

Procedures in the event of unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation

Mid Sweden University should be an institution and a place of work that is free from unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and retaliation. The equal value of all people is an evident cornerstone for all activities at Mid Sweden University. Our activities rest on a foundation of participation and discussion. Employees and students should all be treated with respect, dignity, and with consideration for differences in order to bolster each individual's opportunities for work or study, so as to improve the work carried out at Mid Sweden University.

If an employee or student is subjected to unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment in connection with their work or studies, Mid Sweden University is obligated to investigate what has happened and implement measures to prevent it from happening again in the future.

The purpose of these procedures is to clarify:

- who to turn to in the event that a person feels mistreated
- what Mid Sweden University must do when made aware of any unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation at the workplace/institution
- who is responsible for investigating the matter or allegations

Who should I approach if I am mistreated?

Students

As a student, if you are subjected to unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation, or if you are witness to another student or an employee being mistreated in a similar manner, you should contact the department head/supervisor of the institute/department in question. Try not to wait for too long, since the more time that passes, the more difficult it becomes to rectify a situation.

There are also other entities that can provide advice, support and information:

- The department head's assistant or the director of studies
- Teachers
- The student health and safety representative
- The Student Health Centre
- The Equality Ombudsman

Employees

As an employee, if you are subjected to unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation, or if you are witness to an employee or student being mistreated in a similar manner, you should normally contact your immediate department head/supervisor for the institute/department. If this is not possible, you can approach the closest senior supervisor, union representative or health and safety representative whom you feel is most appropriate. Try not to wait for too long, since the more time that passes, the more difficult it becomes to rectify a situation. There are also other entities that can provide advice, support and information:

- HR specialist
- Occupational health services
- The Equality Ombudsman

Reporting and registration

Reports or knowledge of unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment must be documented and registered. In accordance with the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act, all documents received by the university or that are prepared here are public and may be requested by private individuals. Each time a document is requested, a confidentiality assessment may be conducted. However, the possibility of having information classified as confidential is limited and may be reviewed by a court.

Reports that are registered must include the following:

- A description of what happened
- When it happened
- Name of the victim and his or her place of work or study
- Name of the accused and his or her place of work or study
- Any witnesses

Following investigation and after a decision has been made, all documents relating to the case must be recorded.

Reporting to the police

In some cases, an incident may be so serious that it can be considered criminal according to the Swedish Penal code, in which case such incidents should be reported to the police. It is the victim who personally reports the matter to the police, but a department head/supervisor may offer support to the victim, such as by means of occupational health services, the Student Health Centre, the health and safety representative or union representatives.

Reporting to the Equality Ombudsman

Anyone who feels subjected to discrimination is entitled to report the matter to the Equality Ombudsman (*Diskrimineringsombudsmannen – DO*), regardless of whether the department head/supervisor is aware of the discrimination and has conducted an investigation or not.

Investigation

The principal has overall responsibility for the working environment at Mid Sweden University. The principal delegates responsibility in writing to each subordinate manager, which means that it is the immediate department head/supervisor who is responsible for ensuring that an investigation is conducted.

If a department head/supervisor becomes aware that an employee or student considers that they have been subjected to unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment at their place of work or study, the department head/supervisor is obligated to investigate and document the circumstances without delay, and, when appropriate, take the measures necessary to prevent it happening again in the future. HR and the head of the legal department provide support in assessing how the case should be investigated. Each investigation must be carried out in a respectful and impartial manner towards everyone involved and must be done in a factual way and objectively, which means that an independent party, such as occupational health services, should conduct the investigation.

The purpose of investigating an incident where someone has felt subject to unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment is to gather sufficient information and knowledge about the situation. According to the Discrimination Act, retaliation is forbidden, which protects the individual who has complained about or reported discrimination, harassment or unequal treatment. This means that department heads/supervisors must ensure that those participating in an investigation or who have reported a matter do not run the risk of being victims of retaliation. This can be done by informing the one who has been accused about the prohibition.

An investigation relies on active participation from everyone concerned, and can therefore not be conducted if those involved wish to remain anonymous. If an individual would still like to bring accusations of unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment without personally participating, the issue will be handled on a general level within the team or student group where the problem exists.

Measures

If unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation is confirmed to have occurred, measures must immediately be put in place to stop it and prevent it from occurring again. The choice of measures that should be implemented depend on the results of the investigation for that particular case.

Unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation can be considered as acts of misbehaviour and, following the investigation, can thereby be referred to the student disciplinary board, the Staff Disciplinary Board (*personalansvarsnämnden* – PAN) or the Government Disciplinary Board for Higher Officials (*Statens ansvarsnämnd* – SAN). The student disciplinary board may decide that a warning or suspension is necessary. The Staff Disciplinary Board and Government Disciplinary Board for Higher Officials may determine that a dismissal, termination, salary deduction or written warning is needed.

Follow-up

When the matter has been dealt with, it must be followed up as part of the systematic health and safety management efforts, to ensure that the unwelcome behaviour has stopped and to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.