

Rules on student influence at the Swedish Defence University

Governing document	
Heading	Rules on student influence at the Swedish Defence University
Classification	Rules
Case number	Ö 215/2018
Decision maker	Vice-Chancellor
Responsible for document	Chair FoUN
Decision date	12/04/2018
Period of validity	Until further notice, the document should however be checked no later than 30/06/2020
Document that is replaced	2012-02-14 (according to FoUN protocol)
Number of appendices	-
Brief summary	This document regulates and provides guidance on how work on student influence shall be conducted at the Swedish Defence University.

Date
12/04/2018

1. Introduction

Studies at the Swedish Defence University shall be characterised by a safe and inclusive environment. Students¹ influence over their education and study situation helps create an education that is attractive and of high quality. A strong student influence is therefore of great importance to the Swedish Defence University.

These rules on student influence have been drawn up in collaboration with the Swedish Defence University Student Union.² The aim is to concretise how work on student influence at the Swedish Defence University shall be conducted and provide a guide to good practice for cooperation between Swedish Defence University employees and students on issues related to education and the study situation in general. According to chapter 1 section 4(a) of the Swedish Higher Education Act, students shall have the right to exert influence over education and the Swedish Defence University shall work to ensure that students take an active part in the work of further developing the education. These rules shall form the basis of a common and comprehensive view of student influence as a key instrument for improving the quality of the activities of the Swedish Defence University.

Student influence takes place in several different ways. It takes place through the student influence, which is regulated in the Swedish Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance, through active participation in teaching, through evaluation of courses and programmes, through representation in decision-making and advocacy bodies and through the student union. The Swedish Defence University shall make it easier for students to commit to positions of trust on behalf of the student union.

2. Good communication

2.1 Well-functioning communication between the Swedish Defence University's employees and students on issues relating to education and the situation of students is crucial for real student influence. Good communication enables the individual student to be able to protect their rights and pass information on to their student representatives.

2.2 The rules and governing documents of the Swedish Defence University relating to education or the situation of students shall be available to all students and employees.

2.3 Introductory days shall be planned into the students' schedule to enable student participation.

¹ Student refers to one who is admitted to and follows higher education and a doctoral student is one who is admitted to and follows third-cycle education according to HL chapter 1 section 4.

² The Swedish Defence University decided on 14/06/2016 that the Swedish Defence University student union shall take the position of collaborative body from 01/07/2016 to 30/06/2019 inclusive.

Date
12/04/2018

2.4 The Swedish Defence University is responsible for providing information to students about the meaning and possibilities of student influence.

2.5 The Swedish Defence University shall provide information channels, such as message boards and through a specific page on the website, for information from the student union. The student union is responsible for keeping the information up to date.

2.6 Regular meetings between representatives from the student union and the Swedish Defence University shall be held to enable real student influence through information and collaboration. The Student and Education Department (FUS) in the University Administration is responsible for meeting representatives from the Swedish Defence University at least twice a semester. At least one of these times, the Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor's deputy shall attend. The aim should be for a meeting to be held in shortly after the annual general meeting of the student union, when new student representatives are appointed.

3. Student representation in preparatory and decision-making bodies

3.1 Influence at an early stage in decision-making processes creates good conditions for real student influence, therefore it is important that students participate not only during decision-making but also during the preparation of issues.

3.2 According to the Swedish Higher Education Act, the Higher Education Ordinance and the Regulations for the Swedish Defence University, the students at the Swedish Defence University have the right to be represented on the Swedish Defence University board, the disciplinary board and the research and education board (FoUN). In addition to these specific bodies, the students are entitled to representation in bodies where decisions or preparations are made that have bearing on their courses or programmes or the situation of students.

3.3 The student union is responsible for appointing and dismissing student representatives.

3.4 For assignments in decision-making bodies where fees are paid, the same fee shall be paid to student representatives as to the other ordinary members. Further instructions on the fee are decided in a special order.

4. Division of responsibilities

4.1 When a new body is established, whose activities relate to education or the situation of students, student representatives shall be invited to participate in this. Information and invitations to participate are sent to the student union. If the student union has reported obstacles to participation, meeting minutes and relevant information shall still be sent to the student union.

4.2 In determining the number of student representatives in preparatory and decision-making bodies, the size and composition of the body shall be taken into account in general.

Date
12/04/2018

4.3 The chair of each body is responsible for ensuring that every new student representative in the body receives the relevant introduction to the function and working methods of the body, and that student representatives are given the opportunity to prepare well for each meeting.

4.4 If decisions on matters relevant to education and the situation of students are taken by an individual official, this person has an obligation to inform and cooperate with the student representatives in good time before deciding. Collaboration with student representatives should be seen as a natural part of the preparatory work and in decisions made the collaboration should be documented. If collaboration has not taken place, this shall be stated in the text of the decision.

4.5 The student union is responsible for ensuring that all invitations to collaborate and participate in preparatory or decision-making bodies are handled and answered within five working days. If there has been no feedback from the student union in the appointed time, the Swedish Defence University's obligations to inform and invite participation are nevertheless fulfilled.

4.6 The student union shall continuously inform the Swedish Defence University of changes in student representation and notify each body of any lack of representatives. Absence from a meeting shall, under the current order, be notified in advance and an appointed deputy, if there is one, shall take ordinary representative's place.

4.7 The Swedish Defence University shall inform the student union before each semester about which bodies student representatives should be appointed to. If there is no student representative on a body, calls to meetings, information and minutes shall be sent to the student union's functional mailbox.

4.8 The Swedish Defence University shall make it easier for students to engage as student representatives during the study period. In order to participate in meetings of various higher education bodies, the designated student representative, where it is practicable and economically feasible, is given the opportunity to undergo mandatory course elements at another time or otherwise replace them in an acceptable way. In cases where a student representative cannot attend meetings because this is prevented by their education, this shall also be noted in the minutes if the secretary is advised in advance.

4.9 When the Swedish Defence University prepares the possibility to submit a consultation statement on issues related to education or the situation of the students, collaboration with the student union shall take place before the statement is submitted. If the student union has itself been a consulted body, no further collaboration is needed.

5. Work environment

5.1 In order to create a good study environment, it is a prerequisite that students' views on the study environment are taken account of. Student health and safety officers represent students in study environment issues. Student health and safety officers are therefore an important part of the Swedish Defence University's work for a safe and stimulating study environment. Student health and safety officers represent the students on health and safety committees. A functioning student health and safety activity requires collaboration between the Swedish

Date
12/04/2018

Defence University's employees and students.

5.2 The student union is responsible, in cooperation with Student Health, for ensuring that student health and safety officers receive the training needed for the assignment.

6. Student influence through course and programme evaluation

6.1 The Swedish Defence University shall, according to chapter 1 section 14 of the Higher Education Ordinance, enable students who are participating in or have completed a course to express their experiences of and views on the course through a course evaluation to be organised by the Swedish Defence University. This is further regulated in the *Rules for course evaluations at the Swedish Defence University*.

7. Complaint procedures

7.1 The students' complaints about, for example, grading, treatment from teachers, supervision, quality of a particular course or long processing times should be reported in writing to the Swedish Defence University's director of studies for each programme. When complaints are received by the authority, the recipient shall in the first case refer the matter to the respective director of studies. Complaints do not include the handling of formal appeals, which are governed by specific national provisions. Complaints also do not include the handling of discrimination cases or the work of the Swedish Defence University on course evaluations, which are dealt with in defined manner.

7.2 The director of studies for each programme shall urgently handle complaints received and return any decisions made in connection with the complaint to the student group. It is important that complaints are dealt with primarily where the problems have arisen, i.e. as close to the relevant activity as possible.

7.3 If a matter cannot be handled by the director of studies due to a conflict of interests or other circumstances, the complaint shall be handed over for consideration by the Student and Education Department, FUS. Any decisions related to the complaint are made by the deputy vice-chancellor for education.

7.4 Complaints shall always be dealt with respecting the privacy of all involved.

7.4 The director of studies for the programme is responsible for developing the education in good dialogue with the student union, so as to prevent and solve problems for students.

8. Follow-up of the work on student influence

8.1 The student union can present a statement of its view on student influence at the Swedish Defence University and how student influence has evolved. This statement should be provided annually to the Vice-Chancellor in connection with the annual report.