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UNIVERSITET

Active measures for education providers

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Sweden's Discrimination Act has two main aspects:

1.
A prohibition
on
discrimination

2.
Active measures

Focus of this
presentation

Contents

- What are active measures?
- Grounds of discrimination (protected characteristics)
- Continuous work in four steps
- Five areas to work with
- Collaboration with students
- Documentation

Sweden's Discrimination Act on active measures

- Higher education institutions and universities are required to work to combat discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities in their activities.
- This work is described in Sweden's Discrimination Act and is termed **active measures**.

Proactive work at the structure level

- The purpose of active measures is to **prevent** students and applicants from being discriminated against or otherwise having their opportunities limited.
- Work on active measures is not about correcting problems that have already arisen in an individual case.

Example

A reactive effort at an individual level:

- Investigate reported discrimination in an individual case.

A proactive approach at the structure level:

- Review and improve various aspects of the course or study programme so that discrimination does not occur.

Active measures at a glance

Work on active measures should:

- cover all grounds of discrimination (protected characteristics)
- be done continuously in four steps
- be implemented in five areas
- be done in collaboration with students
- be documented.

Grounds of discrimination (protected characteristics)

The grounds of discrimination (characteristics) protected by the Act are:

- gender
- gender identity or gender expression
- ethnicity
- religion or other belief
- disability
- sexual orientation
- age

Continuous work in four steps



Step 1: Investigate



- Investigate whether there are risks of discrimination or reprisals (punishment).
- The investigation should be done at the structure level.
- Example:
 - Review premises and online meeting places.
 - Review guidelines and procedures.
 - Via surveys and interviews, investigate whether prevailing attitudes and norms are experienced as discriminatory.

Step 2: Analyse



Analyse the causes of the risks and impediments found.

Think about:

- ✓ Why the situation is as it is
- ✓ What the causes of the detected risks or impediments might be.
- ✓ Whether the risks and impediments are linked to one or more grounds of discrimination.

Step 3: Take action



Plan and implement measures to prevent discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities based on the findings of the survey and the analysis.

Decide on:

- ✓ What action needs to be taken
- ✓ Who is responsible for implementing the measures
- ✓ When to implement the measures
- ✓ How to follow up and evaluate the measures.

Step 4: Follow up and evaluate



- Follow up and evaluate the measures.
- Also follow up and evaluate **the process** of taking active measures, i.e. how well the investigation, analysis, planning and implementation of the measures is working.
- The experience gained from this process should be used in the next cycle of active measures.

Follow-up

Follow-up means one or more checks **before** the planned measure is implemented.

Examples of questions to ask in the follow-up:

- ✓ Are we on the right track?
- ✓ How do we know that?
- ✓ Is the timetable and allocation of responsibilities working?
- ✓ Are different or more measures needed?

Evaluation

An evaluation is made at a point in time **after** the measure is assumed to have been fully implemented.

Examples of questions to ask in the evaluation:

- ✓ Have we eliminated the risks and impediments identified in the investigation and analysis?
- ✓ Have we implemented all the measures we decided on?
- ✓ Did these measures have their intended effects?
- ✓ How do we know that?

Harassment and sexual harassment

In addition to the four steps, policies and procedures to prevent harassment and sexual harassment should also be followed up and evaluated.



Five areas to work with

Work with active measures must be carried out in the following five areas:

1. Admissions and recruitment
2. Types of instruction and the organisation of courses and study programmes
3. Exams and assessment
4. Study environment
5. Studies and parenthood

1. Admissions and recruitment

- Investigate and analyse and if necessary implement measures to attract applicants regardless of discrimination grounds.
- Investigate and analyse whether there is a risk of certain groups being disadvantaged when recruiting for doctoral studentships.

2. Types of instruction and the organisation of courses and study programmes

- Investigate whether there is a risk that the type of instruction and how a course or study programme is organised could have a negative impact on some group of students.
- Where there is such a risk: investigate whether there is any connection with one or more grounds of discrimination (protected characteristics).

3. Exams and assessment

Investigate, analyse and ensure that course syllabuses and other rules for assessment do not risk compromising the opportunities of any group regardless of discrimination ground.

4. Study environment

- Investigate both the physical and psychosocial environments.
- Also investigate the risks of harassment and sexual harassment.

5. Studies and parenthood

Investigate how the teaching is organised and scheduled, whether certain activities can be done online/remotely or whether there are special needs for teaching rooms to make it easier for students to combine studies with parenthood.

Collaboration with students

- Collaboration with students and employees at the University must permeate all aspects of the University's work with active measures.
- It is the students, along with employees, who know what needs there are.
- This collaboration may be designed to suit each individual education provider.

Document the work

Work on active measures must be continuously documented.

The following must be documented:

- ✓ the risks or impediments identified in each area after investigation and analysis
- ✓ the measures to be implemented/that have been implemented
- ✓ what results have been achieved.

More information

For more information on discrimination and suggestions on how to promote students' rights and opportunities, see the Equality Ombudsman's online course:

[Studenters rätt i högskolan \(Students' rights in higher education institutions\)](#)



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This presentation was developed as part of the **Sustainable and accessible learning environments** project at the Faculty of Social Sciences.