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universitet

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## Guidelines for disciplinary matters at Stockholm University

### 1. Regulations

In order to avoid confusion in relation to examinations or similar situations, it is important that students are given information at an early stage about the courses and how these will be examined. In addition, it is important that students and employees are familiar with the University's regulations concerning education and examinations, as well as the regulations concerning disciplinary matters and measures in the Higher Education Ordinance; see Book 2 of the Rules & Regulations.

Disciplinary measures are regulated by Chapter 10 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) and may be taken against students who:

- use unauthorised aids or other methods to attempt to mislead during examinations or other forms of student performance assessment;
- disrupt or obstruct teaching, examinations, or other activities related to courses and study programmes at the higher education institution;
- disrupt activities in the library or other special functions at the higher education institution;
- subject another student or employee at the higher education institution to harassment or sexual harassment of the kind described in Chapter 1, Section 4 of the Discrimination Act (2008:567). In addition to sexual harassment, this encompasses harassment on the basis of gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other faith, disability, sexual orientation or age.

Disciplinary action may not be taken more than two years after the offence was committed.

In accordance with Chapter 1, Section 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance, "student" refers to a person admitted to and participating in higher education at Stockholm University. Thus, a participant in contract education does not count as a student.



Under the Discrimination Act, the University must, upon learning that a student claims to have been subjected to harassment and/or sexual harassment, investigate the circumstances surrounding the allegations. In such cases, always contact the University's coordinator for equal treatment.

Certain types of disciplinary offences, such as disruptive behaviour (threats or violence), victimisation (harassment, sexual harassment or hate crimes), forgery or false certification, may also fall under the penal code and lead to criminal charges. The decision to report cases of forgery or false certification to the police is usually made by the Vice-Chancellor following a review by the Disciplinary Committee. When it comes to threats, violence, harassment or hate crimes, the matter should be reported to the police by the targeted individual. The Section for Safety and Security can provide assistance with reporting a matter to the police.

Severe offences may also lead to the matter being referred to the Higher Education Expulsions Board.

## **2. Procedure for dealing with disciplinary matters**

All employees at Stockholm University are obliged to report disciplinary matters. Each department (or equivalent) must have a person responsible for investigating suspicions of disciplinary offences. This person is normally the head of department or director of studies. All suspicions of disciplinary offences must be reported immediately to the head of department or someone appointed by the head to deal with such matters. The main responsibility for ensuring that the matter is properly investigated lies with the public authority, not with the individual. The department must thus investigate the matter in sufficient detail to determine whether the suspicion is well-founded.

Suspicions must be based on objective grounds, not merely subjective intuition. However, even a suspicion based on very little factual evidence may be sufficient to write a report. Please note that in cases of misleading conduct, the matter should only be reported if the offence occurred in connection with examinations or other forms of student performance assessment, not when submitting a draft or similar.

If the department determines that there are grounds to suspect that a disciplinary offence has occurred, the department should, under normal circumstances, contact the student to explain that an investigation is underway and hear the student's version of events. This should be done before the matter is reported to the Vice-Chancellor. When multiple students are involved, for example, in cases of unauthorised collaboration or when a student is suspected of plagiarising the work of another student, the department should let both students give their account. If any uncertainties or questions arise during the investigation, the department should contact the case administrator at the Strategic Planning and Vice-Chancellor's Office.

Until the matter is resolved, the student may continue to participate in instruction, examinations, and other activities related to his or her studies. Disciplinary action may not be taken at the department level; such decisions should always be made by the Vice-Chancellor or the Disciplinary Committee.

If the department determines that there is a well-founded suspicion of a disciplinary offence, the matter should be promptly reported to the Vice-Chancellor. This means that disciplinary matters should be given high priority. The report should be addressed to the Vice-Chancellor but sent digitally as a PDF file to the registrar. If the student does not speak Swedish, the report should be written in English. Reports to the Vice-Chancellor concerning well-founded suspicions of

disciplinary offences should be complete and must contain the following basis and in the order given:

- Cover letter from the head of department containing the student's name, personal ID number and address in Sweden, as well as the type of suspected offence being reported (e.g. unauthorised collaboration). The cover letter should also include the name and extent of the course and course unit in which the alleged violation occurred, the credit value of the examination, how far the student has progressed in his or her studies, as well as a brief summary of the incident. If there is need to restrict a student's access to certain facilities at the University, this should preferably be mentioned already in the department's report.
- As detailed a description of the incident as possible.
- Ladok records for the student.
- Notes from any conversations or other contacts with the student about the suspected violation.
- In cases of suspected unauthorised notes, copies of these notes should be enclosed if available.
- Reports generated using any text comparison tools.
- In cases of suspected plagiarism, the submitted assignment and relevant extracts from the original source should be enclosed, with the plagiarised sections marked. Please note that marks should be made in both the submitted assignment and the original source.
- Any relevant codes of conduct.
- The course syllabus, course instructions, and other information the students have received concerning what is permissible or not permissible.
- Any additional information that may be relevant to the investigation.

Under normal circumstances, one report per student should be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor, even if multiple students are suspected of the same type of violation during the same examination. A joint report should be submitted if students have written an assignment together (e.g. a group assignment), if plagiarism or unauthorised collaboration between students is suspected, or if a student is suspected of having received unauthorised help from a fellow student on the course.

When the Vice-Chancellor has received the report, the department will receive a confirmation as well as information about who the case administrator is. If the case administrator finds it necessary, the department shall promptly submit a completion of the report. The student will then be given the opportunity to comment on the report. If necessary, the matter will then be investigated further, after which the Vice-Chancellor will decide if the matter should be referred to the Disciplinary Committee, if the student should be issued an official warning, or if no further action should be taken on the matter. To issue an official warning tried by the Disciplinary Committee, the student is entitled to have a decision by the Vice-Chancellor.

Matters referred to the Disciplinary Committee must be thoroughly investigated. It is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Committee to provide the concerned students with the opportunity to state their case to the Committee. In addition, reported students are entitled to be present when statements are made to the Committee by others in relation to their case, unless there are special reasons to the contrary. Following closed deliberations, the Disciplinary Committee will decide if disciplinary action should be taken against the student.

The members of the Stockholm University Disciplinary Committee include the Vice-Chancellor (Chair), a legally qualified representative, a representative of the teaching staff (appointed for a three-year term), and two student representatives (appointed for one-year terms). If the Vice-

Chancellor is unable to attend, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will take the Vice-Chancellor's place. The other members have alternate members as well. The Disciplinary Committee has full jurisdiction to issue and ratify decisions when at least three members are present, including the Chair and the legally qualified representative.

### **3. Consequences**

If a matter is referred to the Disciplinary Committee, the Vice-Chancellor – upon consultation with the legally qualified representative – may decide to temporarily suspend the student from University activities with immediate effect. The decision to temporarily suspend a student is in effect until the matter has been heard by the Disciplinary Committee; however, for no longer than one month.

The Disciplinary Committee may decide to take no further action in the matter, issue an official warning, or suspend the student from his or her studies.

In case the Disciplinary Committee decides to suspend the student, the suspension normally takes effect on the date the decision was made and lasts for a maximum of six months of the academic year. The decision should be communicated immediately to the student, the members of the Disciplinary Committee, the head of the concerned department, the concerned office of Science/faculty office, Student Services, IT Services, Stockholm University library (SUB), and the National Board of Student Aid (CSN). Other departments where the student is registered will also be notified of the decision. When a student is suspended because of disruptive behaviour or harassment, the decision should also be communicated to the Technical Support Office.

When a student is issued an official warning or no further action is taken, the decision should be communicated to the student, the members of the Disciplinary Committee, the head of the concerned department, and the concerned office of Science/faculty office. When a student is issued a warning because of disruptive behaviour or harassment, the decision should also be communicated to the Technical Support Office.

A decision to suspend a student means that the student is prohibited from participating in instruction, examinations, or any other activities related to courses and study programmes at Stockholm University – including the use of SUB – during the period of suspension. A student who has been suspended from the University is, in principle, required to repay student grants and study loans for the period of the suspension, as suspension is considered an interruption of studies. A decision to suspend a student may be limited and apply only to access to certain facilities at the University.

### **4. Appeals**

The student may lodge an appeal with the Administrative Court in Stockholm against a decision by the Disciplinary Committee to issue an official warning or suspend the student. A decision by the Vice-Chancellor or the Disciplinary Committee not to take further action in a matter cannot be appealed.

The appeal must be in writing and specify the decision being appealed, the desired change in this decision, as well as the reason for the appeal. The appeal must be received by Stockholm University within three weeks from the date on which the student was notified of the decision.

### **5. Grading examination assignments**

Only the examiner may decide whether or not to grade an assignment. The following discussion is intended to provide guidance to the examiner when making such a decision. The Vice-Chancellor's recommendation is that, under normal circumstances, the grading should be postponed

until a decision on the matter has been made by the Vice-Chancellor or the Disciplinary Committee.

The examiner has no obligation to examine a student who has been found guilty of any form of misleading conduct in connection with an examination or similar, as the assignment is then usually considered to be invalid. In exceptional cases, it may be justified to examine a student in spite of the student being found guilty of misleading conduct. For example, the examiner may consider that a student who brought unauthorised aids to an examination was caught at such an early stage that the student clearly did not have the opportunity to use them. However, the examiner is still not obliged to examine the student in such a situation, as the student has violated an important regulation.

A student who has not been found guilty of misleading conduct in connection with an examination or similar should normally be examined. In some cases, however, the examiner may still decide that the assignment is invalid. For example, the student may have brought unauthorised aids to an examination, but the Disciplinary Committee did not find any grounds for disciplinary action.

Suspicions of misleading conduct usually arise in connection with an examination or when grading an assignment. If an assignment has received a passing grade before a suspicion of misleading conduct comes to light, the examiner may rescind the grade if the Vice-Chancellor or Disciplinary Committee has found the student guilty. A favourable grade can be changed if it has become inaccurate due to misleading conduct on the part of the student. The examiner may thus rescind a grade, and the examiner's decision cannot be appealed. However, the student should be given the opportunity to comment on the issue before the grade is rescinded. Always contact the case administrator at the Strategic Planning and Vice-Chancellor's Office before a grade is rescinded.

This decision takes effect on 13 October 2016 and replaces the Vice-Chancellor's previous decision from 18 December 2014 (Reg. no. SU 1.1.2-3585-14).