2019

Widening access to higher education will be investigated

The government has missioned the Swedish Higher Education Authority to investigate the work done by higher education institutions regarding widening access to higher education.

The Swedish higher education needs to be open and welcoming to all regardless their background. The society needs to make use of all talent that is available.

[For more information in Swedish](#) [1]

Increasing the quality and attractiveness of Teacher Education

The government has appointed two investigators to assist the Ministry of Education and Research to produce a proposal for actions in order to increase the quality of Teacher Education and to help making it more popular.

The proposal should include strengthening the link between theory and practise, increase the focus on methodology, facilitate for those with higher education to choose the teaching profession, shorten the period needed for complementary educational training for those getting a Teacher Education diploma on top of their former academic degree, introduce more teacher-led hours and improve the possibilities to work as a teacher and do Teacher Education studies at the same time.

The investigation should be reported by 31 March 2020.

[For more information in Swedish](#) [2]

Investment in summer courses for Teacher Education students has given effect

The government’s investment in summer courses since 2018 to get more Teacher Education students to study during the summer in order to graduate faster has lead to results. There was a 19 percent increase among students and a 45 percent increase among working teachers who participated in summer courses.

[For more information in Swedish](#) [3]

New rules on residence permits for researchers and students within higher...
The Swedish government has proposed an implementation of the EU-directive for researchers and students into Swedish legislation. The proposal has also as a goal to strengthen the appeal of Sweden to highly skilled third country citizens who can contribute with their competence and knowledge.

The Government proposes new rules for residence permits for researchers and students within higher education but also for working or starting businesses in Sweden after their studies or research. New residence permit rules are also proposed for work placements during university studies, for voluntary work within European Voluntary Service and for au pair work.

For more information in Swedish [4]

A new Advisory Committee for Research has been appointed by the Swedish Government

A new Advisory Committee mainly of rectors and professors of Swedish universities has been appointed for e.g. to assist the Government in the work on the coming Research Policy Proposal.

For more information in Swedish [5]

Assignment to prepare the establishment of the special committee to examine issues of alleged Research Misconduct

The Government has given the Swedish Ethical Review Authority the assignment to prepare the establishment of the special committee to examine issues of alleged research misconduct by 1 January 2020.

The Authority is assigned to prepare the tasks of granting premises and managing administrative and handling tasks to the special committee, including the responsibility for the financial reporting. The Government's proposals, assessments and considerations in proposition (2018/19:58) New order for promoting good practice and managing misconduct in research, is to guide the preparation work.

The assignment should be reported to the Government no later than 10 January 2020.

For more information in Swedish please see: (U2019/01983/F) Uppdrag att förbereda inrättandet av den särskilda nämnd som ska pröva frågor om oredlighet i forskning [6]

The Commission of Inquiry on Governance and Resources of Higher Education

The Commission of Inquiry on Governance and Resources (SOU 2019:6) has conducted a comprehensive review of the steering of and resource allocation to Swedish state Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The goal is to develop the steering so that it makes it easier for Sweden to become one of the foremost countries within research and innovation and a leading knowledge based society. According to the Inquiry, a first precondition for the fulfilment of HEIs' complex mission is academic freedom, as a basis for the development of knowledge and the necessary trust that this development is not controlled or limited by political, economic or other interests. Academic freedom needs to be reflected in corresponding responsibilities in the form of integrity and high quality. In addition, academic norms of quality and integrity are upheld through collegial processes which, consequently, are also central preconditions for HEIs' mission. An active societal responsibility in the form of public engagement and dissemination of knowledge is also central. Lastly, a long-term view, coupled with
room for flexibility and renewal, are important conditions.

The inquiry is under consultation until 24 June 2019.

For more information in Swedish with an English summary please see: (SOU 2019:6) En långsiktig, samordnad och dialogbaserad styrning av högskolan. [7]

Proposal of a new law based on the Commission of Inquiry on Alleged Research Misconduct

The Swedish Government has proposed to the Swedish Parliament a new law (2018/19:58) which is based on the Commission of Inquiry to investigate the need for new procedures for cases concerning the investigation of research misconduct, and make proposals to ensure clear and legally certain handling of alleged misconduct. Under the legal regulations, public higher education institutions are to investigate alleged research misconduct internally. The Inquiry concluded that a change of procedures for investigations of alleged misconduct was needed to ensure a system that was more reliable and legally certain. The Inquiry also concluded that a system in which an independent body investigates all alleged cases of misconduct would be best placed to ensure that investigations are handled impartially, uniformly and reliably. It is therefore proposed that such investigations be handled by a new independent agency, the Research Misconduct Board.

The new law is proposed to enter into force on 1 January 2020.

For more information in Swedish please see: (2018/19:58) Ny ordning för att främja god sed och hantera oredlighet i forskning. [8]

2018

Student aid for effective studies

The comission of inquiry regarding student aid for effective studies (SOU 2018:73) was presented to the government (regeringen [9]) in September 2018.

The inquiry’s assignment was to propose measures to increase the security of students in the event of illness and promote more effective studies. In addition, the inquiry was assigned to investigate how to promote more effective studies and how the student aid system could be used to increase the flow through universities. The assignment was also to propose how the earned income allowance (fribelopp [10]) within the educational system can be designed with the aim of creating a long-term sustainable system with both incentives for effective studies and sufficient opportunity for work in addition to studies.

Examples of the proposals in the inquiry are:

Reduced earned income allowance for students younger than 30 years in order to improve the flow through the university and earned income allowance for students 40 or over to facilitate the conversion in the workplace.

The proposals in the inquiry are suggested to be taken into effect on 1 July 2019

Increased internationalisation of Swedish Higher Education Institutions

The comission of inquiry regarding an increased internationalisation of Swedish higher education
institutions (2017:02) final report was presented to the government on 31 October 2018. The inquiry was tasked to propose a new national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education institutions that include both education and research activities, in addition to revisions the Higher Education Act (högskolelag [11]). In addition to proposing measures to increase Sweden’s attractiveness as a study destination propose how more students can gain an international perspective.

Examples of the proposals in the inquiry are:

- A comprehensive scholarship system and doubling of the funds allocated directly by universities.
- Rules for tuition fees that increase the security for the student and are more flexible for the university.
- An increased presence for Swedish higher education and research abroad.

**Distance learning programs**

The government has tasked the Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och Högskolerådet, UHR [12]) with the responsibility to coordinate and offer funding for projects which aim to further develop distance learning programs so that those unable to move to university towns have access to higher education, The government has dedicated SEK 40 million to the fulfilment of this project from 2019-2020. Smaller municipalities often have a larger percentage of lower educated people than larger municipalities. The aim of the government's initiative is to attract more students in rural areas to apply to higher education, and thereby mitigate the municipalities' need for education, lifelong learning and competencies.

**More chances for visually impaired applicants**

Until recently, visually impaired applicants to higher education (högskola [13]) have been able to take the national university aptitude test (högskoleprovet [14]) maximum three times in DAISY or braille format. As of 2018, the Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och Högskolerådet, UHR [15]) has decided to offer an adapted test every year for the visually impaired so they may have the same opportunities are other students.

**New admission requirements**

The government has developed new general and specific entry requirements for higher education, with a larger focus on applicants' competencies. In an attempt to create more paths to higher education, the government has also introduced a new national entrance exam for students who have not completed upper secondary school. The applicant must be at least 24 years old and passing the exam will give the applicant a basic eligibility for higher education. Moreover, there is now a age limit on students taking the national university aptitude test (högskoleprovet [13]); students must be 18 to take the test. The hope is that this age requirement will encourage students to focus on their upper secondary studies first, while still allowing enough time to take the test multiple times. Most of these new rules will come into force in January 2022.

**Increased internationalisation in higher education**

In order to achieve a higher quality of education and research and to contribute to sustainable development, the government proposes that a new wording regarding internationalisation should be included in the Higher Educational Act by 2020 and a new strategy shall be implemented between
2020 and 2030. The vision of the new strategy is that international understanding and intercultural competence shall constitute an integrated part of higher education and research in Sweden. Read more about the Strategic Agenda [here](https://example.com) [16].

**2017**

**Increased investment in higher education**

In order for more people to complete higher education, the government proposes increased resources for higher education throughout the country in the budget bill for 2018. The government proposes an investment of SEK 260 million for 2018 and 2019. In total, it would open up for more than 3,200 additional students. In addition to this initiative, the government proposes expansion of education in engineering, medicine and civil education at the Swedish Defence University. Fully expanded, the investment is expected to amount to approximately SEK 394 million.

**Increased number of places in engineering education**

There is a great need for engineers in several different areas and access to skilled labour is crucial for both Swedish economic growth and the ability to meet social challenges. The government is therefore investing in the development of engineering courses. Fully expanded, the investment comprises 160 million SEK, which is estimated to amount to approximately 1,600 new study places.

**Increased funding for civil training at the Swedish defence university**

In order to better meet the competence needs of the defence the government proposes an expansion of the Swedish Defence University's civil education programmes in the budget bill for 2018. The proposed increase amounts to SEK 5 million for 2018 and SEK 10 million annually from 2019. Fully expanded, the investment corresponds to approximately 200 new study places.

**More places in medical training**

In the budget bill for 2018 the government proposes to expand the medical education with approximately additional 40 study places, an investment of SEK 201 million in 2018. Fully expanded in 2023, the investment is estimated to comprise 96 million, corresponding to approximately 440 study places.

**Increased safety for students in the event of illness**

The government wants to improve student safety in case of illness. At present, it is not possible for students to retain grants and loans (studiemedel) for full-time studies while on part time sick leave. However, from 1 July 2018 and onwards, this will be possible if special reasons for part time sick leave apply. [Swedish Government official webpage](https://example.com) [17]

**Improved employment conditions for young researchers**

The government has decided to amend the Higher Education Ordinance (Högskoleförordningen [18]) to provide young researchers with clearer terms of employment and more predictable career paths. With a new type of position, assistant senior lecturer (bitrådande lektor), researchers will be able to qualify themselves scientifically and pedagogically in order to fulfill the requirements needed to become permanently employed as Senior lecturer (lektor). The changes are proposed to apply from 1 October 2017. [Swedish Government official webpage](https://example.com) [19]
Increased number of university places for people with foreign degrees

In 2017 the Swedish government has increased the number of student places for people with foreign degrees in three areas. In total there are now about 60 new student places on additional training for biomedical scientists, 90 new student places for economists and 40 new student places for computer scientists. These changes affect several universities across Sweden.

Proposal to increase teachers' competence in neuropsychiatric disabilities

The government proposes that 15 higher education credits in the programme for special needs teachers shall be dedicated to increase competence in neuropsychiatric disabilities including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The proposed changes are expected to come into force in July 2018.

Inquiry regarding increased internationalisation of higher education

The Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) will conduct an inquiry with the aim to propose new goals and a new national strategy for the internationalisation of universities. The strategy will include proposals on how more students can gain an international perspective in their education.

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