

WORK FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

INFORMATION ABOUT VICTIMIZATION,
HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION



Mittuniversitetet
MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

***”All human beings are born free
and equal in dignity and rights.”***

The United Nations Universal Declaration
of Human Rights

POINTS OF DEPARTURE

ALL RELATIONSHIPS AT MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY shall be characterized by mutual respect for each other as people and as professionally competent colleagues. It is the aim of Mid Sweden University to create a stimulating and creative working environment together with its staff and students.

As an employer and education provider, Mid Sweden University has a particular responsibility to ensure that our students and staff are not subjected to offensive behaviour or actions.

An important part of the work to prevent the discrimination, harassment and/or victimization of our staff and students is to keep up a continuous dialogue, the purpose of which is to make everyone, as far as possible, involved in shaping the activities of the University.

The purpose of this brochure is to spread knowledge about the meaning of discrimination, harassment and victimization, and about our preventive efforts. We also want to share information about where to turn if you feel that you are the victim of any of these things.

What matters most to Mid Sweden University as an employer and an education provider is to ensure that if this type of problem does occur in our study or working environment, we will act to put an end to it and work to prevent it from ever happening again.

Yours Sincerely,
Anders Söderholm, Vice-Chancellor



Mid Sweden University should be a seat of learning and a work place free from discrimination and harassment and where differences are made full use of to both support the individual's possibilities to work or study and to develop the activities of the university.

(Equal Opportunities Action Plan 2014-2016, Reg.No. MIUN 2014/879)

DEFINITIONS

As a student or employee at Mid Sweden University, you have the right not to be subjected to discrimination, sexual harassment or victimization. There are laws to protect you from unwanted behaviour or treatment, primarily the Swedish Discrimination Act (2008:567) and the Working Environment Legislation (AFS 1993:17).

The Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation and age. At Mid Sweden University, we label the work on these issues Equal Opportunities.

Discrimination: There are different forms of discrimination.

Direct discrimination: Someone is disadvantaged by being treated less favourably than someone else is treated, has been treated or would have been treated in a comparable situation, if this disadvantaging is associated with one of the grounds of discrimination.

Indirect discrimination: The application of a provision, a criterion or a procedure that appears neutral, but which in practice and in association with one of the grounds of discrimination may put certain people at a particular disadvantage.

Inadequate accessibility: A person with a disability is disadvantaged through a failure to take accessibility measures to put people with disabilities in a situation comparable to that of people without such disabilities, where such measures would be reasonable under accessibility requirements in laws or other statutes and taking into account the financial and practical conditions.

Harassment: Conduct that violates a person's dignity and that is associated with one of the grounds of discrimination, for example exclusion, isolation or offensive comments.

Sexual harassment: Conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity, for example unwanted deliberate touching, groping, jokes, suggestions, jargon, looks or images of a sexual nature.

The Discrimination Act also contains a prohibition on instructing an employee to discriminate, or subjecting a person to reprisals for having reported discrimination.

Preferential right of interpretation: What is not considered offensive by one person may be considered offensive by someone else. It is important to note that it is the person who, for example, has the experience of being harassed who

has the preferential right of interpretation and who decides if what someone has said or done is offensive.

In other words, it does not matter that the person who allegedly committed the harassment did not intend to say or do anything offensive. In order to avoid a repetition of the unwanted behaviour, the person who felt offended or violated should to the best of their ability try to explain how they experienced the situation.

When a matter is brought up for investigation, there is no longer any preferential right of interpretation, formally speaking. In that situation, the customary demands for impartiality and evidence apply.



EXAMPLES

The list below contains some examples of instances of discrimination, harassment or victimization. It may be a matter of a single occasion or something that occurs repeatedly in connection with examinations, employment processes, accessibility, admission processes, notices of termination, promotions, continuing professional development, social activities and relationships.

- A teacher asks a student who is a transvestite if the student has sought treatment.
- An employer pays a man a higher salary than a woman for performing the same or an equivalent job, despite there being no factual grounds for the individual differential.
- A doctoral student experiences that her supervisor is constantly seeking physical contact. It usually happens very quickly and she almost does not have time to react. She feels that her integrity is being violated.
- A teacher refuses to allow additional time during an exam for a student with dyslexia, despite the fact that the student has provided the necessary documentation to prove that he or she is entitled to such arrangements.
- The highest qualified applicant is not offered the job, because the employer feels that the applicant is too young.
- A person is not called to a job interview because their name "is not Swedish", while another, less qualified applicant is called.
- With reference to the person's disability, an employer offers a visually impaired employee a lower salary than the other employees.
- Calling someone a "dago", "moron", "poof", "whore", or using mocking or disparaging generalizations of various characteristics.
- An employer does not include someone in the salary review because the employee is on parental leave.
- Employees may only bring their partners to staff parties if the partner is of the opposite sex.



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

It is important to know the potential causes and consequences of discrimination, harassment and other forms of victimization. For example, such actions may be related to the abuse of power or jealousy, which are problems that we all share a responsibility to counteract.

Prevailing power structures and norms, structural flaws in the working environment, such as indistinct goals, unclear or unspoken rules, and inadequate work on values may also form the basis of discrimination, harassment and victimization.

Also, conflicts in the form of temporary differences of opinion or difficulties in cooperation are not uncommon in workplaces. Even if they do not always involve discrimination or harassment in the legal sense, they may be serious and cause hurt and offense.

When someone is subjected to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or victimization, there are consequences not only for the victim. The psychosocial climate and solidarity of the group are negatively affected and it may lead to decreased efficiency, more absences due to illness and a higher staff turnover.



PREVENTIVE WORK

In order for students and employees at Mid Sweden University to have the best possible study and working environment in terms of peace and quiet, comfort, joy, development and success, understanding and commitment are required both on an overall level and by individual students and employees.

Mid Sweden University's responsibility

As a public authority, Mid Sweden University is legally obligated to act in case of harassment, for example. Systematic work on the working environment and structured work for equal opportunities is essential in order for the preventive work to progress.

With the students, it is primarily through course evaluations, Satisfied Student Index, analyses, and evaluations of course contents and teaching methods from an equal opportunities perspective, as well as the inclusion of student representatives in various groups at the university, that the preventive work progresses.

In terms of the employees, the preventive work progresses through the psychosocial work environment inspections, salary surveys and continuing professional development, among other things. In addition, it is essential that the activities of the university and its aims are discussed from an equal opportunities perspective regularly during workplace meetings and staff appraisals.

We all have a responsibility

In addition, every individual has a responsibility to act. We are part of each other's study and working environment and our actions shall be governed by that fact. As a fellow student or coworker, you can make it clear that you will not listen to sexist or racist "jokes", for example. You can also support a fellow student or colleague by emphasizing the fact that anything that is done at their expense is not welcome.

- Think about how you treat others, in words as well as action.
- Take immediate action if you hear or see any behaviour or statements that are offensive.
- Participate in the efforts for prevention and for raising awareness about equal opportunities and the working environment.
- Learn about the rules and regulations concerning victimization, discrimination and sexual harassment.
- Discuss the climate of cooperation in seminars, at workplace meetings, during staff appraisals, etc.
- You can also contact the Equal Opportunities Coordinator or the Equal Opportunities Representatives for advice and support, or if you have any opinions or ideas that you would like to share.

IF IT HAPPENS ANYWAY

Mid Sweden University has an obligation to investigate and take action if someone feels that they have been subjected to harassment or sexual harassment.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against, harassed or victimized, there are people that you can turn to for help and support. You do not have to make a formal report.

If you feel that you have been offended:

- If possible, depending on the situation, **make it clear** that you do not appreciate the “joke”, the action or the behaviour. You are not to blame and you should not have to endure unwanted behaviour.
- **Tell** someone what has happened: a fellow student, a colleague or someone else that you trust.
- Inform your teacher/superior of the problem as soon as possible, otherwise it may easily grow bigger.
- **Write down** your experience of the situation – it will make it easier for you if you later decide to make a formal report against the offender. Make a note of each occurrence, including the time, place and possible witnesses, as well as what happened and how you experienced it. Doing so may also help you to discover patterns and processes in what is happening.

For advice, support and information, please contact:

Employee:

- The Equal Opportunities Coordinator
- Your immediate superior
- The Equal Opportunities Representatives
- The HR Specialist
- The Legal Expert
- The Union Representatives
- The Safety Representative
- The Occupational Health Service
- The Equality Ombudsman

Student:

- The Equal Opportunities Coordinator
- The Head of your department
- The Director of Studies or the Programme Coordinator
- The Equal Opportunities Representatives
- Your teacher
- The Safety Representative
- The Student Health Centre
- The Study Adviser
- The Equality Ombudsman

Formal report

A formal report must be in written or sent via e-mail to the Mid Sweden University Legal Expert or to the Mid Sweden University Equal Opportunities Coordinator. You can also turn directly to the government agency The Equality Ombudsman (Swedish: DO).

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?

More information about the work for equal opportunities can be found on Mid Sweden University's website www.miun.se/en/staffnet/stod/equality

<http://www.do.se/en/>, and about victimization on the Swedish Work Environment Authority's website, <http://www.av.se/inenglish/>

You can read more about discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment on the Equality Ombudsman's website,



The equality of all human beings is an obvious and basic value in all activities at Mid Sweden University. Both students and employees should be treated and met with respect and dignity and differences should be respected in order to make the most of the individual's opportunities in terms of studies and work.

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