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Strategies for Stockholm University 2023–2026

Fundamental values and mission – knowledge, enlightenment and the pursuit of truth

The idea of the modern university, shaped in the spirit of the Enlightenment, has characterised Stockholm University ever since its inception. Rooted in a millennial European tradition, universities drive the emergence of new knowledge and the future society. Europe's multifaceted cultural and educational heritage is a common ground for this. The modern research university, with its collegial governance and research-based education, has a central place here.

The university will actively promote the fundamental academic core values of autonomy and academic freedom, as enshrined in the *Magna Charta Universitatum*. Stockholm University has identified knowledge, enlightenment and the pursuit of truth as its additional core values as a higher education institution. These values shape the university's activities and are expressed through both research and education. The university upholds these core values, not only for its own activities, but also due to the importance of research and education in society at large. The core values are based on the conditions for academic work and on the university's fundamental mission – to contribute science-based knowledge. The core values create a common foundation for everyone working at Stockholm University; a continuous and lively discussion about the values that drive research and education forward is therefore important. In times of global unrest, it is particularly important to safeguard the open society, where science contributes to explaining and developing knowledge about events in the world around us. Through its broad activities and its strong position nationally and internationally, Stockholm University will contribute to the development of fundamental knowledge, open academic discourse and democracy.

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Purpose and implementation of the strategies in the organisation

Stockholm University's strategies clarify the core values, direction and ambition for the future within the framework of four identified strategic areas. The strategies also include the university's 16 profile areas, each of which comprises strong and broad research environments with high-quality education, that collectively characterise the university. The strategies guide the area-specific strategic plans in human science and science, and provide a common framework for other governing documents within the university.

The strategies clarify, at an overall level, what the university wishes to achieve and the direction in which this is to be implemented. The strategies are implemented in close dialogue between the different levels of the university, through layered leadership in which departments have activity-centred operational responsibility, disciplinary domains and faculties are responsible for recruitment and strategic development within the disciplinary domains and faculties, and the senior management team has overarching responsibility for the strategic direction of the university. Through the short communication and decision-making paths of layered leadership, the university applies trust-based governance based on confidence in academic autonomy. This is a principled position based on the premise that academic activities need a strong mandate. The organisation creates conditions for strategic discussions as well as collegial cooperation and accountability. Hence, the different parts of the university can further develop their activities in coherence. The implementation of the strategy is a joint task and responsibility involving the senior management team, teachers and researchers, university administration and students. Collegial influence, student participation, gender equality and equal treatment should characterise the work.

Strategic areas

The university has a broad mission. The university plays a central part in knowledge development and *Bildung* through free research and doctoral education, and through the development of courses and study programmes. The main role of research is to develop knowledge within both new and traditional disciplines, and in the intersections between the two. Universities play a crucial role in finding solutions to, and disseminating knowledge about, climate change and environmental sustainability – major challenges of our time. The world is at a critical stage where free research and higher education are key contributors. Science is crucial to achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through collaboration within academia, and with other societal actors, the university will increasingly contribute with scientific analysis in the strife for a better world. It is particularly important to collaborate with other higher education institutions, for example within university alliances



such as the Stockholm Trio (consisting of Karolinska Institutet, KTH Royal Institute of Technology and Stockholm University) and the European collaboration CIVIS, or in strategic partnerships with individual universities, as well as in forums such as University Reference Group for Research Infrastructure (URFI). Based on the university's mission, the following strategic areas have been formulated to set the long-term framework and direction for the university's activities.

- *Stockholm University's research shall be internationally leading and a driving force in the development of new knowledge.*
- *Stockholm University's education shall be broad, research-based and of high international quality for the development of individuals and society.*
- *Stockholm University shall have a well-functioning organisation with strong academic environments, and work strategically with recruitment and skills provision.*
- *Stockholm University shall be a force in society that contributes to democracy and sustainable development.*

Internationally leading research that drives the emergence of new knowledge

Stockholm University is a prominent research university characterised by both basic and applied research in its two disciplinary domains, Science and Human Science, which includes the humanities, law and social sciences. Through its research, the university is involved in a wide range of international and national collaborations. The university shall actively participate in international research arenas and create conditions for vibrant and internationally outstanding research environments, where the commitment and competence of teachers, researchers and doctoral students are crucial. Doctoral students play an important role in building strong long-term academic environments. The university will therefore ensure the future growth of research environments by increasing the number of doctoral students.

Freedom in research requires that researchers are free to formulate research questions, choose methods and publish. Free research has an inherent innovative power, and is crucial to the breadth, diversity and excellence of research. It creates progress; free basic research produces future innovations. Stockholm University will continue to emphasize its strong basic research profile, and the importance of research for knowledge development, research utilisation and solving societal challenges.



Research at Stockholm University shall safeguard quality, integrity and independence, which requires that it is conducted in accordance with good research practice. The research culture creates an environment for open and well-informed conversations about research ethics. The university's research must be continuously scrutinised through both internal and external review processes. Within the framework of the university's research quality assurance system, research conditions and outcomes are reviewed through inter alia, external research grants, publications, recruitment follow-ups and external focus evaluations. Based on the evaluations, the university identifies research areas that need to be strengthened and further developed or that can inspire others through good examples. The goal is to achieve even higher international quality in research. Stockholm University will safeguard its strong research culture, which contributes to deep subject knowledge and excellent research.

External research funding is of great importance to Stockholm University. The university is successful in attaining both national and international grants. Through competitive national and international projects that involve the vast majority of the university's faculty, the university will raise the ambition level in its efforts to obtain external funding, both from European funders and from the Swedish research councils and private research foundations.

Research and doctoral studies are conducted all through the university; the subject-related development that takes place in the departments represents deep disciplinary knowledge with the potential to lead to scientific breakthroughs. Interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary research contribute to the scientific breadth of the university and involve collaboration across faculties and departments. Several of the university's centres have an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary basis. The research-intensive environments of these centres, which are subject to continuous collegial quality review, are a complementary strength within the broad research university. The subject-related breadth and depth of the research is part of Stockholm University's profile, and shall be specially promoted and made visible.

Research on climate, the environment and sustainability is one of Stockholm University's areas of strength. Most of the research is conducted within the departments, but there are also a number of collaborations and centres of relevance to climate work, such as the Bolin Centre for Climate Research, the Baltic Sea Centre, the Stockholm University Centre for Circular and Sustainable Systems (SUCCeSS), the Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC), the Stockholm Environmental Law and Policy Centre and the human science collaboration between the humanities, law and social sciences in relation to the environment. Through its strong research environments, Stockholm University will develop its position at the forefront of international research in climate, the environment, sustainability and biodiversity.



Access to and development of relevant research infrastructure is key to conducting internationally prominent research and to recruiting outstanding researchers. Research and advanced research infrastructure are developed in close interaction; access to infrastructure and the development of powerful new instruments and methods enhance the potential for innovative research. Stockholm University's successful efforts to strategically and efficiently use existing, and develop new, infrastructure through international, national and regional collaborations will continue to be developed. The national collaboration within URFI is central to this. Collaboration within the Mälardalen Region and the national infrastructure Science for Life Laboratory (SciLifeLab) should also be highlighted in particular. Experiences from the successful establishment of SciLifeLab show the importance of cooperation between universities in developing a complex national research infrastructure. Furthermore, the large databases are of great importance for the development of social science research. The university has also made significant investments of its own in infrastructure, for example in transmission electron microscopy and the establishment of the Stockholm University Brain Imaging Centre (SUBIC) and the Centre for Palaeogenetics (CPG). Another example of necessary research infrastructure of a somewhat different nature is Stockholm University's field stations, where teachers and researchers can collect data, carry out analyses, teach and initiate dynamic collaborations for periods of time. The geographical spread of the field stations – from Tarfala in the Kebnekaise massif in the north to the solar telescope on La Palma in the south – provides unique opportunities for observations. Based on the evolving needs of research, the university will continue to pursue collaborations on national and international infrastructure, and further develop the skills needed to develop new infrastructure and exploit the opportunities offered by existing infrastructure.

The Stockholm University Library is an infrastructure that encompasses both the physical book and periodical collections and electronic resources. The library is central to both disciplinary domains and has a nationally and internationally leading role in how data and open science are stored and made accessible. Through this, the university contributes to an open research society. The university will continue to be a driving force and a frontrunner in the transition to open science, in terms of access to both publications and research data. This includes encouraging collaboration and participation in national and international contexts to promote sustainable development in open science.



Broad research-based education of high international quality for individual and societal development

As a university in the capital, Stockholm University operates locally, nationally and internationally. The wide range of general programmes, professional education and training, and freestanding courses is unique. It is a central aspect of Stockholm University's identity and is part of the transformative power required in society. The academic breadth creates the conditions for a wide range of collaborations and helps to make the university attractive to students with different backgrounds, both nationally and internationally. In particular, the university shall strive to further increase the number of students enrolled in second-cycle courses and study programmes. The university shall also continue to offer a broad range of programmes aimed at imparting basic knowledge, relevant professional skills and *Bildung*.

The university campus will provide a place for education and research with beneficial opportunities for interaction, collaboration and a vibrant student life. A long tradition of campus life has demonstrated the value of people-to-people encounters – an interaction that contributes to understanding and community between colleagues, between teachers and students and between students. Physical encounters create the conditions for knowledge sharing and social interaction that are central to the organisation as a whole.

Education at the university shall be of high international quality in content and performance. The strong commitment of the teachers, combined with a high level of pedagogical and subject expertise, will further contribute to an educational environment focused on student learning. Inherent in this is that education should convey international perspectives and provide opportunities for international experiences. In this way, students will be well prepared for a national and global labour market. Stockholm University shall pursue active pedagogical development. The university shall attract the best students, regardless of their background. A broad student base contributes positively to the study environment by providing a forum for more perspectives and experiences to be expressed.

The active participation of students in the development of the courses and study programmes is an important part of the quality work at Stockholm University. Responsibility for effective student participation is shared between teachers and students, and between the student unions and the university's collegial boards and management. The student faculty associations also play an important role. Students shall be given good conditions for student influence with a focus on the highest quality in education, a high student completion rate and a good study environment.



An important task for universities is to contribute to lifelong learning and the opportunities for individuals to return to the University for further education. Labour market relevance shall be continuously taken into account and developed through dialogue with various societal actors and alumni.

The range of courses and study programmes offered at Stockholm University reflects the university's strength and breadth of subjects. The education is characterised by in-depth subject knowledge and the possibility of independent work with close links to ongoing research, where students are supervised by prominent researchers. This builds on a strong research culture where teachers work in strong academic environments with both education and research. As part of the living culture of quality, the anchoring of the education in research shall continue to be ensured.

The focus of Stockholm University's internal quality system for education is on strengthening and developing the academic quality of its activities through collegial processes. These include supporting initiatives for the quality development of academic activities, as well as regular reviews of the conditions and enactment of the education. The quality system shall also ensure that the quality requirements and expectations that students and society have on education are addressed.

The transition to a more sustainable and resource-efficient society requires changes at many levels. Progress in this direction is possible through research-based education. Here, education in both human science and natural science contribute to relevant knowledge in relation to the broad scope of the Sustainable Development Goals. Knowledge about climate, the environment and sustainability is needed for society to achieve the overall goal of climate neutrality. Stockholm University shall continue to develop environmental and sustainability courses and study programmes across disciplinary boundaries; education that prepare students for a working life in which these issues play a crucial role.

A well-functioning organisation with strong academic environments that work strategically with recruitment and skills provision

Stockholm University has a well-functioning organisation with delegated decision-making, where collegiality, responsiveness and communication are leading principles. The collegial organisation has a long tradition and is based on the understanding that collegial influence is key to maintaining and developing academic integrity and quality. The collegial bodies and



academic leaders in the line-management interact through the layered leadership in close dialogue between the different levels of the organisation. This leads to a constructive management with clear forms for communication and knowledge based decision-making. These management principles are central to Stockholm University and must be preserved.

Employee competence is the most important factor in creating success within the university. Teacher recruitment is the single most important decision made and a key to creating strong academic environments; the teacher recruitment processes of the faculties must be internationally aligned and lead to the strongest possible recruitment. Recruitment and promotion processes should increasingly be based on a broad assessment of qualifications, rigorous vetting and the long-term and strategic development of university activities.

Good leadership, both academic and administrative, is a high priority and shall be given great attention. Stockholm University shall be an attractive workplace by offering competitive working conditions and a working environment characterised by collegiality, social equality, gender equality and equal treatment. This means that leaders and managers must have sufficient knowledge and prerequisites to carry out active and systematic work on equal opportunity and work environment. The work environment must make use of the resources that employees with different backgrounds, life situations and skills bring to the university.

A well-functioning operational support, both within the core operations and the administration, is required to conduct education and research of high international quality. Operational support shall be based on an understanding of the needs of education and research; an organisational culture with good communication and a climate receptive to new ideas is essential in order for the operational support to handle the many complex issues within its remit, such as support for quality development and communication, research and innovation support, student and staff support, financial management and the exercise of public authority. The provision of premises is a key strategic issue for which the administration is responsible, but one that covers the whole university. All activities must increasingly strive to optimise the use of premises. Data protection and information security, including information technology, are further examples of strategic issues affecting the organisation as a whole, where the efforts and skills of operational support are becoming increasingly important and need to be developed. Systematic information security and compliance with regulations shall be strengthened, and staff knowledge of the issues shall be increased.

The digital working and study environment is of great importance to the entire university, whether work or teaching is carried out on campus or online. Digitalisation work shall be



based on an analysis of the needs of education and research and the potential of digitalisation to create added value and increased quality. Students and staff must be met by effective digital services and systems. Similarly, research must be supported by appropriate digital services for data processing, storage of research data and making research results accessible. In order to develop working methods and pedagogy, and as part of reducing the university's carbon footprint, the positive experiences of a more digitalised approach will be harnessed.

A force in society that contributes to democracy and sustainable development

Since its founding in 1878 as a higher education institution in the capital, Stockholm University's relationships with other parts of society have been characterised by openness. In a complex society, the university has a key function in being a resilient bearer of academic values. This includes actively promoting open academic discourse that rests on a scientific foundation, consolidates knowledge and develops critical thinking. Research communication is an important part of this, making clear the university's contribution to society. Communication shall be developed to further highlight and disseminate research results, and explain how knowledge can be used today or in the future. Communication also involves conveying the importance of scientific methods and perspectives to increase public understanding and confidence in scientific practices and approaches.

Stockholm University's climate work, the objectives of which are expressed in the Climate Roadmap, has a broad societal perspective. As part of its climate work, Stockholm University is committed to being carbon neutral by 2040. The target reflects the university's strong profile in these issues. Stockholm University's activities will be characterised by a clear and developed sustainability profile, which contributes to sustainable development primarily through its research and education, as well as through a reduced environmental and climate footprint from its own operations.

As the largest education provider in Sweden and with its strong basic research profile and location in the capital, Stockholm University has a unique societal mission. It is close to important societal functions and offers opportunities for extensive interaction with other parts of society. The university's departments work with a large number of external partners. Collaboration is part of the development of activities and involves an interaction in which flows of ideas, problems, knowledge and resources between the university and external actors lead to mutual development. These broad forms of collaboration will further develop. They benefit society through the education of students and doctoral students, adjunct teachers,



research communication, contract research, expert assignments, statements of opinion, centres and institutes, and through innovation and support for ideas in the early stages of development. The university shall promote open dialogues and create conditions for knowledge exchange, innovative solutions to problems and a better understanding of how research results develop new knowledge and provide benefit in multiple ways. Thus, society is positively influenced while education and research are advanced.

Stockholm University engages in a wide range of collaborations with other higher education institutions; collaborations with other research universities offer great potential for the organisation and should be further developed. The recent Wallenberg initiatives on data-driven life science and on research on sustainable materials are two examples where Stockholm University actively participates and recruits researchers. In recent years, collaborations and networks have also been strengthened through partnerships in the Stockholm Trio and CIVIS university alliances, which are strategically important for the university and create opportunities for exchanges for staff and students. The work within Stockholm Trio is being developed, for example, by identifying priority subject areas and developing Master's programmes with close links to strong research environments. CIVIS, a European university alliance funded by the European Commission, involves universities on two continents – Europe and Africa – and is based on collaboration on jointly identified societal challenges. Strategic partnerships with individual universities, notably with the University of Helsinki and the University of Tokyo, will be further developed. Based on an analysis of the development of research and education, the university will also build on collaborations and dialogues with other academic institutions.

Wars, political unrest and authoritarian repressive regimes in the world have devastating consequences for individual citizens, civil society and social institutions. In this perspective, responsible internationalisation is key. Academic activity is transnational, and its strength lies in the exchange of knowledge between people around the world. At the same time, informed, research-based assessments of when and how academic collaboration may need to be limited in the light of geopolitical changes, security concerns and politically authoritarian tendencies in an international context are required. Stockholm University, with its broad expertise, will further contribute actively to the work on these issues, which are complex but highly pressing for the whole sector.