



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY 2022–2025

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¹ This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.



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1. Description

This document describes the strategy for the work on gender mainstreaming.

2. Background

The Swedish government has assigned Umeå University² with the task to continue its work on gender mainstreaming to ensure the organisation achieves the gender equality policy goals. Each higher education institution (HEI) is to work on an institution-specific plan based on development needs, goals and activities that the HEI intends to implement and which describes how gender equality will be integrated and form part of the HEI's regular activities.

Umeå University's vision includes a clear ambition to ensure that gender equality permeates the entire organisation and for students and staff to be able to study and work at the University on equal terms. On this basis, and to ensure the inclusion of the entire organisation in Umeå University's gender mainstreaming strategy, this document is based on a problem analysis carried out by each of the University's faculties, the Umeå School of Education, the University Administration and the University Library in 2021. The work was completed in cooperation with the trade unions and student unions.

3. Identified problem areas

The gender equality policy goals highlight the issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve an equal society and university, free from discrimination and harassment. The work on gender mainstreaming requires specialised knowledge in order to understand the factors that affect and lead to inequality. The key to successful change management is a thorough analysis of the organisation clarifying the fundamental issue. If the management and staff are aware of what creates unequal power relationships, adequate measures can be put in place to counteract gender inequality. The key is to distinguish between the consequence of a problem and the problem itself. With this as a starting point, the problem areas identified by the organisations have been categorised under the Swedish government's gender equality policy sub-goals.

Each organisation's description of their identified problem areas can be found in Annexes 1–7.

Equal division of power and influence

The first sub-goal of the gender equality policy is to achieve an equal division of power and influence in society. Women and men must have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making in all sectors of society. The goal also encompasses the division of power outside the formal democratic system, for example in civil society, industry and the media. Additionally, it focuses on equal opportunities for women and men to participate in and influence the processes that shape our perceptions, thoughts and ideas in media, culture, research, popular education and educational systems.³

² Appropriation directives for the 2021 financial year with regard to higher education institutions.

³ Sweden's gender equality policy, [the Swedish Gender Equality Agency](#).



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Under the sub-goal of equal division of power and influence, Umeå University has identified problem areas at every stage of the academic career. This includes a gender imbalance in different positions such as professorships, where there is a higher percentage of men than women. A structure has also been identified in which certain tasks are valued and distributed differently according to male- and female-coded tasks and subject areas. There is a gender imbalance in leadership roles, such as heads of department, programme coordinators, directors of studies, members of research councils etc., which in turn leads to an uneven division of power and influence. It has also been identified that women are generally lagging behind on the academic career path, and there is a lack of knowledge of gender equality and gender mainstreaming issues.

Economic equality

The second sub-goal of the gender equality policy is economic equality. Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to paid work, which give economic independence throughout life. The main focus of the sub-goal on economic equality is on the financial conditions of women and men as individuals. The sub-goal focuses on the distribution of economic resources between women and men to ensure they have the same opportunities and conditions in terms of employment, wages and other working conditions, including development opportunities at work. Paid work should not only provide economic security during working life, but it should also bring economic security and independence in retirement.⁴

Under the goal of economic equality, Umeå University has identified a discrepancy between women and men's opportunities, with men being at an advantage when it comes to professional development, career paths and wages. For example, this is reflected in the gender imbalance observed in different positions and the lack of clear career paths and professional development for technical and administrative staff, the majority of whom are women. The opportunities for wage growth are therefore also limited.

Equal education

The third sub-goal of the gender equality policy is equal education. Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education and training, study choices and personal development. They must have equal opportunities to cultivate interests, ambitions and to reach their full potential without being hindered by structures, prejudices and gender-based stereotypes.⁵

There is an uneven gender distribution among students at the University, which varies according to the subject area. Harmful gender norms in education and inequality in teaching materials have also been identified.

Equal division of unpaid housework and provision of care

The fourth sub-goal of the gender equality policy is an equal division of unpaid housework and provision of care. Women and men must have equal responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to provide and receive care on equal terms. The sub-goal not only covers the division of unpaid work between heterosexual couples in a household, but refers to the division of unpaid work between women and men across society.⁶

⁴ Sweden's gender equality policy, [the Swedish Gender Equality Agency](#).

⁵ Sweden's gender equality policy, [the Swedish Gender Equality Agency](#).

⁶ Sweden's gender equality policy, [the Swedish Gender Equality Agency](#).



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Under this sub-goal, the University has identified the problem area referred to as academic housework. Women are more likely to carry out activities that are undefined, indefinite or invisible in terms of staffing in the academic work context, leading to increased workloads and occupational ill-health among women, as well as slowing down the academic careers of female associate professors.

Equal health

The third sub-goal of the gender equality policy is equal health. Women and men must have the same conditions for good health and be offered healthcare on equal terms. The sub-goal encompasses physical, mental and sexual/reproductive health, as well as preventive public health work such as measures and initiatives for individuals with regard to social services, support and services for people with disabilities as well as healthcare.⁷

With regard to this sub-goal, there is a biased gender distribution in certain positions at the University which leads to an unequal workload within working groups. Gender differences are also experienced in the organisational and social work environments. When it comes to equal health, it is a warning sign that a higher proportion of women than men are on long-term sick leave at the University.

Men's violence against women must stop

The sixth sub-goal of the gender equality policy is for men's violence against women to stop. Women and men, girls and boys, must have the same rights and opportunities to physical integrity. The sub-goal covers all expressions of mental and physical violence, including sexual and honour-related violence, violence and threats of violence targeting women and girls. The sub-goal also has a special focus on the link between masculinity and violence. The sub-goal also covers harassment, threats and other types of violence that occur online and via other digital channels.⁸

With regards to this sub-goal, the identified problem areas show that, at the University, from the perspective of its responsibility as an employer as well as an education provider, there is a lack of knowledge and awareness of men's violence against women. The different organisations also reported experiences of unsafe environments and incidents of sexual harassment as problems.

4. Goals

The problem areas identified and linked to the gender equality policy goals highlight the shortcomings that need to be addressed in order to achieve an equal society and University free from discrimination and harassment. Therefore, the University has developed two overarching goals:

- All managers and employees are to have knowledge of what contributes to unequal power relationships from a gender equality perspective.
- At Umeå University, there are to be no forms of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation.

⁷ Sweden's gender equality policy, [the Swedish Gender Equality Agency](#).

⁸ Sweden's gender equality policy, [the Swedish Gender Equality Agency](#).



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The University has more than 4 700 employees and approximately 37 000 students, which means that the challenges and conditions differ between organisations. In addition to university-wide goals, further goals will be developed based on each organisation's individually identified problem areas. In this way, the work on gender equality can be integrated and adapted to the individual conditions and needs of each organisation. By working in this way, the hope is for the organisations to operate equally and fairly, which in turn contributes to an equal society.

5. Measures

In their operational plans for 2023–2025, the organisations will develop goals and measures based on identified problem areas and describe how the goals and measures are to be followed up. The organisations will also develop measures based on the university-wide goals. The work is to be documented and carried out in cooperation with the trade unions and student unions.

The measures are to focus on the factors that lead to power inequality, and not on the group that is adversely affected or wronged. This is crucial in order to achieve change. Measures can be both quantitative and qualitative. In particular, quantitative measures are aimed at achieving a balanced gender distribution between men and women in positions of power, for example, in the distribution of research funds and in education. Representation is part of the work on gender equality, but qualitative measures are also needed to change power structures and cultures that help to maintain inequality and limit the conditions, circumstances and opportunities of women, men and other groups.⁹

6. Follow-up and evaluation

Umeå University's work on gender mainstreaming is to be reported on within the framework of its annual report to the Swedish government. The work will be followed up on through dialogue between the organisations and the University Management. Prior to the presentation of each annual report, the Human Resources Office will also request documentation demonstrating the results and impacts in relation to the goals and measures that are set. Where possible, this follow-up is to be reported on, analysed and assessed in relation to gender disaggregated data (legal gender).

⁹ The Swedish Gender Equality Agency's guidance for the planning and organising of work on gender mainstreaming.