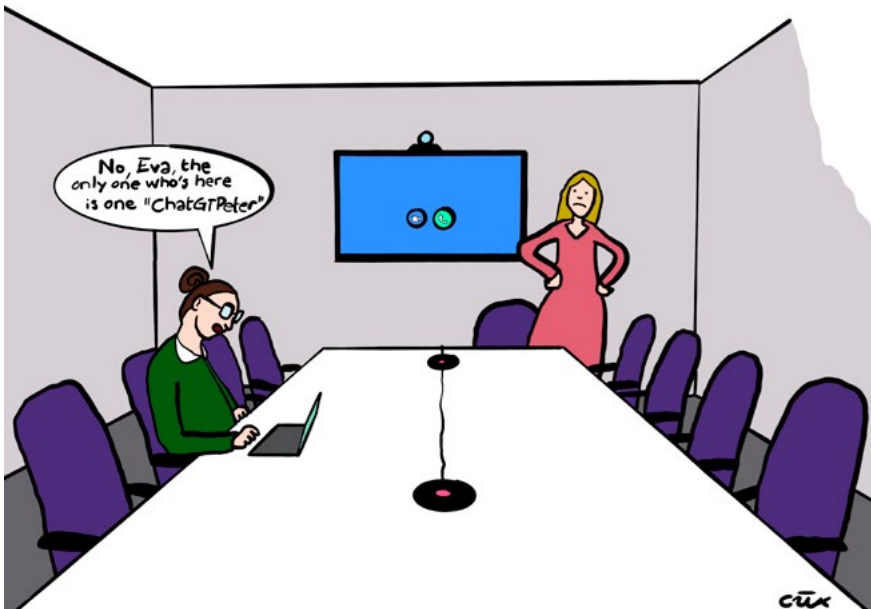
## 57. I wasn't informed about anything!

One department has introduced Teams as its main communication channel. The invitation to an upcoming workplace meeting is sent out in the channel. However, several members of staff never turn up to the meeting and the head of department (Åsa) wonders if the channel is working.

Lisa, the administrator, has put a lot of work into building the Teams channel and drawing up communication guidelines. She feels frustrated that her colleagues are not following the agreement to stay informed through the channel. Is she expected to take regular responsibility for something that is the responsibility of others?

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- What do you think the head of department should do?
- What do you think Lisa should do?





### 58. We've tried that before; it doesn't work!

The results of the employee satisfaction survey have brought both praise and criticism. Linda is the new head of department and has set aside a lot of time for the department's planning day to work through the results. Staff are divided into groups and asked to discuss what can be done to increase well-being and a sense of involvement in the department.

The groups work enthusiastically on the issues, except for one group where Bengt and Monika, in a patronising tone, questioned every proposal put forward by the others in the group.

When all the groups reconvene to present their proposals, Bengt and Monika continue to make patronising comments and question everything:

"We've tried that before; it doesn't work."

"Why should we bother with this nonsense; we should talk about our research instead."

The previously enthusiastic mood turns to discouragement and the enthusiastic staff members fall silent.

#### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- What should the head of department do?
- What should the other members of staff do?

## 59. Only professors are given flowers on their 60th birthday

Kim is an administrator in a department. She noticed that Göran, who has worked as a research engineer at the department for a long time, is about to turn 60 and tells the head of department that she can order flowers for Göran.

“No,” says the head of department. “Göran is not a professor. We only give flowers to professors who are celebrating a major birthday.”

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- What should the head of department do?
- What should Kim do?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 60. What is okay and not okay?

Discuss what is okay and not okay to say or do in the workplace.  
Feel free to use the toolbox for core value discussions.

### What is okay to say to a colleague?

Are you pregnant?

Wouldn't you feel better if you lost some weight?

You looked better with long hair.

You look great now that you've lost weight!

You've gotten so thin; it doesn't suit you.

That colour really suits you!

Nice jumper!

Oh, you smell so good!

Why don't you speak better Swedish after having lived in Sweden for so long?





### What is okay to do?

Standing very close in the queue at the coffee shop?

Picking hairs off a colleague's clothes?

Flirting in innocent ways?

Massaging a colleague's shoulders without being asked?

#### Discussion

- What do you think is okay to say and what is not okay to say?
- What behaviour do you feel is okay and what behaviour is not okay?
- Does it matter who says what and does what in the example?
- How does gender, age, sexual orientation or position in the organisation play a role?
- Are there other factors that can influence what is okay and not okay?



## 61. Aren't you charming!

Yasmine has long been frustrated that the department's workplace meetings are often poorly planned and unstructured. Often a lot of time is spent on less important issues, leaving no time for what many people think is most important to discuss. Yasmine musters the courage to raise the problem with the head of department, Björn at an appointment. She prepares in advance to describe her experience of the meetings in a constructive and clear way. She has also developed some concrete suggestions on how the meetings could be organised to increase participation.

She feels a bit nervous about the meeting, but it goes well and she feels that the head of department listened sympathetically and that they had a fruitful discussion.

"Now you've provided your opinions in a responsible and charming way!" Björn says in conclusion, leaning back with a smile.

Yasmine feels belittled and wonders what made him call her charming and not constructive. Did she perhaps tilt her head during the discussion?

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- What would you do if you were Yasmine?
- What would you do if you were Björn?

## 62. Nobody seems to listen to Mira

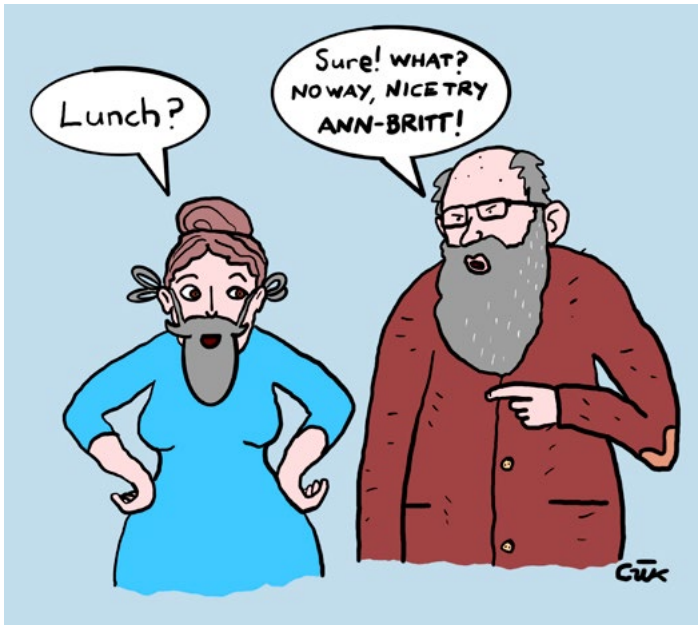
Mira is a PhD student and part of a research team led by Professor Erik. The group meets regularly to discuss current issues within the research project and to plan future work. However, Mira feels increasingly uncomfortable at the meetings. When she asks to speak, other meeting participants often start flipping through their papers and studying their calendars. She feels like they are totally uninterested in what she has to say. She tries to make eye contact with Erik, but he seems more interested in something on his computer.

Mira starts to doubt herself and wonders if she is too vague and uses too low a tone of voice when speaking, or if the others simply don't like her.

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Could a similar situation arise in your department?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- Is it acceptable to read and reply to emails during a meeting?
- What do you think Mira should do?
- How should the other participants behave?
- How can similar situations be prevented?





### 63. Men's Club at Universum

A group of professors, who are men, usually have lunch together at Universum. Recently, another professor, who is a man, was hired, and he has already been invited to attend the lunches. The department's two professors, who are women, have never been asked to join the group and do not feel welcome in the male community.

#### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- How should the professors, who are women, react?
- What can the department do to become an inclusive workplace?



## 64. Does family always come first?

The Master's Programme Planning Group meets at the end of February. Fredrik is responsible for preparing the material for the meeting. However, he comes to the meeting without any material.

"I feel like it's bad manners to not prepare what you promised," says his colleague Kerstin. "It will be some time before we manage to find a time when everyone can attend again. How are we going to prepare the programme in time?"

"Unfortunately, I have not had time to prepare the material because my children have had winter sports holiday. But it may be difficult for you to understand, as you do not have children," says Fredrik.

### Discussion

- What do you consider the problem in this situation?
- Have you been involved in a similar situation?
- What should Kerstin do?
- What should Fredrik do?
- How can similar situations be prevented?





## 65. I am a senior physician...

I am a senior physician...

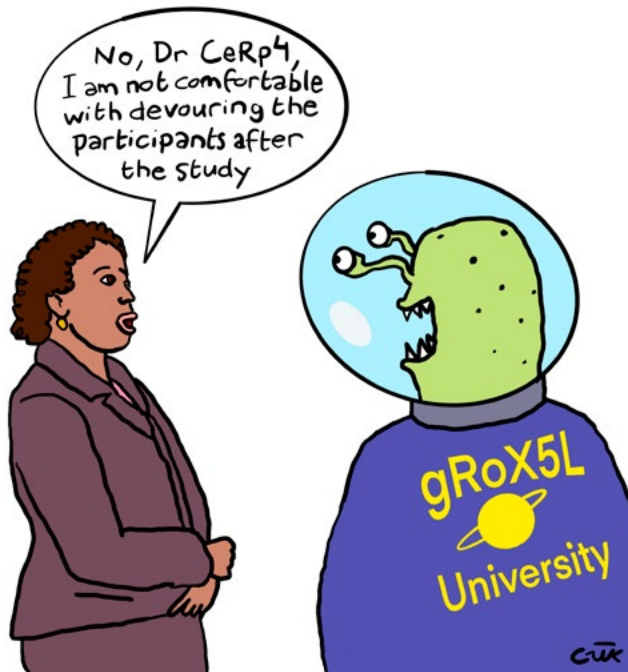
I am a journalist at DN...

I am a member of the municipal council...

It is not uncommon for family members, employers or other related individuals to attempt to influence a decision affecting a loved one, claiming that their position entitles them to advantages. This includes recruitment or admission to courses and programmes. Trying to influence a decision inappropriately is considered corruption.

### Discussion

- How would you react if you received such a call?
- What can you say?
- What should you not say?
- What core value principles are being challenged?



## 66. Should you just accept local customs?

Sometimes the norms and standards at universities in other countries are different from what we consider important. This includes hierarchical organisations where lower-ranking staff are patronised and women are not treated equally to men.

It can be difficult to know how to handle different situations that may arise when working with these universities. The question is whether we should take the high road and pretend like nothing happened or whether we should try to take a stand.

### Discussion

- When can and should the University take a stand?
- When can and should the University question collaborations?
- How should staff working with other universities deal with situations that may arise due to differences in norms and standards?

Umeå University's core values are characterised by three academic core values: academic freedom, academic collegiality and academic integrity. The University is also a government authority which means the central government's basic values apply to our activities.

As an employee both at a higher education institution and a public authority, you must navigate between different values and expectations. At Umeå University, you are to follow the laws and rules, the central government's basic values and the academic core values on which we base our work. But different principles can sometimes conflict with each other and, when this occurs, how should you act? Based on the law or effectively? How does objectivity align with free formation of opinion, and academic freedom with political governance? These are the types of conflicts that we each must consider and resolve in our daily work.

The second part of the book, which we call Everyday dilemmas, has 66 different dilemmas to discuss, for example, at workplace meetings and planning days. Regular discussions about our core values allow us to better respond to difficult situations and promote a good workplace culture. This will make it easier when dilemmas arise in the reality.



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