



A report on the governmental assignment to survey and analyse the work of Swedish higher education institutions on widening access and widening participation

## **Can excellence be achieved in homogeneous student groups?**



Swedish Council for  
Higher Education

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Swedish Council for Higher Education 2016

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# Summary and recommendations

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have a responsibility to ensure that societal diversity is reflected in higher education. In principle, this can be regarded as the basic definition of widening access, although operative work on widening access may vary. Each person's right to higher education and, in the long term, to power and influence, is an issue of democracy. In purely economic terms, Sweden cannot afford to miss out on potentially excellent students. Diversity among students brings new perspectives and broader experiences, so heterogeneous student groups contribute to increased educational quality, as knowledge develops through the meeting of different perspectives. Another aspect of quality is that students are prepared to encounter social diversity after studying at an HEI that has diversity.

Since the early 2000s, HEIs have been required to actively promote widening access to higher education, but uneven recruitment patterns persist. Entrants to higher education are still more likely to have parents who have higher education and the pattern of uneven socioeconomic recruitment has not changed significantly over the past decade. Other aspects also affect transition to higher education. For example, patterns vary according to gender, ethnicity, between rural and urban areas, and between regions, or are affected by religion, sexual orientation, disability, and how these aspects may interact.

Both in Sweden and internationally, the discussion about widening access has come to include widening participation, increased student completion rates and employability. The requirement to work with widening access means that measures and resources are not limited to student recruitment, but the responsibility remains throughout the period of study.

HEIs see particular challenges in their work on widening access to and widening participation in higher education, not least in terms of resources, but they are generally positive to the government once again prioritising these issues. This is shown in the results of the survey and analysis of how Swedish HEIs work on widening access to and widening participation in higher education, performed by the Swedish Council for Higher Education on behalf of the Swedish government.

## **Conditions vary**

An important starting point for the Swedish Council for Higher Education when working on the task given to it by the Government has been that Swedish HEIs have very different conditions for their work on widening access, partly due to the courses and programmes they offer, their locations and their total resources. Their target groups and the focus of their activities will therefore vary, even if the overarching structures of their work are the same.

In order to produce an operative definition of their work on widening access, each HEI must have knowledge of their student bodies and which groups are underrepresented. HEIs should therefore use the official statistics from the Swedish Higher Education Authority and Statistics Sweden. These should be combined with their own quantitative and qualitative surveys.

### **A broad approach is necessary**

Another important starting point is that work on widening access demands a broad approach, and consists of numerous interconnected components. To succeed, an HEI must work with everything from activities that aim to widen access, via activities to retain admitted students and those aimed at easing student entry to the labour market. The Swedish Council for Higher Education has therefore surveyed how Swedish higher education institutions work with all the components that should be included in successful work on widening access.

The survey shows that the HEIs are committed to work on the issues, but that this is not always structured or has broad support. A number of HEIs have no definition of widening access and widening participation and the majority lack measurable goals, or goals that can be followed up. Half of the institutions have described their student bodies, primarily in terms of gender and social background. Despite the fact that gender is an often surveyed factor, and that educational choices based on gender are perceived as a large structural problem, relatively few of the activities described aim to change traditional gender choices.

### **Recruitment activities aimed at different groups**

It is important to start early when widening access to higher education. A number of activities are organised for pupils in compulsory and upper secondary education, such as “open days” or the use of student ambassadors. Virtually all HEIs organise these types of activities in their work on widening access.

Gender roles should be addressed to a greater extent. Activities for school pupils favour the natural sciences and technology, with clear links to the labour market. Activities for other subjects should also have links to the labour market.

Most HEIs also organise activities for other groups, primarily the unemployed, refugees, immigrants and young adults.

It is relatively common for Swedish HEIs to collaborate with schools and unemployment offices, adult education at upper-secondary level and independent adult education colleges. However, only half of the HEIs have followed up their activities for widening access.

### **The need for preparatory training**

The target groups for widening access often need introductions and preparatory training of some sort. Different types of preparatory, introductory or supplementary qualification programmes open up possibilities for more people to apply for higher education. These types of programmes should



therefore be an important part of work on widening access. Among the programmes offered in order to broaden the knowledge of prospective students, foundation year programmes in the natural sciences or technology are the most common. They are offered at half of the HEIs in the survey. Other types of preparatory programmes, such as in the fine arts or introductory programmes, are not so common.

### **Admission regulations as a means of widening access**

Evaluating prior learning and using alternative selection are the areas of the admission regulations that HEIs may use as tools to widen access to higher education. The survey shows that there is a consensus among the surveyed HEIs that assessing prior learning contributes to widening access. However, assessments are not performed to the extent that is actually possible; few HEIs assess prior learning if there is no formal documentation. Almost 60 per cent of the HEIs use alternative selection, but the purpose is primarily to identify students that are deemed as having a good chance of completing their studies, rather than to widen access.

### **Responsibility for those admitted**

There is awareness among the surveyed institutions that recruitment activities are not enough on their own, but that they must also take responsibility for the students they admit, such as giving them a good reception and support throughout their education. That means that widening participation is as important as widening access. Work on widening access for people with disabilities needs to be expanded, as does work on widening access and participation for HBTQ people. Widening access for adult refugees and immigrants should also focus on those who lack previous higher education. Swedish national minorities should also be considered in work on widening access.

The support that HEIs offer is for students with disabilities and other students in need of support. Adapted examination is one of the most common forms of supporting measures to improve conditions for students who have disabilities. It is important that HEIs ensure accessibility for students with disabilities and offer equal support measures, and that information about supporting measures is easily accessible and is proactively disseminated to presumptive applicants. It is also important that the administrative processes regarding support correspond to the start of the student's education, especially as regards the certificates that enable students to receive support.

Academic writing, language support and mentor programmes are the most common supportive measures available to all students. The most common subject-specific measures are for mathematics. This may be an area of development for other subjects.

### **The importance of a norm-critical approach and teaching and learning in higher education**

There is a link between widening access, widening participation and teaching and learning in higher education, and it is important that a norm-critical approach is included in courses in teaching and learning in higher education,

which should be taken by all teachers in higher education. A norm-critical approach is not just a way of combatting discrimination, but also allows multiple perspectives on knowledge. The higher education sector has unique competence that can be used to develop this area.

### **The recommendations of the Swedish Council for Higher Education**

Work on widening access requires a broad and strategic approach that includes all components.

- The Swedish Council for Higher Education therefore recommends that the Swedish Government demand that Swedish HEIs produce a strategy for their work on widening access and widening participation. This strategy shall include the definition of widening access and widening participation used by the HEI, one or more targets for work on these issues, the activities used to attain these targets and a clear allocation of responsibility. It shall also include a description of how the strategy is to gain the support of the organisation and how it is to be implemented.

As uneven recruitment patterns vary among HEIs, the HEIs can focus on the aspects of widening access that are relevant to their own work by using their own definitions, and by acquiring knowledge of their student body. HEIs can also formulate targets that can be evaluated for their work on widening access to all levels of higher education. HEIs should use the official statistics provided by the Swedish Higher Education Authority and Statistics Sweden. These should be combined with their own quantitative and qualitative surveys. By doing so, HEIs can acquire information that is not available in official statistics, such as gender identity and the students' experiences of higher education.

- The Swedish Council for Higher Education therefore recommends that the Swedish Government demand that Swedish HEIs' strategies clearly state the way in which they will acquire knowledge of their student body.

Uneven recruitment patterns to higher education are part of a process which begins very early and is concretised through the choices a person makes during compulsory school and upper secondary education. An important element of working on widening access is raising the idea of higher education among underrepresented groups. It is also important to influence people who can have an influence, such as teachers, study counsellors, career advisers and parents.

- The Swedish Council for Higher Education therefore recommends that the Swedish Government demand that Swedish HEIs' strategies clearly state the way in which they will achieve their chosen targets. It is important that the HEIs establish cooperation with schools and other actors, such as unemployment offices, independent adult education colleges and immigrant organisations.

For the groups usually targeted by activities for widening access, there is often a need for an introduction or preparation of some sort. Support is also required throughout their studies. Different types of preparatory, introductory or supplementary qualification programmes make it possible for more people to apply for higher education. These educational programmes are therefore an important part of HEIs' work on widening participation.

- The Swedish Council for Higher Education therefore recommends that the Swedish Government demand that Swedish HEIs clearly state, in the abovementioned strategy, how they plan to support students from underrepresented groups before and during their studies and in their entry to the labour market. In this context, the development of teaching and learning in higher education is of paramount importance. HEIs' work on widening access also intersects with their task of counteracting discrimination.

Alternative routes into higher education are in demand, from HEIs, other government authorities and representatives for underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities and groups that represent people with disabilities.

- The Swedish Council for Higher Education therefore recommends that the Swedish Government demand that Swedish HEIs, in the abovementioned strategy, clearly state how they plan to use assessments of prior learning and alternative selection as tools to widen access during admissions to higher education.

The link between higher education and the labour market is another important aspect of work on widening access. Part of this is the systematic follow-up of the students after their graduation. The aim of this should be to examine the relevance of the course/programme to the student's success on the labour market. This is particularly important from the perspective of widening access, as there is an empirical connection between poor employability and belonging to a student group that traditionally does not enter higher education.

Follow-ups are also a good instrument, in that their results can provide prospective students with a realistic idea of which jobs the course/programme may lead to.

- The Swedish Council for Higher Education therefore recommends that the Swedish Government demand that Swedish HEIs, in the abovementioned strategy, clearly state how they intend to increase links to the labour market in the courses and programmes they offer.

The survey performed by the Swedish Council for Higher Education shows that, in general, HEIs are positive about reporting their work on widening access and widening participation. They understand that a reporting requirement keeps the issue alive.

- The Swedish Council for Higher Education therefore proposes that the Swedish Government tasks it with regular monitoring of the work on

widening access and widening participation performed by Swedish HEIs, in addition to its current task of supporting HEIs in their work on widening access and widening participation.

# Counteracting imbalanced recruitment to higher education – the background

The issue of widening access and widening participation in higher education is a priority area for the Swedish Government<sup>1</sup>. According to the Government, traditions, socioeconomic background, gender or disability should not be decisive for the opportunity to start or complete higher education; Swedish higher education should be open and welcoming to everyone who has the potential to complete it.

The Government states that there is imbalanced recruitment to higher education on the basis of the students' backgrounds. For example, it is still twice as common for people with parents who have higher education to continue to higher education themselves, than it is for people whose parents' highest level of education is upper-secondary (see Appendix 1). Also, more women than men enter higher education. The Government highlights how imbalanced recruitment to higher education means that society is not utilising talent, at the same time as there is increasing demand for people with higher education. Making the most of every person's potential is thus not only an issue of equality, but an economic benefit for society.

Additionally, the Government states that widening access and increased diversity lead to increased quality in education. A group in which the students have different backgrounds enriches education through the exchange of more experiences, perspectives and perceptions.

As a means of developing work to counteract imbalanced recruitment, the Government has tasked the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) with surveying and analysing the work of Swedish higher education institutions (HEIs) on widening access to and widening participation in higher education. This task also includes presenting good examples and disseminating information about them. This shall be reported to the Government Offices of Sweden (the Ministry of Education and Research) by 1 April 2016. In this work, UHR shall consult the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ).

UHR's task from the Government shall also be viewed against the background of HEIs – since the early 2000s – having been tasked with the actively promoting and widening access to higher education<sup>2</sup>.

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1. Including in Hellmark Knutsson, H. and Svantorp, G., *Högskolan ska välkomna alla*, Värmlands Folkblad (30 March 2015).

2. Pursuant to Chapter 1, Section 5 of the Swedish Higher Education Act.

# UHR's work on the assignment

The problem of imbalanced recruitment to higher education (HE) is partly due to factors that HEIs cannot influence, or which they find difficult to influence. These may include the availability of student housing, the system of student funding and the traditionally greater resistance to taking loans found among the groups that are under-represented in higher education. Additionally, social and gender patterns in the education system are founded much earlier than the opportunities for recruitment to higher education. The conditions for higher education are established at school, including through the choice of programme at upper-secondary level. This means that it is important for other actors to work on this issue as well.

However, it is also important to emphasise that HEIs have a societal responsibility to reflect the diversity of society. Even if the HEIs cannot take responsibility for the factors that are outside their area of responsibility and for the choices made by young people at school, they are able to widen participation in their courses and programmes using a range of means.

UHR's task thus applies to *HEIs'* work on widening access and widening participation and is based upon two main questions: How do HEIs work on widening access to their courses and programmes based on their own circumstances and potential? How do they work on widening access within the HEI? UHR has examined these questions using several sources, which has resulted in extensive documentation for surveys and analyses.

## Questionnaire for HEIs

UHR sent a questionnaire to all state HEIs and to a selection of independent HEIs, a total of 38 HEIs. Based on the assignment from the Government, the questionnaire covered the HEI's work on widening access and widening participation. It therefore included questions about measures taken by the HEIs to widen access and to help the students complete their courses/programmes, including various types of support, courses for teachers in teaching and learning in higher education and work on equality (see Appendix 6). It also included questions about the HEIs' application of admission regulations, supporting measures for employability, the organisation of work on widening access, the meaning given to the concept and about the challenges and difficulties of recruiting and educating students from a variety of backgrounds. Space was also provided for HEIs to highlight their own activities, projects or organisations within the field of widening access. The HEIs were also welcome to make requests for the support they would like to receive from UHR for their work with widening access (see Appendix 6).

The response frequency was very high, with responses from all but one HEI. In addition, another two HEIs in addition to the original 38 provided responses, so a total of 39 HEIs responded to the questionnaire.

## **Hearings and discussion forum**

To get opinions from under-represented groups in higher education, as well as from other areas of society, UHR organised a discussion forum (see Appendix 2). A wide range of organisations, including interest groups for people with disabilities and other frequently discriminated groups, public authorities and labour market organisations, were invited to a whole day of talks. During the group discussions, participants were able to provide opinions about the barriers to some groups entering higher education and completing their education. The participants could also make proposals for how HEIs should work with recruiting and educating students from a range of backgrounds. The opinions from the discussion forum were an important starting point for the discussions at the HEI hearings and have also been used as a basis for this report. See Appendix 2 for a summary of opinions put forward at the discussion forum.

To add information to the questionnaire responses, UHR organised five hearings with the HEIs. These were also over a full day, with representatives from the HEIs and students' unions participating. The questions discussed during the hearings were based on the questionnaire and followed its structure. The answers and conclusions generated at the hearings, as well as the questionnaire responses, have been used as a basis for the report to the Government.

## **Other activities completed as part of the assignment**

As part of its assignment, UHR has also analysed the information about widening access and widening participation on the HEIs' websites. This analysis is presented in the section *Survey results*. Based on UKÄ's statistics, UHR has described the recruitment imbalance to higher education and presented compiled statistics per HEI for the aspects of widening access that are provided by UKÄ (see Appendix 3). As a basis for the analyses carried out as part of this assignment, UHR has also reviewed the relevant international and Swedish research (see Appendix 4).

UHR has also collected good examples of how HEIs work on widening access and widening participation (see Appendix 5). The purpose is to inspire HEIs and help them learn from each other. These examples should also be able to be used as a basis for similar activities at other HEIs. It has not been possible to include all the good examples for reasons of space, but they have been selected in an attempt to make the examples as varied as possible. However, UHR wishes to emphasise that there are more good examples than those in the appendix. The examples will be used as a basis at seminars and workshops that UHR plans to organise to support HEIs in their work on the task.

While working on the assignment, UHR has provided regular information about how work is progressing through various channels, including status reports sent to interested subscribers. UHR has also produced a number of films with good examples of the HEIs' work on widening access and widening participation.

### **Who has worked on this assignment?**

UHR's working group has comprised Aleksandra Sjöstrand (project manager), Peter Barck-Holst, Carina Hellgren and Charlotte Löfgren. Annika Ghafoori and Tonje Broby have also participated.

UHR also had an external reference group. This comprised Andrea Amft (UKÄ), Petra Angervall (University of Gothenburg), Stina Backman (Linköping University), Fredrik Bondestam (Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research), Ella Gosh (Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions), Olle Brynja (Equality Ombudsman), Carina Carlund (University of Gothenburg and Include), David Lundgren (Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education), Caroline Sundberg (Swedish National Union of Students) and Moira von Wright (Södertörn University and the Association of Swedish Higher Education).

UHR has used Vetenskap & Allmänhet (VA – Public and Science), a non-profit organisation that promotes dialogue and openness between researchers and the general public, in some areas of its work. VA has participated in the preparation, execution and documentation of the HEI hearings and the discussion forum. VA has also provided opinions about the questionnaire UHR sent to the HEIs. Throughout the working process, UHR has discussed the issue in various contexts, including at meetings with the authority's board and participation committee, an external expert committee for issues relating to widening access to higher education.



# Starting points for UHR's work on the assignment

## HEIs have varying conditions for their work on widening access

The content and form of work on widening access and widening participation is context-dependent. HEIs have very different conditions in which to work on this task and its starting point must be the circumstances at each HEI. It can therefore be difficult to find *one* standard for how work on widening access and widening participation should be conducted, even if the overarching structures for the work are the same. These differing conditions also make it difficult to compare the work of HEIs on widening access; there are various factors that influence HEIs' work on this task.

### Courses and programmes

One of the most important aspects to have an effect on recruitment is the range of courses and programmes that are on offer. According to UKÄ's statistics (see Appendix 3) students from different social backgrounds tend to study somewhat different subjects in higher education. For example, on some long programmes that require high grades from upper-secondary school for admission, and which also pave the way to professions with good career prospects, a comparatively large proportion of students have highly educated parents. There is also a relative high proportion of students with highly educated parents on fine arts programmes. HE entrants with poorly-educated parents, however, comprise a fairly large proportion of students on programmes in teaching and careers and study guidance counselling.

New students with Swedish and foreign backgrounds study programmes that lead to a general or vocational qualification to about the same extent. On a few programmes and on pharmacy degrees, people with foreign backgrounds are over-represented.

Educational choices are also strongly gender linked. Men generally dominate on programmes in technology, while women dominate on programmes in care and healthcare, medicine and odontology, as well as teaching.

Broadening the range of available courses and programmes can almost automatically lead to widening access. However, if an HEI has a narrow range of courses and programmes, applicants are often less varied, including both gender and social background.

### Geographic location

Another important aspect in widening access is the HEI's geographic location. This includes population density in the local area, the region's attraction

power as a place to study and the region's need for qualified workers. According to UKÄ's statistics, there are great differences in recruitment between the various counties and municipalities (Universitetskanslersämbetet 2015a). There are also regional differences between men and women as regards entry to HE.

### **The image of the HEI among potential applicants**

The image that potential applicants have of the various HEIs can also influence the recruitment of under-represented groups. The challenges can vary depending on the type of HEI. Arts-based HEIs may, for example, find that some groups don't know of them or feel they cannot afford an artistic education. Technical HEIs are often regarded as "macho" and thus find it difficult to recruit women. Older HEIs may find that the image of the HEI as historic and research-based is a barrier to recruiting students from homes without academic traditions.

### **Knowledge of the HEI**

Public knowledge of the various HEIs varies. Some HEIs are well-known while other, younger HEIs find that they have a low recognition factor. For the less established HEIs, it can therefore be relevant to primarily work on improving public knowledge of their existence, such as through marketing activities.

### **The HEI's size and total resources**

Conditions for the HEI's work on widening access and widening participation also vary depending on its size. It is relatively easy for small HEI's to gather knowledge of the students' background or to integrate work in the organisation, which can be much more difficult for bigger HEIs. On the other hand, bigger HEIs usually have greater total resources and thus better conditions for working with various types of resource-demanding activities.

### **Different "means of distribution" for higher education**

Geographic distance to an HEI, business structures and social composition of municipalities clearly demonstrate the likelihood of a young person continuing to HE. That HE is distributed in various ways thus contributes to widening access. These are distance courses, decentralised or relocated courses and programmes and those run via municipal centres of learning.

Distance course are a convenient way of studying, because they are often independent of time and space. Sweden made early investments in the development of distance education, both qualitatively and quantitatively. One expressly stated aim was to widen access to HE.

A survey carried out by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket) in 2010 showed that there are many older students in distance education (Högskoleverket 2010). Learning centres are also a way of reaching such categories of student that would probably not otherwise be reached, particularly those who are slightly older and from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, and unwilling to move from their hometown.

Courses that are located in places other than the HEI create a geographic proximity to the HEI, making it easier to study.

## **What is widening access to higher education?**

The task legislated by the Swedish Higher Education Act, to be carried out by HEIs, on the active promotion of and widening of access to HE is vaguely worded. Partly, it lacks a coherent definition of the concept of widening access, partly a clarification of which aspects of the work to widen access are important to focus on. In other words, there is a great deal of room for interpretation when HEIs define their task. This is not necessarily a bad thing, because imbalanced recruitment may have different characteristics at different HEIs. The potential for an HEI to formulate its own definition means that it can focus on the aspects of widening access that are relevant to its work on the task. There is also a great deal of room for interpretation as regard the concept of widening participation in HE that UHR's assignment deals with.

In Sweden, widening access has long been limited to two primary categories: social background and foreign background.

### **Social background**

Social background, measured as the parents' level of education, is by far the most important factor for entering higher education. The social recruitment imbalance<sup>3</sup> is built up throughout the entire period of schooling. Pupils with parents who have higher education are over-represented on the upper-secondary programmes that provide the best prerequisites for higher education, while pupils from educationally-disadvantaged backgrounds are strongly under-represented on these programmes. This social recruitment imbalance has, in general terms, not changed over the past decade. People with well-educated parents are over-represented in HE and people with poorly-educated parents are under-represented. The parents' level of education also affects the focus of studies (see Appendix 3). For example, the proportion of people with highly-educated parents is considerably greater on medical degrees than for HE on average.

### **Foreign background**

Foreign background means people who are registered in Sweden who were born abroad, and people who were born in Sweden with both parents born abroad. People with foreign backgrounds now start HE to the same extent as people with Swedish backgrounds. However, people with foreign backgrounds are a heterogeneous group and their present situation in Sweden depends on many factors, such as the country from which they emigrated, how old they were when they emigrated and how long they have been in

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3. Social recruitment imbalance occurs when individuals from particular social origins achieve higher levels of education more often than others.

Sweden. For example, people who arrived in Sweden after starting their schooling, between the ages of seven and eighteen, are under-represented in Swedish HE.

### **Not only social and foreign backgrounds influence entry to HE – other aspects are also important**

In UHR's opinion, only analysing social and foreign backgrounds is inadequate as regards entry to HE. It is important to take account of other aspects as well. For example, the selection that is based on gender, between rural and urban, and between different regions, or differences due to faith, sexual orientation or various types of disability, and how these aspects interact.

## **Widening access to higher education – a chain with many links**

Both in Sweden and internationally, the discussion about widening access has come to include widening participation, increased student completion and employability. Widening access is discussed in relation to HEIs' responsibility for the students they admit vis-à-vis teaching methods, supporting measures and follow ups. This responsibility includes the HEIs recognising students who appear to have problems with their studies at an early stage and informing them about the available support. The task of widening access means that measures and resources are not only limited to student recruitment, but that the responsibility remains throughout the period of study.

Successful work on widening access to HE thus requires a broad approach. This consists of several interdependent components and sub-components. To succeed, an HEI must work with all these components, from measures to widen access, via retention of admitted students to measures that aim to ease the students' transition to the labour market. Information or gender equality issues are not adequate. It is important to see a "red thread" that ties the various components together and that work on the task is spread evenly across the field. The starting point for this work is that work is structured and evaluated.

### **Structure and support are fundamental to successful work on this task**

#### ***Formulating a definition of widening access – the first step in creating structure for working with the task***

One basic condition for successful work on the task is that each HEI makes an interpretation of and defines what the task of widening access – as it is formulated in the Higher Education Act – means for them. As imbalanced recruitment may have different characteristics at different HEIs, they can use their own definitions to focus on the aspects of widening access that are relevant to their own work on the task.

### ***Knowledge of the student body is also important***

Another important condition for successful work on the task is knowledge of which groups are under-represented on the HEI's courses and programmes. This makes it important to acquire knowledge of the HEI's student body as regards the occurrence of and situation for over and under-represented groups.

A quantitative survey is an important part of gathering this knowledge, particularly for recruitment measures. Based on existing statistics, an HEI can compare the distribution of students on its own courses/programmes with similar ones at other HEIs or with the national average. On the basis of statistics, the HEI can formulate aims to reduce any imbalances. Quantitative targets are easy to define, measure and follow up.

However, a quantitative survey is not enough to achieve real change; it should be supplemented with qualitative data. The primary purpose should be to understand the underlying reasons why the HEI has not succeeded in recruiting certain groups of students. A quantitative survey is thus an important starting point for qualitative analyses. One important element of HEIs' work on widening access and widening participation should be a deep analysis of their courses and programmes, including their content and organisation and how the HEI functions overall. Using this knowledge, HEIs can work on producing various techniques to get a range of groups to apply for a particular programme. Qualitative data collection methods can be aimed at both current and potential students, doctoral students and staff.

### ***A clearly formulated target should be established***

An important foundation for the work on the task is that each HEI formulates a clear target for what it wants to achieve. This could be several targets, because recruitment imbalances can vary within an HEI depending on the subject. It is highly unlikely that HEIs with a wide range of courses and programmes will be able to formulate a single target for the whole HEI, unless general qualitative aims are formulated with a high level of abstraction. It may thus be better for these HEIs to develop concrete targets at faculty or department level, rather than at the level of the HEI. The target(s) should be based on a in which the HEI specifies which aspects are covered by this work. It is difficult to integrate work on these issues in the organisation.

### ***A strategy creates structure for work with the task***

To be able to work successfully and effectively with the task, it is important that each HEI develops a strategy for working with these issues. A strategy and associated action plan shall state the focus of the HEI's work by including the HEI's definition of widening access and widening participation, one or more targets for work on the issues, activities for achieving these targets and a clear allocation of responsibility.

### ***Support and implementation are important for sustainable work on the task***

To achieve long-term effects, HEIs must drive the issues relating to widening access in a long-term, integrated manner. Several staff categories should be

involved in the work. The measures taken within the framework of widening access and widening participation should include a plan for their introduction and management in day to day activities and have internal support prior to their start.

## **HEIs' work on widening access**

### ***Important to raise the idea of higher education – information, marketing and influencing attitudes***

Imbalanced recruitment to HE deals with a process that begins very early and which is concretely expressed in the choices an individual makes during his or her schooling. An important part of the task of widening access is therefore to raise the idea of HE among groups with low rates of entry to HE. Study information is an important part of this work, but just providing information about studying is not enough. Information is important if you already know that you are going to keep studying, but not where or what. If you are less certain about what HE entails, this information is a poorer match for requirements. This is why it is also important to work on influencing attitudes among school pupils, to arouse interest and make entering HE a less dramatic choice.

### ***Important to influence those who can have an influence***

The parents' background plays a decisive role in imbalanced recruitment to HE. Highly educated parents, and parents with a Swedish background, have more knowledge of the education system and can help their children through it by helping them make the right choices. Parents thus have a great influence on the pupils' choices for upper-secondary and higher education, such as which upper-secondary programme to take. The pupils' upper-secondary and higher education choices are also affected by their gender. This is where school has an important compensatory role. In the work on widening access, it is important to highlight the importance of the teachers and study guidance counsellors as regards counteracting limitations to potential educational choices based on the pupil's background, and breaking stereotypical choices for careers or studies. Work on changing the attitudes of pupils should include information and education measures aimed at these groups. Efforts should also target another important group in this context, namely the parents of pupils in under-represented groups.

### ***Recruitment activities***

Recruitment work on an outreach basis is an extremely important element of work on widening access. This covers recruitment activities aimed at school pupils and at other groups, such as refugees, jobseekers, immigrants or students at adult education colleges. For this reason, it is important that HEIs establish cooperation with schools and other actors, such as job centres, adult education colleges and associations for immigrants.

## **HEIs' work on facilitating entry to higher education**

### ***Bridging and qualifying courses***

Groups that are the target of widening access often need for various types of introductions and preparation. Different types of preparatory, introduction or supplementary courses open up opportunities for more people to apply for HE. These courses are thus a very important part of the HEIs' work on widening access. An introduction course may be a way of making HE seem less stressful for people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who are hesitant about entering HE, as well as facilitating an introduction to the HE's working methods. Gaining insight into how to study in HE provides better conditions for continuing to study successfully.

Many prospective students also lack the specific entry requirements for the relevant course/programme. A foundation year provides eligibility and a guaranteed place on the programme the foundation year is for, often engineering or the natural sciences. Foundation year programmes are often held in the same way as other HE programmes and thus provide the opportunity to practice study techniques for upcoming studies. This makes a foundation year a good basis for further study. It is also a good tool for widening access, particularly for increasing the proportion of female applicants in engineering and the natural sciences, but also for the recruitment of students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Students with these backgrounds have a better chance of having a go and succeeding with their studies, including in engineering, an area that may be perceived as too big a step to take.

HEIs can also organise introductory courses to HE to boost recruitment, aimed at preparing students for continuing in HE. It is also possible to organise special courses for foreign graduates.

### ***Admission regulations as an instrument for widening participation***

The design and application of admission regulations can be of great importance in widening access to HE. Admission to HE, particularly for courses/programmes aimed at new entrants, is regulated in detail at a national level<sup>4</sup>. However, there are some areas of regulation that allow flexibility and also touch on the issue of widening access. Evaluations of prior learning and the application of alternative selection can be particularly useful as a tool to widening access to admission to HE.

### ***Evaluations of prior learning***

Prior learning is the collected competence a person has, whether or not he or she has formal proof of this. It is a means of gaining eligibility that is equivalent to formal qualifications. According to the provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance, HEIs are obliged to evaluate the applicant's prior learning. Evaluations of prior learning allow applicants of varying backgrounds and experience to be admitted.

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4. On 17 March 2016 the Government decided that the entire system for access to HE at the undergraduate level will be reviewed. The intention is to create a simpler and more open system.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's evaluation of HEIs' work on the evaluation of prior learning showed that there is some hesitation at HEIs vis-à-vis work on evaluating prior learning (Högskoleverket 2009c). Among other things, the provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance are regarded as ambiguous and there is a lack of clarity about some terminology. During work on the assignment, it has also become apparent that evaluations of prior learning are given a low priority at HEIs. One reason may be that the provisions that have been in the Ordinance for several years are not widely enough known, and that there is uncertainty about how they should be applied. Another reason could be the approach that is often found at HEIs, i.e. that formal requirements are the "proper" way of acquiring competence. HEIs often feel that these evaluations are an unnecessary evil, one that uses a great many resources for little reward because there are few cases<sup>5</sup>.

### ***Applying alternative selection***

The provision on alternative selection came into force on 1 January 2003. The background is the Government's proposal in *Den öppna högskolan* (Government Bill 2001/02:15) that it should be possible for HEIs to widen access, including for applicants with prior learning or non-traditional educational backgrounds.

The provision means that an HEI may itself decide which selection criteria will be used for a maximum of one-third of the places on a course or programme. The selection criteria that are decided by the HEI may consist of other specific tests than the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test, knowledge, professional experience or other experience that is of particular value for the course or programme, and other objective circumstances of relevance. After permission from UHR, an HEI may use alternative selection for more than one-third of the places<sup>6</sup>. It is important to note that there is no legislative support for positive discrimination or quotas. This means that gender, ethnicity, or other factors may not be a merit for selection; suitability for studying must be the overarching criterion for selection. One primary requirement when it comes to the selection instruments used is that they have the ability to select students who have better prerequisites for successful study than those who are not admitted. This principle may contradict the use of selection to fulfil certain targets of education policy, such as reduced social, gender and ethnic imbalances in recruitment.

Some HEIs that previously applied alternative selection by using positive discrimination for gender and ethnicity have been taken to court and lost (Supreme Court 2006, Värmland District Court 2007, Örebro District Court 2007). In *Ny värld – ny högskola* (Government Bill 2004/05:162), p. 31, the Government states that the basic principle of the admissions system is to be fair and treat all applicants equally. The Government emphasises that alterna-

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5. The Government has put aside SEK 30 million to support the work of HEIs in developing processes and structures for the evaluation of prior learning. The equivalent amount has been calculated for the years 2017 and 2018. Additionally, UHR has been tasked with proposing how trial activities with special validation measures in HE and higher vocational education can be designed.

6. Pursuant to Chapter 7, Sections 13, 15 and 23 of the Higher Education Ordinance.



tive selection must not be used to provide an advantage for applicants from particular groups or with a particular background.

In the opinion of UHR, alternative selection can be regarded as an instrument for widening access, even if positive discrimination is not permitted. A wide range of opportunities for admission to HE increases opportunities for people who do not have a “traditional” background. Different selection methods benefit different groups of students. Within the bounds of alternative selection, professional experience can comprise a basis for selection, which is good for mature students. In this way, alternative selection can contribute to the student group becoming more heterogeneous. UHR therefore wishes to promote the value of having several instruments for selection. However, it is important that alternative selection is followed-up, including from the aspect of widening access.

### **Work on widening access also includes the third cycle**

Widening access to third cycle programmes (doctoral level) has thus far not been prioritised, probably because recruitment to doctoral programmes is so greatly affected by any imbalances in recruitment to the first and second cycles. However, the issue of student completion has been raised. In the opinion of UHR, widening access to and widening participation at doctoral level is an important aspect of an HEI’s work on widening access and widening participation more generally.

### **Widening participation as important as widening access**

The focus of work on widening access has, over the years, moved from just recruitment to issues of widening participation and the completion of studies, student retention. Previous follow ups and evaluations of HEIs’ work on widening access, and international experience, show that a focus on widening participation is a successful strategy. Recruitment measures alone are not adequate, HEIs must help the admitted students to complete their studies. This means that HEIs should work systematically with measures for welcoming, introducing and supporting the students in a variety of ways. The development of teaching and learning in higher education also has an important role to play here.

HEIs work on widening access also touches on their task of counteracting discrimination. It is the obligation of all HEIs to conduct targeted work on the active promotion of equal rights and opportunities for the students who participate in or apply for places at the HEI, regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, faith or belief system, disability, sexual orientation or age<sup>7</sup>. The legislation expressly gives HEIs the responsibility to actively work towards counteracting discrimination and harassment. This includes HEIs drawing up an annual plan for equal opportunities.

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7. According to the Discrimination Act 2008:567

### **Links to the labour market an important part of this work**

An important part of widening access is the HEIs' careers guidance. It is important that the students, particularly students from under-represented groups, get an idea of what they can work with after completing their studies. It is therefore important that careers planning is included for all students early on in their studies and that study and careers guidance is improved. Career planning should also include measures for increasing graduate employability and the usefulness of course/programmes.

Research has demonstrated an empirical connection between poor employability and belonging to a category of students that do not traditionally study in HE (European Commission 2014). Students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, for example, find it more difficult than other students to get a job that matches their education after graduating. Aspects such as the programme's links to working life, the scope of entrepreneurship in the programme, the degree of the HEI's cooperation with business, formalised contact areas between students and potential employers, such as labour market days, are of particular importance to students from under-represented groups.

### **Follow-ups are a final link in this work**

It is important that HEIs systematically follow up their students for a period after they graduate. This should aim to find out the relevance of their education to their success on the labour market. This is particularly important as regards widening participation. Follow-ups are also a good instrument, as their results can provide potential students with a realistic picture of which professions the course or programme may lead to. This is also particularly important for students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

# Survey results

## How structured is HEIs' work on widening access and widening participation?

Structured work on the task requires the formulation of a definition of widening access and widening participation, acquiring knowledge of the student body, formulating and following up targets for work on the task, developing a strategy and creating an organisation for the work and gaining the support of the organisation for the work.

## How do HEIs define widening access and widening participation?

### ***The majority of HEIs have not formulated a definition***

As the character of recruitment imbalances can vary from HEI to HEI, it is essential that each HEI defines widening access in relation to its own circumstances. Using this definition, the HEI can focus on the aspects of widening access that are relevant to its work on the task.

The survey showed that a majority of the surveyed HEIs have not formulated a definition of widening access or widening participation. However, some stated that they are currently working on producing a policy or an action plan for widening access. This work entails producing a definition.

### ***No definition, but widening access is covered in various types of internal documentation***

Some of the HEIs that do not have a definition instead refer to various types of internal documentation that cover the issue of widening access and/or widening participation. These are partly HEI-wide steering documents, such as strategy or vision documents, partly action plans for work on widening access or equality issues. In other words, these documents do not contain any definition of widening access, but the meaning that the HEI given to the concept is more or less clearly woven into a document's contents.

The HEI-wide steering documents are characterised by the language relating to widening access being very general. For example, *Södertörn University's* document *Vision, ethos, mål och strategier 2015-2019* states that it will be "an open and thriving meeting place that attracts students from different backgrounds and at different stages of their lives".

However, in action plans, the other type of documentation that HEIs refer to, widening access is referred to more concretely. For example, *Dalarna University* shall, according to its action plan for widening access, work to create more routes to HE, expand the range of courses and programmes, offer relevant supplementary courses for foreign graduates, work on validation, develop supporting measures for its students, develop web-based teaching in real time and use targeted marketing in specific subjects. The areas cov-

ered by the action plan indicate in a relatively concrete manner what the HEI means by widening access.

### ***Some HEIs have produced their own definitions or use definitions formulated by others***

Some HEIs have produced their own definitions. The majority of these include both access and participation. A few definitions only cover access. At a few HEIs, work on widening access and participation includes not only the students, but also staff. In some cases, it also includes the third cycle. A few cases also include measures for increasing student employability.

Some of the definitions also cover measures to encourage or attract under-represented groups to apply to HE. The definitions are established in action plans or strategies for work on widening access or equal opportunities.

The HEIs vary in how clear they are in their definitions of which groups are included in widening access and widening participation. Some HEIs state that the measures are intended for under-represented groups without specifying which groups these are. Some HEIs refer to the grounds for discrimination in the Discrimination Act (2008:567). Others are more specific in their definition and state exactly which aspects they intend to focus on in their work on widening access and widening participation, which may be gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and geographic location. Social background is the aspect that is stated in all definitions.

*University West's* definition is an example of an extra clear delimitation of the aspects it focuses on in its work on widening access. It defines widening access as the admission of people with parents who have a non-academic background and people who want to supplement previous education. The definition also states that the university's measures for widening access are aimed at large groups in the local area.

A few HEIs state that their basis is existing definitions of widening access as formulated by others, such as by the Government in *Den öppna högskolan* (Government Bill 2001/02:15) or by the Include network<sup>8</sup>.

### **Have the HEIs formulated targets for their work on the task?**

One of the important starting point for the HEIs' work on widening access and widening participation is that there are clear targets. It is also important that targets are followed up.

### ***Half of the HEIs have formulated targets***

More than half of the HEIs state that they have formulated their own targets for reducing imbalanced recruitment. At some, there are shared targets for the HEI as well as targets at faculty or department level.

Some of the HEIs that have not formulated any targets for work on the issues instead refer to different types of overarching steering documents, such as vision documents. The documents include targets that, according to

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8. Include is a national network of HEIs that works on widening access and widening participation in HE. Include's website states that the network has 23 members, 22 HEIs and SFS.

the HEIs, indicate their ambitions in their work on widening access and widening participation. For example, one of the *University of Gävle's* operating targets states that it shall offer “significant accessibility to the university’s courses and programmes through flexible solutions with unlimited opportunities to study in time space”. According to *Malmö University's* vision document *Strategisk plattform 2020*, the university’s target for 2020 is to be a university that is “characterised by creativity and diversity”.

In the opinion of UHR, the targets in these two examples are formulated with a high level of abstraction. However, the aims in the document referred to by *Mid Sweden University* are more concrete. The targets include increasing interest in HE among school pupils and recruiting from groups with educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. This includes potential and existing students from homes without a tradition of HE, as well as people living in rural areas.

### ***Few HEIs have formulated quantitative targets or ones that can be followed up***

The survey shows that only a few HEIs have formulated measurable quantitative targets, i.e. targets that the proportion of under-represented groups will increase to a particular percentage. Measurable targets are almost exclusively gender-related.

For example, the targets for *Blekinge Institute of Technology* and the Institute of Technology at *Linköping University* are to achieve more even gender distributions, 40/60 per cent women and men, on all courses and programmes. However, the target for *Luleå University of Technology* is more modest, namely using targeted measures to work towards at least 25 per cent of the students being represented by men or women on all courses/programmes.

*Chalmers University of Technology's* targets, on the other hand, relate to social and ethnic imbalances in recruitment. Based on UKÄ's statistics, it has compared the number of students with different backgrounds on its programmes with the national figures for each group on the equivalent programmes. The targets established by the university exceed the national average, both for the proportion of students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and students with foreign backgrounds. It is also planning a survey to improve knowledge of why the university has such imbalanced recruitment, including regionally and socioeconomically.

*Mälardalen University's* targets for widening access relate to gender and social background.

Some HEIs have formulated targets that may not be quantitative, but which can be followed up to some extent. This could be a target of achieving a more even gender distribution on courses and programmes, or a target that the student body – and sometimes the staff – will reflect the ethnic and social diversity of society at large. Work may also be divided into a number of clear targets with an allocation of responsibilities or references to those affected, e.g. that “everyone (managers, employees and students) shall know of and be familiar with the university’s current equality and equal opportunities

plan, and the way in which allegations of harassment or sexual harassment are dealt with”.

However, the majority of HEIs lack measurable targets, or even ones that can be followed up, for widening access. Frequently, general aims have been formulated, such as “all students will feel welcome at the university”, that “the university will be an environment that, in a variety of ways, promotes critical reflection and awareness of issues relating to equality and equal opportunities in higher education” or that “admission of students is conducted from the perspective of equality”, sometimes without specifying how this is to be achieved.

### ***Targets are often for both widening access and widening participation***

The survey shows that there is an awareness among the surveyed HEIs that recruitment measures are not adequate and that it is necessary to take responsibility for admitted students, including how they are welcomed and the support they receive while studying. In most cases where the HEIs have formulated targets for work on these issues, they cover both widening access and widening participation.

For example, the *University of Gothenburg* states that its targets are to motivate more people from under-represented groups to apply to the university and to give them access to the university in a fairer manner. In addition, they will develop preparedness to welcome and support all students throughout their studies. Another example is *Luleå University of Technology's* target that everyone, regardless of social or ethnic background, disability, gender or sexual orientation, will feel welcome as a student and be provided with good conditions in which to complete their education. To achieve this, the university has produced specific measures to widen access and provide good reception and support throughout the period of study.

### ***Many HEIs aim to achieve a more even gender distribution***

Numerous HEIs have a target of achieving and, in some cases, maintaining, an even gender distribution throughout the HEI or on particular courses/programmes. In many cases the HEIs specify which gender is meant. For example, *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* state that work on recruiting female students has long been in focus at the university. *Beckmans College of Design*, on the other hand, aims to increase the number of male applicants to one of its programmes, the fashion programme.

### ***One-third of HEIs aim to reduce the social imbalance in recruitment***

More than one-third of HEIs state that their target is to increase the proportion of students from educationally disadvantaged or non-academic homes, or from non-traditional or under-represented groups. This is sometimes expressed as how the composition of the student group should reflect society outside the HEI in terms of diversity and composition.

***Some HEIs have a target of increasing the proportion of students with a foreign background***

A few HEIs state that they have a target of increasing the proportion of students with a foreign background, which includes the HEIs with the target that the composition of the student group shall reflect society outside the HEI in terms of diversity and composition. UHR's interpretation is that the meaning of the target includes a striving to reduce ethnically imbalanced recruitment.

***Other types of targets stated by some HEIs***

- To make it easier for working students
- To make it easier for students with children
- To increase the number of international students
- To increase geographic spread
- To increase the rate of entry to HE in the region
- To widen participation in natural science programmes

***Combining targets is common – promoting recruitment is not the same as widening access***

In its report *Uppföljning av lärosätenas arbete med breddad rekrytering 2006-2008*, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education highlighted how ten or so HEIs had targets that dealt with promoting recruitment rather than widening access. UHR's survey also shows that there is a combination of targets. For example, a relatively common target for programmes in the natural sciences and technology is to encourage or increase pupils' scientific interest, such as through cooperation with local schools. Another example could be that a college with a lower rate of entry to HE than the national average has a target of approaching the national average. This type of target is primarily about promoting recruitment rather than widening access, even if a side effect may naturally be that access has de facto widened.

***What strategies do the HEIs have for work on widening access and widening participation?***

***Half of the HEIs have a strategy for widening access...***

Half of the surveyed HEIs state that they have developed a strategy and/or action plan for work on the issues.

***...and some are working on producing a new strategy or revising the present one***

One of these HEIs is the newly founded *Stockholm University of the Arts*. It is working on a pilot study for a project on widening access that it is estimated will take three years. The aims of the pilot study include defining widening access. It will also include an action plan for continued work on widening access. Another example is *Lund University's* ongoing and ambitious work to develop a shared plan for the development and implementation of work on widening access and widening participation.

Some HEIs state that their existing strategies or action plans will be revised. This includes the few HEIs that have out of date strategies. *Beck-*

*mans College of Design* states that its new strategy will have a greater focus on widening participation through the entire process, from recruitment to employability. The strategy will deal with coordinating resources and making all staff systematically participate in the work. A formulation of targets and overarching action plan for widening participation will be included. The work also includes a review and summarising description and evaluation of the work that the college has long been conducting on programmes and courses.

### ***Sometimes widening access is touched on other strategies or documents***

Some HEIs have no specific strategy for work on widening access and widening participation, instead referring to other documents – strategies or various types of action plans, often action plans for equality. The HEIs maintain that these strategies or action plans include measures and work that aim to achieve wider access and participation.

For example, the *University of Skövde* refers to the action plan for the development of an excellent learning environment. It states that widening access and widening participation are included in this development work. *Kristianstad University* refers to the university's accessibility plan and action plan for equality, diversity and equal opportunities. It maintains that work on increasing accessibility, work on "equal rights" and the above module in the basic course in teaching and learning in higher education are examples of its work on widening access. *Linnaeus University* states that work on widening access is an integrated part of its work on "equal rights".

### **How have the HEIs organised work on widening access and widening participation?**

The survey shows that work on widening access and widening participation is very different at the various HEIs. This is due to factors such as the HEIs' size, organisational structure and also their level of ambition when working with these issues.

### ***The majority of HEIs have a specific organisation for working with these issues***

Most HEIs state that they have a specific organisation for working with these issues. Only a few do not have one. This may be due to the small size of the HEI or that work on the issues is coordinated with work on other issues. For example, the *Stockholm School of Theology* states that it doesn't have many staff categories, with a total of just 25 employees.

### ***Work is conducted at several organisational levels at most HEIs***

At the majority of HEIs, work on widening access and widening participation is conducted at several organisational levels. This means that various areas of operation are affected and that many staff categories are involved in working on the issues. The staff categories that are often mentioned are study guidance counsellors, communications officers, equality officers or the equivalent, teachers, researchers and programme heads. The role of the library is



also highlighted as regards responsibility for specific supporting measures for students with special needs, such as language workshops. Management usually has the overarching responsibility for the HEI's work on widening access and widening participation. It is usually the vice-chancellor that is responsible, but in some cases the pro-vice-chancellor, the HEI's director or the executive management are named.

The survey also showed that students at the HEI are also usually involved in working on the issues, for example through participation in preparatory and decision-making bodies. Several HEIs highlight the students' efforts as student ambassadors. The ESMeralda diversity agency at *Uppsala University* can be highlighted here as an example of student involvement in work on these issues.

### ***Several HEIs have a central unit for work on these issues***

The survey also showed that several HEIs have a specific body or central unit with responsibility for coordinating, conducting and developing measures for widening access and widening participation at the HEI. This could be an HEI-wide working group for widening access, an equality council, a coordinator for widening access, a coordinator for "equal opportunities" or a diversity strategist.

## **How do HEIs work on gaining organisational support for work on widening access and widening participation?**

### ***At a few HEIs, no support or implementation work is carried out...***

A few HEIs state that they have no structured work for the support and implementation of widening access and widening participation. Individual HEIs maintain that despite the lack of such work, activities relating to widening access are carried out.

### ***...but work has started at some***

A few HEIs state that work has just begun on work for the support and implementation on widening access and widening participation.

*University West* can be mentioned here, as it started work in 2015 on a "TRACKIT concept". This was done after highlighting the issue of widening access strategically and specifying the aspects the university wished to prioritise. In 2014-2015, *Lund University* ran a project to review work on widening access and widening participation at the university. It says that the project provided an opportunity for broad discussions and to inventory activities for widening access and widening participation throughout the university. The university feels that the project has thus contributed to gaining support for and highlighting work on these issues. Many opinions have been heard and collected through conversations with students, teachers, researchers, managers, study guidance counsellors, communications officers, careers counsellors and other administrators.

***At a few HEIs, work is carried out continually to support and implement the task***

Some HEIs state that work is carried out continually to support and implement the task of widening access. Among others, *Linköping University* states that there is continual work to support and implement work for widening access and widening participation at the university. This is done through work on “equal opportunities” at various levels.

***At some HEIs the task gains support through discussions***

Several HEIs state that the issue of widening access and widening participation is taken up and discussed in various contexts at the HEI, which is part of gaining support for and implementing the issues in the organisation. Among others, the *Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences* states that its plan for equal rights and opportunities has been communicated and discussed in various forums with both students and staff. Improvisation theatre focusing on an inclusive approach has been conducted at two staff days, to which all employees were invited.

A few small HEIs maintain that widening access and widening participation is supported and implemented through group discussions with all staff, i.e. that “everyone” can have their say. *Beckmans College of Design* refers to a quality forum for all staff. At this forum, as well as at staff and teacher meetings, measures for widening access and increased diversity are discussed and gain support. It states that at these meetings, projects are planned and cooperation and activities initiated between groups of staff. The activities are then conducted in smaller groups. At the *University College of Arts, Craft and Design*, “Open Space” group discussions with all staff have been a prioritised area since 2013.

***Sometimes support and implementation take place for only some aspects or activities***

Individual HEIs state that sometimes support and implementation take place for only some aspects or activities.

For example, *Kristianstad University* states that the coordinator for students with disabilities has presented an accessibility plan, work for increased accessibility and a *Universal Design for Learning* concept at coordination meetings, to the programme committee, at department meetings and at programme area meetings. The coordinator also holds workshops on *Universal Design for Learning* and is a resource for courses and programmes in their work for increased accessibility and widening participation.

The *Royal College of Music in Stockholm* states that practical work on implementing widening access is conducted in association with the execution and quality assurance of its admissions test. It states that the admissions test is a vital process for assessing that the right competence for benefitting from the course/programme is guaranteed. It is also an important part of its work on widening access.

**At some HEIs, the range of courses/programmes and the research focus contribute to support for the issues**

Some HEIs believe that the focus of research and education can in themselves contribute to support for the task. For example, the *University of Borås* states that inclusion is one of its prioritised research areas. "“RCIW, Research and Capability in Inclusion and Welfare” is a strategic research programme that deals with the field of inclusion and inclusive education.

According to *Malmö University*, its range of courses and programmes contribute to support for the task, such as Diversity Studies (180 credits). It also states that widening access and heterogeneous student groups was one of several themes when its programme board has made educational development funding available.

## **What do HEIs know about their student bodies?**

It seems that the occurrence of over- and under-represented groups in the student body are primarily surveyed, not their conditions

Half of the HEIs have surveyed their student bodies as regards the occurrence of over- and under-represented groups, not their conditions as students. Gender and social background are the most frequently surveyed aspects. They have been surveyed by far more than one-third of the HEIs. How the survey is carried out is important for the information to be operationally useful in the work on widening access and widening participation. UHR's opinion is that surveys of student bodies should be conducted with regard to the occurrence of, and conditions for, over and under-represented groups. UKÄ's statistics are freely available to HEIs and should be regarded as a natural starting point for work on widening access, which can then be supplemented as necessary.

For example, the *University of Gothenburg* states that 42 per cent of its new students have at least one parent with a degree according to UKÄ's statistics, which is above the national average (37 per cent). Compared to the catchment area, its recruitment of HE entrants with a foreign background is also three per cent lower. It therefore ordered a supplementary survey of the students' backgrounds and study choices from Statistics Sweden, a proactive and constructive way of attempting to clarify work on widening access.

**Women are under-represented in technology and natural science, men in caring sciences**

As regards gender, a number of HEIs use HE entrant questionnaires. They survey gender distribution annually and at programme level, which provides systematisation and information that can be used for a general understanding of how activities to widen access are working.

It is common for women to be under-represented in technology and natural science, and men in the caring sciences. Surveying gender can also be explicitly linked to widening participation. For example, *University West* surveys performance indicators to find out why men perform worse at the university

in terms of student completion on programmes. It admits 34 per cent men, but only 26 per cent graduate. The biggest differences appear on teacher education and general Bachelor's degrees. This type of analysis provides refined tools for improving widening participation.

The gender distribution on freestanding courses is not highlighted in the HEI questionnaire by the HEIs. However, this is a factor that is important to take into account, both because freestanding courses are a significant part of HEIs' activities and to get an overall picture.

### **Benefits to analysing social background in association with other factors**

Social background is surveyed using concepts such as parents' higher education, educationally disadvantaged background, social background, educational-social background, first generation graduates and socioeconomic background. UHR's interpretation is that the meaning of the concepts as they are used generally corresponds to social background, the term used by UKÄ.

Primarily, the general frequency of students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds in the student body is highlighted in the questionnaire, rather than the distribution of social background on programmes and freestanding courses. There are exceptions, such as *Dalarna University* which highlights how web-based study is over-represented among its students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* has surveyed its third cycle students' educational-social backgrounds. This survey of doctoral students is of particular relevance to widening access in the area that the sector and the general public believe is the most inaccessible. At the same time, it is one of the most important areas for expanding views about for whom, and for what, higher education exists.

### **Foreign background gains from being differentiated**

One-fifth of the HEIs survey foreign background using terms such as ethnicity, foreign background, foreign-born parents and born abroad. UHR's interpretation is that the meaning of the concepts as they are used generally corresponds to foreign background, the term used by UKÄ. UKÄ's statistics primarily appear to be used.

The general frequency of students with a foreign background in the student body is primarily highlighted, not the distribution on programmes and freestanding courses. There is an integral problem in using foreign background as an analytical concept, bearing in mind the multitude of nationalities behind the concept and the various times at which there has been immigration into Swedish society. *Uppsala University* states, for example, that pharmacy has a large proportion of students with a foreign background, which is useful information. However, it is hard to say what this means for widening access for students with a foreign background, because one or twenty or more nationalities may be behind this. To really understand widening access, foreign background needs to be differentiated and supplemented. For example, *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* has ordered statistics from Statistics Sweden on the backgrounds of staff and students using the categories born in Sweden

to at least one parent born in Sweden, born in Sweden to two foreign-born parents and born abroad, including country of origin and part of the world.

### **Some HEIs have surveyed other groups**

Some HEIs have surveyed other groups that are important to work with widening access. *Chalmers University of Technology* conducts annual surveys of disability regarding the number of students and need for support, which should provide a good overall picture and help students to express their needs. *Linköping University's* survey of the students' professional experience, for example, led to more faculties trying alternative selection. One example of how student bodies can be surveyed in a targeted and flexible manner in relation to regional change processes is *University West's* survey of former SAAB employees in the student body.

### **Some HEIs have surveyed factors relating to widening participation, but student completion can be further analysed**

Surveys of student completion are very common internationally (Jones and Braxton 2010). Some HEIs have also analysed conditions for under- and over-represented groups in the student body based on student completion, which is an important perspective in work on widening participation. *Chalmers University of Technology* has analysed what influences its student completion and concluded that the first semester was decisive, that the student's background (such as technology foundation year, grades, scholastic aptitude test) did not affect student completion, and that the university's culture and the students' stress needed to be investigated for the right measures to be put in place. Information at this level is very valuable for work on widening participation. *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* has surveyed the students' opinions and experiences of the university, its programmes/courses and educational environment in a middle-year survey given after a few years of study. This type of survey provides the opportunity to draw conclusions about widening participation.

### **One-third of HEIs have not surveyed their student body**

Some HEIs are planning surveys, but one-third of HEIs have not surveyed their student body. Various reasons are provided. It may be that the HEI is awaiting a definition of widening access, has not thought about widening access in relation to its target group, that others have already surveyed the target group, that the survey has been carried out before, that small HEIs believe that they have good knowledge of their student body, that the HEI is not covered by UKÄ's statistics, or that widening access is believed to happen naturally.

It is UHR's opinion that a survey of the student body is a better method than the HEI relying on its own impressions of them. The survey may show where there is under-representation in the student body that is not visible, clarifying for which groups, and how, work on widening access and widening participation can be carried out. A survey also has a symbolic value that

shows the HEI's surroundings, staff and students that diversity is important and part of its mission.

### **Poor knowledge of dimensions that are important for widening access and widening participation**

A number of HEIs use UKÄ's statistics, which are free and publically available. This is a good starting point for creating a clear, recurring and simple evaluative framework for work on widening access and widening participation. However, UKÄ's statistics do not include information about gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other faith, disability and sexual orientation. The HEI must itself produce and pay for these statistics.

At UHR's hearings it became apparent that several HEIs regard such statistics as potentially stigmatising. However, Sweden has been criticised for not using statistics about the situation for minorities, "equality data", by the UN, EU and Council of Europe (Hübinette 2015). The fear of reinforcing categories is understandable, but there is also a material reality in which categories remain of great importance for equality.

There is no easy answer, but even in category-critical knowledge traditions, such as queer-oriented research, there are researchers who see a pragmatic value in using categories for surveys and evaluation in order for work on diversity to progress (Renn 2010). The categories can also be expanded. For example, the Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Students proposes that more responses than man/woman should be available for gender identity in surveys (Lundin, Strömberg and Fuentes Araya 2015). One option is for the HEI to conduct its own questionnaires in which more categories are offered and to allow the HEIs students to decide for themselves whether they wish to define themselves accordingly. Using the data that is produced, clearer links can be made between widening access, widening participation and the relevant dimensions. Work with widening access, widening participation and equality could probably be clearer and easier to conduct operatively if this knowledge was available. Another possibility is that HEIs try to use UKÄ's statistics in a more intersectional manner, i.e. try to see how social background, gender and foreign background influence each other.

## **How do HEIs work with widening access to the first and second cycles?**

### **In general, activities aimed at school pupils to rectify imbalanced recruitment have been carried out over the last two years**

Early action is important for widening access. In principle all HEIs state that they have conducted some activities aimed at school pupils over the last two years, with the aim of rectifying imbalanced recruitment found at the HEI. The most common are "open days", information dissemination, study visits at the HEI, outreach activities and the use of student ambassadors and mentors. Around half the HEIs cooperate with individual schools or offer pupils

the chance to try being a student for a day. Homework help and research courses are less frequently used than other measures. One-fifth of the HEIs state they are also planning other activities.

***In general, activities focusing on compulsory school to rectify imbalanced recruitment have been carried out over the last two years***

The majority of the HEIs' activities that focus on school pupils to rectify imbalanced recruitment relate to upper-secondary school. However, the breadth of the activities focusing on compulsory school demonstrates an awareness of the importance of early action.

Activities focusing on compulsory school often use words such as "science" and "researcher", "heavy" concepts that are set into a playful, undemanding context. One of the earliest activities described is the "Doctoral students in learning" project, in which doctoral students from *Lund University* and *Halmstad University* visited children at Ängelholm's pre-schools, a town with limited continuation to HE.

Similar projects have been organised for children who have started school, e.g. researchers from *University West* who visit years 3 to 9 at schools in Trollhättan to provide inspiration for HE. *Karlstad University* organises a "children's university", based on a German model, for the purpose of reducing imbalanced recruitment from areas with a low initial rate of entry to HE. The university pays for bus transport and simple refreshments for schools. *Stockholm University* organises interactive science theatre for children aged 6-8. By creating positive memories of HEIs as exciting places and research as enjoyable and concrete, these initiatives make HE more tangible.

***Mentor activities less common for compulsory school than for upper-secondary school***

For compulsory schools, mentor activities are used to a lesser extent than for upper-secondary schools. The target groups for the mentor activities that are carried out are often pupils in schools or areas with low rates of entry to HE. Some mentor activities are multimodal, i.e. they combine different measures. *Uppsala University* and Uppsala Municipality finance the ESMerald diversity agency, which is run by Uppsala's students' union. The target group is secondary school pupils, some upper-secondary, particularly from educationally-disadvantaged backgrounds and non-Swedish ethnic backgrounds. ESMerald covers homework help, student ambassadors, shadowing and the Hayat mentor project.

***Outreach activities for compulsory school primarily focus on natural science and technology***

Outreach activities aimed at compulsory school are primarily in natural science and technology. They are often characterised by making the situation playful for children, without any elements of academic performance. For example, *Stockholm University* runs the partnership project "Physics Show", which visits schools and participates in events linked to the natural sciences.

*Chalmers University of Technology* has contributed shows and experiments at the children's day in Biskopsgården.

Competitions for compulsory schools are often found in natural science and technology. They have the advantage of giving individual children the opportunity to have their abilities confirmed, but can be assumed to primarily affect children who have already demonstrated some ability in the subject. Competitions for compulsory school widen access by expanding the HEIs search area for pupils with talent. However, competitions for compulsory school are limited as widening access because they do not reach pupils in under-represented groups who do not have a special interest for the subject or distinguished themselves in school at an early stage. One element of widening access is that children from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who perform in the normal range shall have the same chance as children from academic homes who also do so, but who do not have to cross the same social threshold.

***Homework help, in-depth partnerships with compulsory schools and traditional marketing are less common activities at compulsory school level***

Homework help is a less frequent activity for compulsory schools, probably because other local bodies are often responsible for this. Similarly, in-depth partnerships between HEIs and individual schools are unusual. However, *Linköping University* combines homework help and in-depth partnership in "Good Neighbours". This is a partnership project with two compulsory schools and is run by "Engineers without Borders". It offers homework help for pupils in years 4-9, with the aim of creating good relationships between students and the pupils, as well as providing inspiration for HE. One advantage to the partnership is the opportunity for the university to deepen contacts over time, which increases the chances that more pupils in a group become interested, get study help and can start to form their futures.

Wide marketing activities are less likely to be aimed at compulsory school pupils. One exception is the *Dynamit* magazine that *Dalarna University* sends to all pupils in year 9 in Dalarna, aiming to show that there the region has good education and an interesting labour market.

***Activities to influence attitudes among compulsory school pupils***

Some HEIs organise activities for compulsory schools with the express aim of influencing attitudes to HE. *Luleå University of Technology* has organised group guidance and values exercises for compulsory school. The activities aimed to get a picture of pupils' ideas about education and work, to arouse long-term interest in HE and to encourage more people to apply for technology degrees, whatever their background and gender. *Malmö University* states that it has many activities to influence attitudes aimed at children under the age of 14. These types of activities raise the possibility of HE directly with children from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, and can complement other activities.



**Study visits for compulsory school pupils normalise the environment, big events can be understood as an extension of the world of HE**

Study visits to HEIs can make the academic environment less dramatic, because it is presented to the child as more of a whole than when HEIs visit schools.

The study visits vary in their form, from set formats to ones where the HEI organises the visit according to the school's wishes. *The University of Gävle* has regular study visits from newly arrived refugee children in year 8, an important statement that new residents are also covered by work on widening access. HEIs also arrange larger annual events, such as festivals and exhibitions that are indirect study visits to the world of HE. *Uppsala University* offers visits to the university's interactive Augusta Ångström exhibition, in which physics, chemistry and technology are presented (about 500 pupils participate every year). *Uppsala University* and regional actors also organise a science festival, "SciFest", in which 1,900 school pupils participated in 2015. *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* and *Stockholm University*, supported by the City of Stockholm, run "Vetenskapens hus" (science house), which has activities for pupils up to the end of upper-secondary education.

**Few activities for compulsory school to widen access aim to counteract gendered education choices**

Although gender is one of the categories that is most frequently surveyed in HEIs student bodies, relatively few activities are described for countering gender-linked HE choices. This is a potential area of development, because gender stereotypical interests in children can become fixed at an early age. Unless measures are carried out in compulsory school, the activities that are conducted later, at upper-secondary, may have less chance of influencing the pupils. However, some activities are carried out. *Uppsala University* and businesses hold "technology days for secondary school girls" in which 20 pupils participate every year. Several HEIs organise long summer events for girls at compulsory school, such as *Linköping University*, *Luleå University of Technology*, *Uppsala University* and *Dalarna University*.

**Compulsory school activities in natural science and technology are more common than in other subjects**

There is a tendency for natural science and mathematics to be the focus of a greater number of activities than other subjects. It is possible that greater dissemination of information at an early stage to school pupils about other HE subjects, in relation to working life, would generally benefit widening access. A limited subject focus in compulsory school activities for widening access risks making the image of what is available in HE narrower than it should be, showing fewer routes to HE and reducing widening access in the humanities and social sciences.

**In general, activities focusing on upper-secondary school to rectify imbalanced recruitment have been conducted over the last two years**

***Student ambassadors are used in many ways to widen access from upper-secondary level***

Activities that use student ambassadors are usually described as where students with the same background as the HEIs' target groups for widening access represent the HEI at external events, outreach activities or during study visits. *Luleå University of Technology* sees the university's student ambassadors as an important element of work in offering a broad target group the opportunity to meet representatives from the university in different ways and in different contexts. The student ambassadors' credibility is considered important in helping individuals, regardless of background, gender and experience of studying to make a good decision as regards their education and place of education.

The *University of Gävle* has student ambassadors that promote the university in a range of contexts. Annually, they visit around 40 upper-secondary schools in the region to provide information about the university and HE. *Blekinge Institute of Technology* states that it focuses on upper-secondary schools that have a large proportion of pupils with foreign backgrounds. The HE sector appears to fully support how examples of success can inspire under-represented groups and show that HE welcomes everyone.

The need for good examples was also highlighted by several different target groups for widening access at UHR's discussion forum. One interesting form is hometown ambassadors, which are used by *Uppsala University*. Here, students in technology and natural science go back to their former upper-secondary school, which may create a particular type of credibility, particularly if they also have a background in an under-represented group. Another personal approach is found at *KTH Royal Institute of Technology*, which has a student chat on its website, where potential students from all over Sweden can ask the student ambassadors questions just prior to the deadline for applications. Other HEIs combine other staff groups with their student ambassadors. For example, *Jönköping University's* study guidance counsellors and student ambassadors make joint visits to upper-secondary programmes with low initial participation rates in HE, thus obtaining a combination of the personal touch and guidance.

***Mentor activities for upper-secondary school can be adapted to the target group***

Mentor activities can be a means of widening access that reach selected target groups both socially and academically, as well as in different types of cooperation with the pupils' local environment. *Linköping University*, along with Norrköping Municipality and the Mirum mall in Hageby, runs "LuMiNk Akademin", a project that began in the 2015-2016 academic year to use mentors to encourage pupils in Söderporten, Hageby, to enter HE. *The Stockholm School of Economics* has the SSE Sisters mentor programme for upper-secondary years 1 and 2. *Halmstad University* has mentor activities for unaccom-

panied refugee minors (aged 16-18) as part of “The Nightingale Mentoring Network”. This is an international network in which several other Swedish HEIs also participate.

### ***The link between widening access and “trying out” being a student***

The extent to which shadowing a student contributes to widening access may depend on how the opportunity is offered and who uses it. If the shadowing is on an individual basis and at the student’s request, it is important to make sure that students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds are encouraged to take the chance. *Malmö University* allowed all classes in year three of an upper-secondary school in Malmö to visit the university library to have feel what it could be like to study.

The clearest link to widening participation is when an under-represented group can try studying in HE. In the “Girls at Teknis” project, *Lund University* offers girls studying upper-secondary technical and natural science programmes the chance to spend three days at the university’s technology faculty. Another example is “Include” at *Luleå University of Technology*, a newly-started student network for girls in computing and technical physics that provides “come and try it” courses for girls in upper-secondary school.

### ***Homework help***

The homework help that is described at upper-secondary level is often related to mathematics and natural science. Overall, homework help is less common than other activities at upper-secondary schools for widening access. “Supplemental instruction”, where an older student helps one or more pupils with difficult subjects, is found at compulsory school where students help pupils in natural science and technology.

### ***Marketing activities are widening access, depending on who receives the information, about what and how***

For information activities to be examples of widening access, they must take into account who is being approached and how this approach takes into account under-representation and diversity.

*Beckmans College of Design* carries out systematically targeted information activities to increase awareness in areas close to Stockholm that normally have a low number of applicants per place to the college. *Blekinge Institute of Technology* states that the photographs in all its catalogues and brochures display diversity and it also has an internal handbook in marketing. This way of systematising information activities that target upper-secondary schools increases opportunities for widening access.

At UHR’s hearings, a few HEIs presented forward worries that diversity in marketing is misleading if the HEI does not yet have diversity. But the function of diversity in information material is not to provide a contents list for the student body, but rather to show that diversity is valued and desired.

### ***Upper-secondary school study visits to HEIs***

Study visits for the express purpose of widening access are usually proactive outreach activities for specific under-represented groups or areas. For

example, *Karlstad University* welcomes study visits from local schools that have a low regional initial participation rate in HE. *Kristianstad University* organises study visits for upper-secondary school pupils from Riksgymnasiet for children with disabilities and pupils at other specialised upper-secondary schools.

*Stockholm University* is visited by upper-secondary school pupils with disabilities who want to know what it is like to study and what support is available. *Mid Sweden University* conducts outreach activities with all the schools in its region and invites all pupils to its activities. For this purpose, a structure has been developed with contact people at all the upper-secondary schools in the region. The university's representatives not only meet pupils in year 3, but also heads, teachers and pupils in other years. In consultation with teachers, pupils are invited to science days and study visits.

### ***“Open days” may need resources in order to provide widening access***

“Open days” can be held using different approaches, from purely study visits, “come and try it” lectures, to big events at the HEI. One difficulty when working with widening participation may be that upper-secondary schools have limited resources for visiting the HEI. *University West* pays for travel and refreshments for visitors to its annual HE fair, so that pupils from the local upper-secondary schools have equal opportunities to visit the fair, and they also invite other HEIs. This is very praiseworthy, but also shows that proactive efforts can require a lot of resources.

### ***In-depth partnerships between the HEI and upper-secondary schools***

In-depth partnerships with upper-secondary schools are described by some HEIs. Even if these projects reach fewer pupils, they have the advantage of being able to influence pupils over a longer period of time and thus increase the likelihood of reaching pupils who are initially unenthusiastic. One ambitious example of a multimodal partnership is provided by *Örebro University* which has worked with Örebro Municipality since 2004 on widening access for children aged 13-16 from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, using “Linje 14”. Its purpose is also to reduce social exclusion and increase integration. “Linje 14” takes place in partnership with three schools in areas with low levels of education and high unemployment; the majority of children participating have foreign backgrounds and a significant proportion have newly arrived in Sweden.

Activities consist of homework help, courses in study technique, workshops, study support, cooperation with study guidance counsellors, parents' meetings, study visits to the university and student ambassadors. Activities are evaluated annually by an external company. These evaluations have demonstrated increased interest for HE and for passing the entry requirements for national programmes at upper-secondary school.

Another example of a type of in-depth partnership is described by the *University of Borås*, which has a project with Almås and Viskastrand vocational upper-secondary schools in the form of a coherent activity plan for

each year at the school. During year one, which is obligatory, information is provided about eligibility prior to the pupils' individual choices. In year two, which is also obligatory, the pupils choose different activities based on their interests as part of a common college course; this includes activities such as shadowing a student, professional experience and help with mathematics. In year three there is a voluntary information meeting and returnees talk about their route to HE.

### **How do HEIs work with groups other than school pupils to widen access?**

Over the last two years, the majority of HEIs have conducted activities targeting groups other than school pupils with the aim of rectifying imbalanced recruitment at the HEI. The few HEIs that did not conduct any activities have not expressly provided any reasons for this. Most common are activities aimed at jobseekers, refugees, immigrants and adults, which around one-third of HEIs focus on. One-fifth of HEIs also target the general public. After this is a smaller group of activities aimed at men, women, young adults, study and careers guidance counsellors, folk high schools, international students, students in adult education and teachers. Individual activities focused on LGBTQ people, people with disabilities and municipalities.

### ***HEIs primarily work with Arbetsförmedlingen to widen access for jobseekers***

The most common forms of widening access for jobseekers are contacts with Arbetsförmedling and participation in its education fairs. Student ambassadors are sometimes used. For example, every academic year the *University of Gävle*'s student ambassadors visit Arbetsförmedlingen and actors linked to it.

Contacts involving learning centres are less frequent, but *Luleå University of Technology* participates in work and education days that are organised by learning centres and Arbetsförmedlingen in the regions of Norrbotten and Västerbotten. It is relatively common for study visits to be organised for jobseekers. The *University of Gothenburg* has welcomed groups from Fryshuset in Gothenburg from the "Hitta rätt" project for youths and adults (aged 16-30) who find it difficult to enter the labour market. The visit was organised by the university's communications unit and included study guidance counsellors, lecturers, researchers and student ambassadors. Its purpose was to provide an overview of what HE entails and allowing visitors to meet the university more informally.

Sometimes study visits that focus on unemployment and gender are organised. For example, in the "men for pre-school teacher education" project, *University West* has conducted inspiration activities that focus on selected groups. Among others, unemployed former Saab employees were invited, as well as a range of young jobseekers from the region.

### ***Activities for adults primarily target those with professional experience or prior education***

Activities to widen access among middle-aged adults often focus on adults with HE that can lead to a vocational degree after supplementary education,

or adults with vocational experience that can lead to a vocational degree after supplementary education. These are commonly conducted by, or in consultation with, study and careers guidance counsellors, learning centres and Arbetsförmedlingen. This is done through individual events or more continuous work by special units at the HEI.

At *Mälardalen University*, the central study guidance counsellors host “UMIL” (mid-life education), a day on which they attempt to reach potential students who have been working for a certain amount of time. UMIL is marketed by Arbetsförmedlingen, Komvux and other upper-secondary education providers for adults. The *University of Borås* reaches out to working childcare staff without HE through its programme for “pre-school teacher training for people working in education”. This includes the validation of formal and prior learning, which shortens the programmes and allows the students to work at the same time. Some WBL tasks are located in the workplace. The university also invites potential applicants and their managers to information meetings. In the academic year of 2015-2016, the *Royal Institute of Art* started the “Critical Habitats” course to reach a new group of applicants with experience in architecture, activism, art and academia.

### ***Widening access for refugees and immigrants focuses on people with HE***

The most common form of activities aimed at refugees and immigrants is for those who have foreign HE. They are offered supplementary educational courses or further education, sometimes in partnership with Arbetsförmedlingen or folk high schools. Activities for refugees and immigrants with no HE are more described less frequently. *Södertörn University* states that its student ambassadors are also tasked with hosting SFI classes via study visits or through visits, primarily to provide information about HE in general.

### ***Activities aimed at the general public may also be important for widening access***

Some events for the general public also have links to widening access. It is common for HEIs to organise or participate in large public events, with or without direct links to the HEI’s activities, which show that the HEI is an active part of society. Another type of activity for the general public is study visits to the HEI or activities that demonstrate the links between HE, working life and societal benefit. For example, the law department at the *University of Gothenburg* has built up a legal practice that offers an important service to citizens as well as opening up the university.

### ***Fewer activities to widen access for young adults, folk high school students, international students and Komvux compared with other target groups***

The few activities described for widening access among young adults consist of information measures, events for folk high schools or regional actors. The *Royal College of Music in Stockholm* states that thus far they have never offered a place to an applicant with musical education only from state schools. Its students have often studied municipally, privately and at folk high school

before admission. The college therefore communicates directly with young adults from these groups, which are considered as having reached a high level before being admitted to the college. A few gender-based activities for widening participation among young adults are described. For women, activities focusing on IT are primarily described, for men there are activities that encourage the caring and educational professions. The line between these activities and those focusing on upper-secondary schools is, however, not entirely clear.

Activities for widening access for students from folk high schools can take the form of outreach activities, where HEIs host study visits with the help of their student ambassadors, disseminate information using the student ambassadors or spread more general information about the HEI. *Malmö University* participates in a “folk high school cooperation” to make HE a serious option for students at Skåne’s folk high schools, focusing on widening access. The cooperation organises information days, CPD days for teachers and mentor activities, with information, inspiration and guidance. Each HEI has around five “adopted” schools and offers each school’s students individual guidance meetings. *Malmö University* also works with the City of Malmö, Region Skåne and *Lund’s Faculty of Engineering* in “TeknikCollege Skåne”, to promote widening participation in its engineering degrees. “TeknikCollege Skåne” includes third stream learning, the young researchers’ exhibition and the “Blixtläset” competition.

Activities for widening access for international students include international advertising and hosting international study visits at the HEI. *Lund University* has an introductory programme for Master’s students in English, to offer talented international students the opportunity to develop their academic English prior to studying at the university, and to ensure a global student population and diversity.

Activities for widening access for students in adult education include the HEI’s study guidance counsellors visiting adult education providers in the region, participating in various information activities or hosting study visits. Each semester, the central study guidance unit at the *University of Borås* visits adult education providers in Borås, Svenljunga and Mark to encourage and provide information about the university and about HE in general. It also invites adult education groups from the municipalities to its open days, and to meet study and careers guidance counsellors during a study visit every semester.

Activities for widening access that involve study and careers guidance counsellors include annual information meetings and network days, primarily for regional counsellors. For example, in 2015 the *University of Skövde* held a municipal meeting on the theme of widening access, at which the university management discussed widening access with key people from schools, municipal leaders and other actors.

### **Activities for widening access for adults and young adults with disabilities need to be developed in order to promote widening access**

Work conducted by the HE sector for widening access among students with disabilities would be more credible if more activities for widening access were targeted at adults and young adults with disabilities. A Swedish report has also established the need for research into widening participation among students with disabilities (Larsdotter Frid and Krantz 2012). Only a few examples of activities targeting adults with disabilities are described. *The Swedish Defence University* and *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* participated in an information day at Rehab Station Stockholm to inform young people with acquired disabilities about opportunities in HE and the support that is offered.

### **Activities for widening access for LGBTQ people and for Sweden's national minorities need development**

HEIs provide few examples of activities to widen access for LGBTQ people. There are no statistics on whether LGBTQ people are under-represented in HE. However, a 2015 report from the Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Students states that Swedish HE cannot yet be regarded as completely safe for LGBTQ people (Lundin, Strömberg and Fuentes Araya 2015). To signal that HEIs are safe places, there is a need for widening access activities that focus on LGBTQ people. *Karlstad University* has participated in Värmland's Pride Festival to meet people that may otherwise be difficult to reach via other channels and activities. Other HEIs also participate in Pride festivals and *Halmstad University's* student health services have LGBTQ certification. There are a number of organisations that represent LGBTQ people and contact with these is a simple way of widening access to HE. Activities for widening access among the five national minorities need to be developed, and the groups' needs inventoried.

## **How do HEIs follow up their activities for widening access?**

Around half of the HEIs have followed up activities that they conducted in past two years to rectify an identified recruitment imbalance. Bearing in mind the significant knowledge of methodology found in the HE sector, the need for Swedish research and the cost of the activities for the HEI, it is UHR's opinion that activities for widening access should always be evaluated in terms of results, organisation and administration.

### **Evaluations of a single activity to widen access comprises half of all follow-ups**

Of all the follow-ups of activities to widen access, half of them are for single activities. What exactly is evaluated varies. As regards grouping, gender distribution is the most common. Another aspect is the participants' experience of the activities and their subsequent attitudes to HE. One measure of performance is the number of applications to the HEI from people who



have participated in activities and the number of applications from the target groups for these activities.

Other areas of evaluation are the activities' organisation, administration and relevance. The methods of evaluation vary, but questionnaires, admissions statistics and interviews are common. *Mid Sweden University* follows up all the activities it offers, including the number of participants, but has also conducted focus groups with pupils and parents. This combines quantitative and qualitative data, which may provide a broader picture. In some cases, evaluations are carried out by the HEIs' researchers and doctoral students. In the spring of 2014, *Örebro University* presented a study on *Övergång till högre utbildning - en statistisk kartläggning av Linje 14* (Initial participation rates in HE – a statistical review of Linje 14, by Trumberg and Lindberg 2014). The study demonstrated several changes in the initial entry to HE for pupils from Vällaskolan 2002-2012, compared to a school in a similar residential area in another municipality.

The HE sector has unique knowledge of methodology and should be able to use this comprehensively when evaluating its activities. International research on widening access is in need of empirical evaluations of activities for widening access. Conducting well-considered methodological evaluations of activities for widening access and publishing the results is one way of contributing to the level of knowledge internationally.

### **Analyses of the student body as a whole are sometimes done to evaluate activities for widening access**

In a few cases, analyses of the student body as a whole are carried out to aid understanding of activities for widening access, particularly via application statistics for municipality, age and gender. In these cases, it is difficult to establish a relationship between actions and efforts, as highlighted by several HEIs. However, it can provide an indication of general tendencies and the general value of activities.

### **Continual evaluation usually means that all activities for widening access at an HEI are evaluated**

In a number of cases, the continual evaluation that is described means that all the HEI's activities for widening access are annually evaluated and followed up. The compiled evaluations are then used as a basis for new activities. This is a preferred method for widening access, because it creates an overall picture of the HEI's work.

Other forms of continual evaluation may apply to individual programmes on which recurring imbalances in recruitment have been observed. *Linköping University* conducts annual follow-ups of the recruitment of women to engineering and technology programmes and a long-term, slow, increase in women has been established, particularly in civil engineering.

### **Why aren't all activities evaluated?**

It is difficult to provide an overall picture of why activities are not evaluated, as several HEIs do not provide any reasons for this. The reasons provided for

activities targeting compulsory school are that it is difficult to prove a link between activities at school age and a decision taken a decade later. A lack of resources is also mentioned.

However, all activities for widening access should be evaluated, given the complexity of the many different factors that can influence results. One concrete option is to register participants in activities and then check this against applications to the HEI. In several cases, this is already done for activities for upper-secondary pupils. *Linköping University* has followed up whether upper-secondary pupils who participated in “campus week” chose to start HE at the university due to their participation. There are no reasons not to do this for compulsory school pupils who participate in activities. Evaluation is also important for saving resources and being able to fine tune activities.

In 2007-2014, *Stockholm University* ran the “Medvind” mentor programme, in which 170 students and over 400 secondary school pupils in the Stockholm region had the chance to get to know each other. Group dynamics and increased motivation for learning were strived for through regular group meetings, as well as giving a more relaxed image of the university and providing help and support with school work in small groups. A mentor helped the pupils with homework and study techniques, and looked for creative ways of increasing the pupils’ interest in particular subjects. However, as a result of the evaluation, the programme has paused its activities in order to provide resources for development work. The idea is to examine whether it is possible to make changes in “Medvind” so it can reach more pupils and also make its administration more efficient, or to develop a new activity with the same targets as before. This is an excellent way of managing the evaluation of activities.

## **Courses offered by HEIs to broaden the competence of potential and newly-admitted students**

### **A technology and/or natural science foundation year is the most common form of education that aims to broaden prior knowledge**

Half of the HEIs offer a technology or natural science foundation year. Two HEIs offer special versions of these. The *University of Borås* offers both a technology foundation year and a textiles technology foundation year, i.e. a foundation year for people who lack the qualifications to apply for the textiles engineering programme. The *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences* has specific government funding for a forestry foundation year in partnership with *Umeå University*, which provides eligibility for the Forest Management programme.

The purpose of foundation years is to broaden the prior knowledge of potential students and to allow them to gain the right qualifications for engineering and natural science programmes. Some HEIs emphasise the

importance of a foundation year for widening access, even if it has other purposes according to the legislation. In particular, the proportion of women on foundation years is greater than on the subsequent engineering degree programmes. For example, *University West* states that in the 2015 autumn admissions round, 32 per cent of those admitted to the engineering foundation year were women, while the proportion of women applying to the various specialisations on mechanical or electronic engineering programmes was 12-15 per cent. According to the university, the higher percentage of women among foundation year students indicates that the percentage of women on the engineering degree may be positively influenced if the women who studied a foundation year choose to continue to an engineering degree at the university.

The HEIs also highlight that a foundation year provides an opportunity for people who made the “wrong choice” in upper-secondary school to achieve the specific entry requirements. This group has a higher level of young people from educationally disadvantaged homes. In addition, these students generally perform well in their subsequent education.

In this context, a few HEIs are now expressing concern that present legislation completely ignores widening access and instead has another focus. According to them, this is a threat to foundation year activities. For example, *Stockholm University* has stopped its natural science foundation year. The university states that students who completed the foundation year had guaranteed places to almost all undergraduate degree programmes at the faculty of science. However, only a small fraction of the foundation year students have chosen to continue on any of these programmes. The university states that the ordinance on access programmes states that a condition of providing one is that there is a lack of qualified applicants. As the number of applicants to programmes at the faculty has recently increased, this condition can no longer be said to be fulfilled. Final admissions were in the autumn of 2014, with half the number of places of previous years.

### **Preparatory courses for the fine, applied and performing arts**

HE in the fine, applied and performing arts has the most imbalanced recruitment as regards social background. It is therefore very positive that some HEIs offer access programmes in the arts. Those doing so include *Beckmans College of Design* and the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts at the *University of Gothenburg*.

### **Introductory and access programmes**

Some HEIs organise various types of introductory and access programmes with the aim of facilitating entry to HE. In some cases, these are focused on specific groups, such as foreign graduates (Invandrarakademin at the *University of Borås*) or local people with a low rate of initial entry to HE (Tensta Arkitektskola at *KTH Royal Institute of Technology*).

## **A bridge-building programme for Roma at Södertörn University**

*Södertörn University* has been tasked by the National Agency for Education with offering a bridge-building programme for Roma. It covers two years at 50% of full-time. Half of the programme provide HE credits. It provides knowledge of everything from the Swedish school system to the Roma's own culture and history, and also that of the other four national minorities, and theories on language socialisation, literacy and learning, for example. A similar programme has been commissioned by the National Board of Health and Welfare, focusing on social services and healthcare. The purpose of the programme is to increase trust and understanding between Roma and various public bodies.

The above examples are important measures for Sweden's national minorities.

A report shows that the Swedish school system generally needs to take greater responsibility for national minority languages (Church of Sweden et al 2013). Swedish HE should also develop its responsibility relating to the national minorities' language and culture, which are now barely covered in the HE sector as a whole.

## **Education for admitted students**

Access programmes for newly-admitted students are relatively common and are offered prior to studies, often during the summer. They are commonly mathematics courses so the new students can "freshen up" their maths skills.

## **Other**

In 2015, *Beckmans College of Design* established a stipend and made a place available to a Syrian refugee. The college has organised workshops in partnership with Botkyrka folk high school, Fryshuset, Hökarängen upper-secondary school and the Multicultural Centre.

# **Admission regulations as an instrument for widening access**

## **Evaluations of prior learning**

### ***A considerable majority of HEIs believe that evaluations of prior learning contribute to widening access...***

The survey shows consensus among the surveyed HEIs that evaluations of prior learning contribute to widening access. An overwhelming majority of HEIs feel that some of the reasons for this are that the evaluations capture people with chequered pasts, create a more heterogeneous student group and are thus a way of reaching older people, for example, who do not have the basic entry requirements but instead have a great deal of professional experience. Only a few HEIs do not believe, or find it difficult to accept, that evaluations of prior learning contribute to widening access.

### **...but evaluations are not carried out to the extent that could be possible**

A few HEIs state that evaluations of prior learning are not carried out to the extent that could be possible. This is partly because of difficulties in designing methods and criteria that can be used for a generalised purpose, because many cases for validation are almost unique. The reliability of the results are another general difficulty. It was also highlighted how the evaluation processes are more expensive than the evaluation of formal qualifications, which means that many HEIs do not invest as much in this as they could do.

### **Few HEIs make evaluations of prior learning if there is no formal documentation**

In *Den öppna högskolan* (Government Bill 2001/02:15, p. 77), the Government states that prior learning is that collected competence possessed by a person, whether or not he or she has formal proof of this. The issue of formal proof has come to a head due to the significant numbers of refugees, of which many will probably have no documents to prove their skills and knowledge. UHR has therefore asked HEIs about their opinion of evaluating prior learning if an application has no formal documentation to confirm it.

More than half the HEIs say that they make assessments of prior learning even if there is no formal documentation. However, the results of this analysis shows that it is doubtful that such evaluations are performed to extent stated by the HEIs. Quite the opposite, it appears that few HEIs make evaluations of prior learning if there is no formal documentation.

Among the HEIs that make evaluations despite a lack of formal documentation, are the fine, applied and performing arts HEIs: *the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design*, *the Royal College of Music in Stockholm* and *the Stockholm University of the Arts*. For example, the *Stockholm University of the Arts* states that if formal documentation is missing, it tries to find other ways of validating expertise. Sometimes this is done by the HEI contacting unofficial education providers or with people in the staff's contact network who can confirm someone's level of knowledge.

*Kristianstad University* and *Linnaeus University* also state that they evaluate prior learning if there is no formal documentation. *Kristianstad University* requires that the applicant appends a personal letter that describes the person's knowledge.

### **Why isn't prior learning evaluated if there is no formal documentation?**

HEIs provide different reasons why they do not evaluate prior learning if there is no formal documentation. The most common reasons are as follows:

- **It has not been needed**

A few HEIs state that these types of evaluations have not been needed as the HEI has not received any such applications.

- **More knowledge and resources are necessary**

Some HEIs state there is partly a lack of resources, partly a lack of knowledge about how such an evaluation should be conducted.

- **It may adventure legal certainty**

One HEI believes that a decision taken without a documented foundation may contravene public governance and be unlawful. The HEI therefore believes that it is problematic to evaluate prior learning without documentation that proves the applicant's qualifications. Another HEI believes that it would highly discriminatory in relation to Swedish upper-secondary school pupils who have grades but who perhaps lack the entry requirements in a particular subject and are thus ineligible.

- **Evaluations are primarily done for programmes in vocational education**

Some HEIs state that evaluations of prior learning are primarily an issue for programmes in vocational education.

- **People who have been evaluated as having prior learning still find it difficult to be admitted to courses/programmes**

Some HEIs highlight the problem of applicants who have been evaluated as fulfilling the entry requirements often being less qualified than other applicants. If there is competition for places they are thus not accepted. For this reason, it is important that applicants are encouraged to take the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test if they have had their prior learning recognised but lack a merit rating. Alternative selection could also be used for this purpose.

### ***Some HEIs use alternative selection to widen access***

Almost 60 per cent of the HEIs state that they use alternative selection as a means of widening access, which appears very positive. However, UHR's analysis shows that in several of the examples of alternative selection that the HEIs refer to the purpose is primarily to identify students that are assessed as having good chances of finishing their studies. In other words, the main reason is not to widen access.

For example, the primary purpose of alternative selection for the medicine and dentistry degrees at *Karolinska institutet* is the qualitative measurement of knowledge, skills and properties that are important when studying in the medical field, and finding applicants that are suitable for a long and demanding programme. Another example is the tests in mathematics and physics that are used for alternative selection at *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* and *Chalmers University of Technology*. The tests are a means of recruiting qualified applicants with excellent skills in mathematics and physics, rather than widening access.

However, UHR's opinion is that widening access may be a positive side effect of the abovementioned alternative selection, even if it is not primarily part of the selection models as something to be taken into account.

The most common basis for selection in alternative selection is professional experience. For example, one-third of the places on the Construction Management programme at *Högskolan Dalarna* were allocated to motivated applicants who not only fulfilled the general entry requirements, but also had professional experience equivalent to two years' work in the construction industry. Applicants should also include a personal letter. The purpose

of this alternative selection was to get older applicants with professional experience.

Some HEIs apply alternative selection in the form of place guarantees for students. For example, the maritime programmes at *Chalmers University of Technology* guarantee places for students who have worked at sea before entering HE. It maintains that this is an excellent way of widening access as, for example, these may be people who come from families who have worked with fishing for generations and thus have no tradition of studying.

### **According to the HEIs, what potential barriers are there in the current admission regulations as regards work on widening access?**

The HEIs were asked about any barriers to widening access that they can see in the current admission regulations. The answers can be summarised as follows.

#### ***The problem is not the admission regulations***

One-quarter of HEIs do not feel that imbalanced recruitment is primarily an issue of the design of the admission regulations. This primarily applies to HEIs that have the opportunity to design their own admission regulations due to their status as independent education providers, e.g. *the Stockholm School of Economics* and *Jönköping University*. Nor do a number of fine, applied and performing arts HEIs feel that admission regulations are a barrier to work with widening access. These HEIs also design their own entry requirements and selection tests.

Some other HEIs maintain that the current admission regulations provide enough freedom when it comes to work on widening access. These HEIs do not believe it is possible to rectify imbalanced recruitment by changing the admission regulations per se. According to the HEIs, the limiting factor is instead that the admission regulations cannot be completely utilised, because it is an expensive process and the HEIs have limited resources. For example, it would be possible to work more with alternative selection to widen access, which would not necessarily require freer admission regulations. This would probably relate to individual programmes for which imbalanced recruitment is a major problem.

#### ***The opportunities for widening access that exist in the admission regulations demand significant resources***

On the other hand, a number of HEIs state that the opportunities in the current regulations demand significant resources from the local HEI, e.g. validation of prior learning or the application of alternative selection via interviews or practical tests. The HEIs emphasise how demanding it is for the HEI's resources, and those of the relevant programme, to admit students in ways other than automatically via grades, the results of the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test or credits via the NyA admission system.

Applications for evaluations of prior learning have a high level of complexity and demand resources from several units and at different levels. Because evaluations of prior learning require time and resources, many HEIs do not

use them to the extent they otherwise could. *Stockholm University* states that, based on its experience of being tasked by the Government to develop and offer the *Tisus* test (Test in Swedish for university studies), offering legally fair admission tests demands a great deal of resources.

As regards alternative selection, the HEIs state that they must bear in mind the number of applicants per place for each course/programme, the economic resources available and the forms of alternative selection that may be applicable. Alternative selection requires extensive internal preparation and support, specific information to applicants, quality-assured execution, evaluation, and follow-up, among other things. HEIs feel that it is difficult to use alternative methods of admission, such as interviews or tests, for selection for popular programmes. How various aspects should be weighted before deciding to use alternative selection is also highlighted. For example, how great is the need to counteract imbalanced recruitment for a specific programme? Do you still get mainly women applying for pre-school teacher training if you use interviews? Do you still get mainly men applying for engineering degrees if you use tests?

It was also stated that the recruitment process for people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds requires staffing, and thus economic resources. These prospective students are not a homogenous group; instead there is often a need for situation-related communication in the recruitment process. A lack of economic resources is also a barrier to the development of distance courses, which probably lead to widening access. Distance courses require technical, educational and financial investments.

### ***The admission system as a whole is a barrier to widening access***

According to the *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences*, among others, the problem with the current regulations is that there are no opportunities to use other grounds for selection or to assess an applicant's eligibility using prior learning. It says that the biggest barrier to widening access is the admission system itself, the complexity that makes it so impenetrable and unpredictable for applicants.

The university states that much has come to deal with "understanding the system", knowing about selection groups, being able to maximise your merit rating, planning studies from an early stage, etc. It feels that for applicants from homes with no tradition of HE or knowledge of the system, or for applicants from homes with a different mother tongue and little knowledge of Swedish HE, the application system itself is a major barrier. The biggest positive change to widen access would, according to the university, to reform the admission system from the bottom up to make it simpler and more transparent.

### ***Some provisions in the admission regulations are a barrier to widening access***

Some HEIs state that the system of *credit increments* and *additional qualification groups* mean that young people must optimise their study route very early in HE. This is disadvantageous for students from educationally disad-



vantaged backgrounds. People with foreign backgrounds must often have additional qualifications to fulfil specific entry requirements and therefore only complete for places in the additional qualifications group. The introduction of additional qualifications groups to achieve competitive additional qualifications also contradicts the principle of a validatory approach. I.e. a person's skills and knowledge shall be recognised regardless of how, where and when they were acquired. The introduction of additional qualification groups is a disadvantage for people who change focus, or gain new insights into their study choices after the age of fifteen.

The problem that *applicants in the folk high school group* are rarely allocated places is also highlighted. This makes work on widening access more difficult, because this is one of the groups they want to reach.

According to some HEIs, the provision that *selection shall be based on grades and the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test* is the basic problem for widening participation. One of the reasons is that parental income and education correlate with the students' results in upper-secondary school and the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test, which leads to imbalanced recruitment. One HEI highlights how the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test can be a major barrier, particularly for applicants with foreign backgrounds. The entry requirements for some courses/programmes may be too high, thus excluding some groups from applying to HE.

A number of HEIs state that *there is no support for work with positive discrimination*. They feel it is problematic that it is not possible to benefit specific groups, such as by using quotas, and maintain that it is primarily the Discrimination Act that makes work on widening access difficult. The HEIs state that previous legal judgements have affected the desire to try new means of alternative selection. Based on the wording of the provision on alternative selection, it is difficult to develop selection methods that benefit students from under-represented groups or take into account factors that would boost widening participation, such as geographic ones<sup>9</sup>. Support is thus needed to help the HEIs navigate the regulations and build up expertise in designing appropriate selection methods.

According to some HEIs, it is *negative that foundation year students must decide the subsequent programme in advance*<sup>10</sup>. The HEIs feel that it is a barrier to widening access as the students should be given the opportunity to try it out and change their minds during the year.

### **Barriers highlighted by individual HEIs**

- Giving some applicants exceptions to entry requirements may be unfair to other applicants.

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9. According to the provision (Chapter 7, Section 23 of the Higher Education Ordinance) the selection criteria that are decided by the HEI may consist of other specific tests than the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test, knowledge, professional experience or other experience that is of particular value for the course or programme, and other objective circumstances of relevance.

10. According to the Ordinance on Access Programmes for Qualification for Higher Education (SFS 2007:432)

- Fees for non-European students may make work on widening access more difficult.
- There are no beneficial rules for applicants with professional experience.
- Gender as a differentiating criteria in the case of equal qualifications should not have been removed.
- The regulation system and admissions are not adapted to the needs of foreign graduates.
- The regulations exclude pupils from special upper-secondary schools, which is discriminatory according to the UN Convention<sup>11</sup> on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The design of upper-secondary programmes in natural science and technology may be a barrier to the pupil, because the pupils can choose not to take qualifying subjects.
- The school system is a barrier to widening access, partly because the system is difficult and because pupils are forced to make decisive choices at an early stage.

### **How should admissions to HE be designed to reduce imbalanced recruitment?**

HEIs were asked how they would like to design admissions to their courses/programmes in order to widen access. Their answers were fairly varied.

#### ***Affirmative quotas could counteract imbalanced recruitment***

According to a few HEIs, imbalanced recruitment could be counteracted if HEIs had the opportunity to use affirmative quotas, giving particular groups preference, or specific selection groups.

Affirmative quotas could be an opportunity for some courses/programmes to try rectifying major gender imbalances, for example, or to admit more people of different ethnic backgrounds to the majority. There is also an awareness among HEIs that affirmative quotas should be used with care, as they entail a risk of other groups being disadvantaged or discriminated.

#### ***The Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test and grades should be able to be used more flexibly***

A few HEIs feel that it should be possible to weight specific subjects or subject areas in the grade-based selection and to use specific parts of the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test in the test-based selection for various courses/programmes.

#### ***College courses/programmes with place guarantees for HE courses/programmes should be offered***

A few HEIs feel that HEIs, in partnership with upper-secondary schools, folk high schools, study association or adult education, should create targeted

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11. Among other things, the Convention establishes that "States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others".

college courses/programmes or introduction courses with place guarantees for specific subsequent HE courses/programmes. This could help those who did not have options available earlier in life to make those choices later. Part of the selection could possibly be based on the college course/programme or introduction course.

***The basis for selection should be more transparent***

If there was greater freedom, some HEIs would construct a more transparent selection basis. The HEIs feel that the opportunity to use entry exams or suitability tests would take account of relevant non-profit activities or geographic and social factors, for example, benefitting widening access. More generous grounds for selection could also be used to solve a lack of qualified workers in a particular area, such as a set number of places dedicated for people in a place where the labour market has a lack of that specific profession.

***Other opinions presented by HEIs regarding how admission regulations should be changed***

- Admissions to HE should be more flexible. The opportunity to admit students more quickly, easily and at other times of the year would benefit widening access.
- The importance of the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test in selection should be reduced, as there is much to indicate that the new test benefits Swedish men from the middle class, while grade-based selection is of greater benefit in widening access.
- HEIs should be able to decide specific entry requirements for entry to programmes in the fine, applied and performing arts.
- In general, circumstances for retaining students from educationally disadvantaged groups should be examined. These students should be provided with support, particularly suitable accommodation and the opportunity not to be forced to work while studying. They should also be offered a welcoming study environment.
- System support for the application of new regulations and other selection regulations should be developed.
- HEIs should be able to choose whether they want to combine selection groups BF (the folk high school groups) with selection groups BI/BII (grade-based groups).
- The purpose of a foundation year should change. The legislation that governs foundation years disregards the perspective of widening access and focuses solely on programmes with a low rate of applicants and where the labour market's needs are great.
- More measures are needed for foreign graduates.
- It should be possible for pupils for special upper-secondary schools to apply to HE. There are good examples of methods, partly in the University of Gävle's Health Inspiration programme, partly internationally such as in the US and Australia.

- Cooperation between HEIs is desirable, not least to reduce the risk of legal uncertainty when working on the evaluation of prior learning and alternative selection.
- The opportunity for entire programmes to use alternative selection would make it easier and have more effect than the opportunity to use it for one-third of each programme.
- It should be possible to make exceptions for some entry requirements, such as Swedish, to make it easier for new immigrants to start in HE.

## **How do HEIs work on widening access to third cycle level?**

### **No HEI has a separate strategy for widening access to third cycle education**

No HEI currently has an HEI-wide strategy for widening access to third cycle (doctoral) education. Eleven HEIs responded that they have texts on widening access to the third cycle integrated in other strategic documents rather than a specific strategy for widening access to third cycle level, and 28 do not.

### **There are different perspectives on widening access to third cycle education**

#### ***Widening access to third cycle education is relevant to programmes in fine, applied and performing arts***

In the survey, *Beckmans College of Design* was an exception as regards widening access to third cycle education, because it is integral to the courses/syllabi for all programmes in the field of professional development and in the subject of History, Theory and Context. The programmes support the students in their work on developing application portfolios for the Master's programmes, which is the first step towards third cycle education/research.

The *Royal College of Music in Stockholm*, which works hard to build up platforms and infrastructure for research in the arts, also integrates issues of over- and under-represented groups, primarily in various strategy documents.

#### ***Widening access to third cycle education is regarded as an issue of quality***

A number of HEIs regard widening access to third cycle education as an issue of quality; that widening access has the potential to raise the quality of third cycle education and to contribute to producing more excellent researchers than would otherwise be possible.

At the *University of Gothenburg*, the Vision2020 strategy also emphasises the importance of widening access to third cycle education courses. The strategy was written like this because it is vital to be able to provide the university with qualified researchers/teachers in the future, as well as providing expertise for society. In its response, the *University of Skövde* writes

that widening access is included in the university's work on an excellent learning environment.

### ***Widening access to third cycle education is regarded as an issue of equality***

A number of HEIs regard widening access as an issue of equality. *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* has, for example, an action plan for equality, diversity and equal opportunities 2014-2016, which includes targets and measures for the recruitment of doctoral students and the study environment. The gender distribution among doctoral students at KTH is still imbalanced and KTH is keen to actively encourage female and international students with good study results to apply for third cycle education.

At *Linnaeus University*, widening access to third cycle education is an integrated part of their work for equal opportunities: equal opportunities integration and the equal opportunities committee.

### ***Widening access to third cycle education may be integrated in a general strategy for widening access***

At a few HEIs, text about widening access to third cycle education is part of a general strategy for widening access. This includes *Uppsala University's* work on widening access in third cycle education, which is included as a task in the 2014-2016 action plan for widening access.

### ***Various reasons why strategies for widening access to third cycle education are missing***

There is great variation in the reasons why HEIs do not have a strategy for widening access to third cycle education.

#### ***There is good breadth among the HEIs' doctoral students***

For example, the *Blekinge Institute of Technology* states that it does not have a strategy for widening access to third cycle education because it believes that there is a good breadth among its doctoral students.

Nor does the *Stockholm School of Economics* have a strategy for widening access to third cycle education. However, it states that it has an even distribution of men and women, and Swedish and international students, at third cycle level.

#### ***A few HEIs are starting to build up their own third cycle education***

For a number of HEIs, being at the beginning of building up third cycle education was a reason for not yet having a strategy for widening access to third cycle education. This includes *Dalarna University*, which recently started its own third cycle education and has thus not developed a strategy.

The situation is similar for the *University of Gävle* which has also recently received degree-awarding powers at third-cycle level. It writes that the ambition is to address the issue of widening access to third cycle education, but that it has not yet concretised.

At *Sophiahemmet University*, work is ongoing with an application for degree-awarding powers at third-cycle level. Linked to this, it is establishing a plan for widening access.

### ***Admission regulations contribute to widening access***

Some HEIs respond that the admission regulations can be a tool for working on widening access to the third-cycle.

For example, the *University of Borås* writes that when admitting doctoral students, equality and diversity are among the criteria that the scholarly and fine arts expert assessment groups must take into account when evaluating and ranking the applicants.

*Luleå University of Technology* states that it lacks a true overall strategy for widening access to the third-cycle level. However, the admission regulations for third-cycle education are assessed as being a strategic document that aims to reduce imbalanced recruitment as much as possible. Among other things, it states that validation of previous professional experience is done by the head of school submitting a proposal and motivation to the relevant committee, so that the applicant's professional experience is evaluated as providing the equivalent expertise as a degree or completed course requirements according to the entry requirements. *Lund University* answered that the university has established regulations for third-cycle education and admission regulations for third-cycle education; both these documents have sections relating to widening access.

### ***Some HEIs have no established strategy but still work actively with widening access***

A number of HEIs have no established strategy, but still do things that they feel promote widening access to third-cycle education. Among others, this applies to *University West*, which does not have an established strategy for widening access to third-cycle education, but which works continually with activities in which doctoral students and researchers try to arouse interest in research among students and school pupils.

Nor does *Mid Sweden University* have an established strategy, but regards its externally employed doctoral students as a means of widening access to third-cycle level. They thus achieve a greater breadth of doctoral students, perhaps primarily when it comes to students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

In its response, the *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences* writes that it does not have a strategy, but that places are advertised in Swedish and English, both on the university website and via *Arbetsförmedlingen*. Over half of the current doctoral students have a foreign background, with a considerable number from developing countries.

### ***Other HEIs are working on producing a strategy***

*Malmö University* has no established strategy at present but is currently working on one. *The Stockholm University of the Arts* answered that it has no established strategy, but that work is underway on producing one.

## **Over the last two years, have HEIs surveyed their doctoral students for the frequency of and conditions for over- and under-represented groups?**

Surveys of an HEI's doctoral students are performed at different intervals and using different approaches.

### **Gender is in focus for many HEIs**

*Chalmers University of Technology* conducts an annual staff survey for the entire university. The results of the questionnaire for doctoral students show that most problems are related to gender. Men are generally over-represented but there are major fluctuations in the gender distribution of doctoral students on the various programmes. There are also differences between doctoral students who speak Swedish or English in their experience of their situation as a doctoral student. *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* conducts an annual statistics review and an annual doctoral student questionnaire. The number of admitted, active and graduated doctoral students at the university has an over-representation of men. Men are more satisfied with their education and feel that they get more support and supervision than women, and they experience the research environment as more stimulating.

*Linköping University* conducts annual doctoral student surveys at faculty level for gender and origin. At the university level, the gender distribution is even between women and men (47 and 53 per cent respectively), but there are differences between academic fields. In technology, female doctoral students are somewhat more likely than male doctoral students to feel that demands related to their research have a negative effect on them outside of their education. *Luleå University of Technology* conducts a specific survey in association with work on their annual report. The biggest gender imbalance is found at the departments of Health Sciences and of Computer Science, Electrical and Space Engineering. In the humanities and social sciences, it is common for new recruits to be 40 or above, and in technology 29 or younger.

*Mid Sweden University* regularly analyses statistics from Statistics Sweden for gender distribution (annually) and parental education level (every second or third year). These analyses show that it has a somewhat higher proportion of women than the national average and a lower educational level among students' parents. Foreign doctoral students are in the majority in some subjects. *Halmstad University* conducts a doctoral survey every three years in order to understand the doctoral students' situation; it also has questions about the students' background. In IT and innovation science, there is a majority of men, while women are in the majority in health and lifestyle.

At *Uppsala University*, the Unit for Quality Enhancement and Academic Teaching and Learning analysed material from a questionnaire on the basis of gender. It has also conducted an analysis of the differences between doctoral students' opinions as regards whether they had a Swedish or foreign undergraduate degree. A new doctoral questionnaire was distributed in the spring of 2015 and this data is currently being processed. The equivalent anal-

yses with regard to gender and Swedish/foreign undergraduate degrees will also be conducted and published.

### **Other HEIs focus on social background, among other aspects**

*Lund University* takes a broad approach and its reports present age, gender, disability, social background, ethnicity and sexual orientation among its doctoral students. Women are less satisfied with their professional surroundings as doctoral students than men – and doctoral students who work alone are less satisfied than doctoral students who are part of a research group.

*Malmö University* has reviewed statistics from Statistics Sweden prior to starting work on creating a programme to inspire first generation HE students to study at post-graduate level. The statistics show that 33 per cent of its students who continued to third-cycle education between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 were first generation students, compared to 45 percent first generation students at first-cycle level. *Stockholm University* published its report *Utbildning på forskarnivå vid Stockholms universitet 2012/2013 (Third-cycle education at Stockholm University 2012/2013)*, based on the results of the student union's doctoral survey. One-third to one-quarter of doctoral students had a parent with no HE. Additionally, a somewhat higher proportion of the doctoral students in the natural science and social science faculties had only one parent or no parents with HE compared to the humanities and legal faculties.

### **Graduation surveys for doctoral students**

*Umeå University* focuses on those about to graduate and conducts an annual survey. One of the questions relates to parents' educational background. In 2013 the response rate was 78 per cent with 55 per cent having parents with at least three years of HE. In 2014 the response rate was 80 per cent with 50 per cent having parents with at least three years of HE. No other surveys have been carried out.

### **Reasons why HEIs do not survey their doctoral students**

A relatively common response is that the HEI is so small that no formal survey is necessary. Another is that third-cycle education has just started or will start, so no surveys have yet been carried out.

### **Further activities will take place in 2016**

In 2015, the *Stockholm School of Economics* employed a Diversity and Equality Manager whose task is to conduct surveys at the school. A survey of doctoral students will probably take place in 2016.

*Mälardalen University* will conduct a survey using a doctoral student questionnaire from the faculty board in the early autumn of 2016. *Örebro University* surveys some doctoral students and a decision has been taken to conduct a doctoral student survey. This will probably begin in 2016.



## **In the last two years, what measures have HEIs taken to improve participation and inclusion?**

Almost all the HEIs state that they have taken measures to improve participation and inclusion over the last two years. For the few HEIs that have not done anything, either no reason is given or nothing has been done in addition to supporting measures that are part of normal activities. It is thus important to remember that the answers to this question relate to relatively new measures, and do not represent the total range of measures for participation and inclusion at the HEIs. It is therefore not possible to evaluate the extent of the measures against anything other than newly-adopted measures.

### **Measures to improve participation and inclusion for new students**

Fewer measures to improve participation and inclusion for new students were described for the last two years, probably because introducing students to the HEI or helping them is ongoing. Some new forms of welcome activities were described, including ones in partnership with the students' union and municipality. For example, *Uppsala University* has started to conduct "welcome calls", where students ring up newly admitted students to welcome them and answer questions, a personal and direct way of meeting new students. Some information measures for new students are described, such as starting to show films about diversity and equality on the students' first day, or handing out brochures about special education support at the start of term. It is more common that HEIs have started to have more extensive introductions, a combination of social focus, the HEIs' values and educational culture and an academic focus on study techniques and revision courses for important subjects. Introductions are sometimes carried out in close cooperation with the students' unions. In some cases, new students are now offered mentors. Some HEIs have begun to introduce formal introductions for new students. In 2014, the *Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences* completed its introduction programme with a module worth 1.5 credits for all programme students, focusing on academic writing and what HE entails. At the *University of Gothenburg*, all undergraduate programmes at the School of Business, Economics and Law now have integrated seminars on careers and self-leadership.

### **Information measures to improve participation and inclusion**

A few HEIs state that their communications units have reviewed the HEI's information material in the last two years. These reviews of information material have been carried out for different purposes, such as to attract under-represented groups, offer more easily-available information to new and potential students and to improve the HEI's information about equality. For information about equality, some HEIs state that their equality plans are communicated to students and staff, that new staff are informed about equality during their introduction days, that the HEI's education coordinators

inform faculties about norm critique or that the HEI's equal opportunities committees organise lectures and themed days. A few information measures focusing on disability are described, primarily for staff.

### **Measures relating to diversity, norm critique and discrimination**

Some HEIs highlight how courses in teaching and learning in higher education include norm critique, the students' experience of their reception, anti-discrimination and equal opportunities. Lectures and seminars on the same theme are also described. A few HEIs state that mentor and reception committees are educated about equal opportunities, equality, discrimination and harassment.

As regards diversity, individual measures are described, such as diversity days, improvisation theatre on inclusive approaches at staff days, diversity projects to increase the inclusion of all student categories and lectures about diversity. *The University of Borås* states that its student ombudsman and administrator for student legal issues have a joint drop-in activity to discuss students' questions and provide support in cases of harassment and discrimination. Other measures that are described are that the university's policy now supports equal treatment to prevent unnecessary drop-outs and so that students will have a sense of identity via the HEI, that departments now have funding allocated to equal opportunity activities and that these activities are carried out.

### **Measures to improve participation and inclusion for LGBTQ people**

Very few specific measures to improve participation and inclusion for LGBTQ people were described. However in 2015, at *Linköping University*, its strategy group for equal opportunities and its forum for gender studies and equality co-financed and organised various events and activities for the purpose of highlighting and challenging heteronormativity.

### **Measures for participation and inclusion as regards equality**

A small number of HEIs describe how measures for participation and inclusion from the perspective of equality have been carried out over the last two years. The significant measures that are described were designed to counter specific problems of various scopes, such as introducing gender sensitive pedagogy into courses in teaching and learning in higher education, or conducting activities in networks for female engineering students to strengthen female students in a masculine environment. *Uppsala University* states that it has students meet female lecturers early on a course/programme on which women are in the minority among both students and teachers. The central administration at *Örebro University* has run operational development with a focus on equal opportunities throughout the entire university's organisation to increase inclusion among staff and students. Operational development at *Örebro University* includes information dissemination, activities,

courses, lectures, seminars and cooperation with the students' union and student sections.

### **Measures to improve participation and inclusion based on religion or other belief system**

The *Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences* has created a quiet room for students who want to meditate or pray. No other measures are described for the last two years.

### **Measures to improve participation and inclusion for students with foreign backgrounds**

A few measures to improve the participation of students with foreign backgrounds are described for the last two years. These are primarily related to the HEIs' courses and programmes. The *Royal College of Music in Stockholm* now offers a specific profile in its Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in Music, particularly for applicants who live in Sweden and have great expertise and/or background in folk and art music from other cultures. *Malmö University* states that on the foreign teachers' CPD there are now compulsory courses that aim to create understanding for the Swedish school system. There is also the potential for increased support such as expanded supervision, language support and expanded lesson time.

### **Measures to improve participation and inclusion for international students**

In the last two years, measures that have been taken to improve inclusion and participation for international students are that courses are also offered in English, there is preparation to offer more courses in English, that the HEI markets itself on English websites, or has supported a day on which the HEIs' international students present their home cultures.

### **Measures to improve participation and inclusion for students with disabilities**

#### ***Staff training as a measure to improve participation and inclusion for students with disabilities, undertaken in the last two years***

The staff training courses on disability that are described could be included as a module on courses on teaching and learning in HE or internal staff training. The focus of the courses may be a particular disability or related to the treatment of students with disabilities in general. The target group is teachers or other staff and the course is often given by the HEI's own staff.

#### ***Measures to improve participation and inclusion for students with specific disabilities, undertaken in the last two years***

Some HEIs highlight how they have conducted measures for students with dyslexia and ADHD. A few HEIs state that hearing loops are now available and that basic information has been recorded using sign language. One HEI highlights how it has continued work on adapting its premises over the last two years.

Text to speech and subtitled video lectures were also highlighted as recent measures. One HEI states that accessibility training is now part of mentor training. Another HEI has started to offer mentorship for students with neuropsychiatric disabilities and has also boosted its coordinator function with a half-time post. Some HEIs state that they have started to provide special educational support to students with disabilities, and special units for this have been initiated in a number of cases. These units are described being able to offer a number of different types of support to students with disabilities and support for students who wish to participate in international exchanges.

### **Measures to improve participation and inclusion for the entire student body in the last two years**

#### ***Models at organisational levels to increase student completion may be linked to participation and inclusion***

Student completion can be understood as a measure that is affected by a number of different factors, among them the experience of participation and inclusion at the HEI. A few different models to improve student completion have been initiated in the last two years, particularly systems to capture students with academic difficulties, “early warning systems” and other HEI-wide projects to follow students before, during and after their education. In addition, other measures are described for increasing student completion, such as developing a minimum practice at the HEI for preventive measures, implementing a range of evaluation routines and using student surveys to increase the quality of the study environment.

#### ***Educational measures to improve participation and inclusion, undertaken in the last two years***

Numerous different educational measures have been taken to improve participation and inclusion in the last two years. The majority of these can be described as part of a positive standard offering for student support, which is described in more detail later in this report. These are course guides that clarify the students’ working conditions for courses, educational and technical network support, language support in Swedish and English, language support programmes, supplemental instruction, drop-in support for academic writing and study techniques. More unusual educational measures that are described are credited courses in study techniques and careers, inspiring conversations for successful studies and conversations with students on critical approaches to group work and “making your voice heard”.

#### ***Opportunities for conversations with the HEI’s staff and students as a measure to improve participation and inclusion***

Some measures to improve participation and inclusion provide students with the opportunity to talk to the HEI’s staff outside of purely teaching situations. These conversations can take place as shared lunches or coffee with the vice-chancellor. Students can also be given the opportunity to participate in open quality forums to discuss inclusion and participation directly with the HEI’s teachers.

### ***Social media as a measure to improve participation and inclusion***

A few HEIs state that in the last two years they have started to use social media to improve participation and inclusion, either by increasing their presence in forums where students are the most active or by letting students' opinions influence how the HEI is marketed in social media.

### ***Measures in the physical environment to improve participation and inclusion, undertaken in the last two years***

The *Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences* states that it, in order to create an inclusive environment, has made it possible to shower individually for those students who wish to do so. This may seem a relatively minor or peripheral measure, but at UHR's discussion forum it was apparent that the issue of general sanitary spaces can be of great significance for equality. Non-gendered toilets may be needed for trans people, for example, to reduce the student's fear, unfortunately often justified, of having his or her gender identity questioned. People who do not wish to be identified as belonging to a binary gender can also be troubled by having to use gendered toilets. The right to your own body and how it is perceived can be important due to a great many associations and identities, as well as for religious reasons. It is relatively easy practical measure to offer neutral or individual sanitary spaces as a complement to those that are shared and gendered. In the end, each student's experience must therefore be decisive, and this cannot be determined by others.

## **Norm-critical approaches are important for the production of knowledge, equal opportunities, and widening participation**

Norm-critical approaches have a strong link to work on equal opportunities, which is in turn important for widening access and participation. At UHR's discussion forum, representatives from several groups that are covered by the Discrimination Act described typical situations in which teaching and learning in HE is not capable of covering their experiences. This could entail a student being described as aggressive for having a different opinion on culture and history to the teacher, which was experienced as possibly leading to a lower grade. Self-censorship was also described, such as the choice of neutral essay subjects that would not lead to controversies or conflicts with supervisors. If students do not dare to be intellectually free in their discussions or choice of specialisation, knowledge production in HE will be limited. Potential applicants can be discouraged from applying for HE if it is not perceived as inclusive.

At UHR's discussion forum it was also stated that individuals may not apply for HE due to fear of discrimination, or do not complete their studies due to continually feeling alienated and discriminated against. It was also apparent that students with foreign backgrounds whose parents had both Swedish and foreign HE may not enter HE because their parents have not found work equivalent to their qualifications. These experiences are not random

examples of individual trends. One in ten students has been treated in an offensive manner in association with their studies, it is also more common for women and students who have immigrated to Sweden to have experienced this (CSN 2015).

## **A majority of HEIs work with norm-critical approaches on courses for teaching and learning in HE**

A majority of HEIs state that they work with norm-critical approaches on courses for teaching and learning in HE. Using the grounds for discrimination, norm-critical pedagogy is somewhat more common for sex, gender, ethnicity, disability, social background and religion than for sexual orientation, gender identity and age. What varies most between HEIs in their work with norm-critical perspectives is primarily the scope of the courses offered in teaching and learning in HE and their context and framework. In some cases, measures are described that are not actually courses in teaching and learning in HE. Therefore, the HEIs' work on norm-critical education is based on the forms in which it is organised.

## **Social background is not covered to a significant extent in norm-critical teaching and learning in HE**

Few of the norm-critical approaches that are described in norm-critical HE pedagogy relate to social background to any great extent, compared to the focus found in the grounds for discrimination. This may be because social background is not defined as a basis for discrimination and norm-critique often coincides with the grounds for discrimination. However, social background is one of the factors that has historically proven to be significant in Swedish work on widening access. Internationally, social background is also central to work on widening access and widening participation. As things are now, the psychological and social dimensions of social background, the academic culture's influence on students from educationally disadvantaged homes, risks being overshadowed from a norm-critical perspective.

## **Norm-critical approaches included in courses in teaching and learning in HE**

Over one-third of the work on norm-critical approaches in HE pedagogy courses is carried out in courses for teaching and learning in HE. It is usual for basic courses for teaching and learning in HE with norm-critical content to be obligatory for new teachers. Norm-critique may then be a workshop, a lesson or continually integrated in the basic course. Norm-critique may also be more theoretical or legal, and is then primarily in the course literature or as information about legislation on equal opportunities.

Norm-critical approaches can also be taught interactively, in the form of focusing on how HE teachers take things for granted, educational methods, teaching situations and the significance of working method from the per-

spective of diversity (how gender and diversity are “done” or influence interactions). Norm-critical approaches can also be the subject of a course essay. Lecturers in norm-critique are described as coming from inside and outside the HEI. Norm-critique can also be part of a final examination on a course in teaching and learning in HE. Regardless of its scope, norm-critique as part of the compulsory courses for teachers is an important statement about how the HEI values diversity.

It is desirable for norm-critique not to be limited to following anti-discrimination legislation, but also to clearly be something that is important for widening participation. This means that norm-critique is not just an issue of not doing things “wrong”. Including norm-critique in a basic course in teaching and learning in HE, which is followed by an advanced course at the same HEI, offers the potential for updating and deepening knowledge. For example, at *Umeå University* the norm-critical perspective is included in two courses in university pedagogy and learning support, one at a basic level and one that is more advanced.

***Not all courses in teaching and learning in HE that include a norm-critical approach are compulsory for teachers in HE***

Not all courses in teaching and learning in HE that include a norm-critical approach are compulsory. If a course in teaching and learning in HE is not compulsory, there is a risk that experienced teachers are not updated in norm-critique. Understanding norm-critique then becomes dependent on interest, experience and the surrounding academic environment’s understanding of the field.

Norm-critique is an area of knowledge that is being updated and where design and content have a direct impact on equal opportunities and widening access and participation. A report from the Swedish Nation Union of Students (SFS) shows that 60 per cent of Sweden’s HEIs do not require teaching staff to complete a course in teaching and learning in HE, and that two-thirds lack guidelines for CPD (Ahlsten 2015).

Swedish research indicates that research takes priority over teaching in HE, which maintains the division between teaching and researching teachers (Geschwind and Broström 2015). There is therefore a risk that optional courses in teaching and learning in HE are not taken for reasons of time. There may also be a selection process on admission to third-cycle education, where doctoral students are – right from the start – regarded as future researchers or future teachers (Angervall 2015). HEIs should therefore consider how they can ensure that all teachers have equivalent knowledge of norm-critical approaches. This can be done by making courses in teaching and learning in HE that involve norm-critical approaches compulsory for teachers who are already employed. Alternatively, the HEI can define which type of previous education in HE pedagogy using a norm-critical approach or other experience that is equivalent to the knowledge a newly-employed teacher receives through compulsory courses in teaching and learning in HE.

### **Norm-critical approaches also found on courses in teaching and learning in HE for supervisors**

Courses in teaching and learning in HE for supervisors are far less common than courses for teachers. Norm-critique is usually covered in one lesson and may include supervision of both degree essays and third-cycle education. It varies from information about anti-discrimination legislation to values exercises and discussions about dimensions of power expressed through the supervisory relationship, such as age. It is important to ensure that supervisors have undergone some form of course in teaching and learning in HE relating to norm-critique, as the relationship between student and teacher intensifies when the teacher adopts the role of supervisor and it is extended over time.

### **Other forms of conveying a norm-critical approach partly fulfil a different function to courses in teaching learning in HE**

After courses in teaching and learning in HE, workshops and seminars are the most common forms for conveying a norm-critical approach. Not only teachers participate in the workshops, often other staff groups, sometimes also students. The content usually deals with norm-critique in general, anti-discrimination legislation as a whole or individual grounds for discrimination.

Seminars in norm-critical perspectives are primarily organised for staff, sometimes also for students. CPD is often in focus. Sometimes the aim is problematisation, sometimes networking. CPD days as such are generally described as being for teachers and staff, not students. Otherwise, staff training, lectures with a norm-critical perspective for staff and students, lunch meetings for staff, norm-critical discussions among colleagues and consultations with internal expertise and internal evaluation, known as “peer evaluation” (Thomas et al. 2014) are described. Internal evaluation means that the teachers observe each other’s classes and provide feedback, which could be a valuable norm-critical complement to courses in teaching and learning in HE. Internal evaluation takes into account HE’s need for autonomy, making a norm-critical approach a living educational concern. It allows an HEI’s academic staff to develop educational approaches that are based on the HEI’s own culture, focus and any needs for change. *The Stockholm School of Economics*, for example, states that its academic staff work on their own “peer evaluations” of how lectures and lessons are conducted from a gender awareness perspective.

Several similar measures combine staff and students at the HEI, are relatively limited, provide no qualification, non-compulsory, and can thus not completely replace courses in teaching and learning in HE. However, they do have an important function in maintaining expertise and demonstrating that norm-critique is prioritised at the HEI. As regards staff courses, they have an important function in emphasising that the HEI as an organisation and widening the issue. *Umeå University* states that a three-semester internal course was held in 2014-2015 on teaching power and gender awareness, in which two-thirds of the staff participated. It had a theoretical basis and



educational application, including a norm-critical perspective and a basis in the anti-discrimination legislation.

One reflection is that a review of reading lists from a norm-critical perspective is sometimes mentioned, but is often done on the students' initiative or by students' unions. However, it is the HEI's responsibility to ensure that course literature does not include discriminatory wording and includes multiple knowledge perspectives. The signal risks being that the issue only comes from the students, and is thus not integrated in the world of HE.

### **No forms for conveying a norm-critical approach exclude each other, they are valuable complements**

An American research report based on attitude surveys of 1500 university teachers, found that the teachers, of which the majority were white, valued ethnic diversity in the classroom and in their research groups, and felt that they also learned from this diversity (Alger et al 2000). However, only a third of the teachers developed their teaching to embrace diversity and only one in ten felt that diversity among the teaching staff influenced their own research. Female teachers, teachers from ethnic minorities and teachers with liberal values were more positive towards diversity. Diversity's enrichment of teaching in HE is probably because the academic method builds on observing and testing a number of different perspectives on knowledge. However, such development depends on the extent to which pedagogy in HE develops from abstract goodwill to educational methodology for benefitting from the advantages of diversity. In conclusion, basic and advanced courses in teaching and learning in HE, work to maintain and deepen knowledge and expertise in HE are all needed for a norm-critical approach to be integrated in HE teaching and within organisations. The HE sector itself is a significant producer of norm-critical knowledge and therefore gets a lot of expertise for free, an almost unique opportunity to see norm-critical approaches in HE pedagogy as an intellectual challenge to promote knowledge, and not a reluctant "must".

### **What routines do HEIs have for identifying students that need support at an early stage?**

Almost all HEIs state that they have routines for catching problems at an early stage when it comes to students who need support. Over two-thirds of HEIs have routines for the whole HEI. A few HEIs have both HEI-wide routines and routines at particular faculties or institutions. A few HEIs state that the identification of students who need support, based on each student's needs and circumstances, takes place at programme level.

At a number of HEIs, routines for catching problems at an early stage are limited to routines for coordinating support to students with disabilities.

***Information to newly-admitted students about opportunities for help is the most common***

The majority of HEIs refer to various types of proactive and preventive actions. These are mainly the provision of information to students about opportunities for support. This information mainly focuses on newly-admitted students in association with the semester start, e.g. via information letters, websites, receptions, mentor activities or meetings with study guidance counsellors or the coordinator for students with disabilities. Newly-admitted students are informed that different types of support can be offered, such as for academic writing, study techniques or oral presentations.

***A range of functions are responsible for identifying students in need of support***

- **Study guidance counsellor**

Some HEIs highlight the role of the study guidance counsellor in supporting students. They work with different types of supporting activities, such as lectures and courses in subjects such as time management or career planning. Their role is also to follow up the students' results and, where necessary, offer support to those deviating from their study plan.

- **Student health services**

Some HEIs state that they cooperate with student health services to identify students who need support. The students are either offered support via student health services or by referral to the coordinators for students with disabilities or study guidance. In some cases there is an established cooperation between the student health services and students' union.

- **Teachers and programme coordinators**

At a few HEIs the programme coordinators and teachers are responsible for identifying students who need special support.

- **Mentor activities**

A few HEIs have mentor activities, where teachers at the HEI are mentors for the students. Mentors have a study guidance function and are the ones who should identify students that need support.

- **Student ombudsman**

One HEI has a student ombudsman, who has a coordinating function between academics, student health services and other supporting functions at the HEI. The ombudsman's role includes helping students access the right help quickly. In addition, the programme leader function for the various degree programmes works as the first point of contact.

***A few HEIs perform follow ups of study results***

A few HEIs state that they have routines for following up study results of first year students, to identify students who are not coping. The approach can vary; students may be offered individual meetings, alternative study paths, special support and help with motivation and study techniques. The follow-ups can also lead to the creation of individual study plans. A few HEIs have "barrier courses" so they can see in good time whether a student should

be given the opportunity to progress. One HEI refers to regular course and programme evaluations that may indicate if there is anything particularly problematic in a certain subject or discipline. At one HEI, students who choose to terminate their studies must fill in a form and provide a motivation in a meeting with a study guidance counsellor.

A few HEIs have built up or are building up an “*Early Warning System*”, which means that the student is followed up systematically. An “*Early Warning System*” is a tool for following up study results, the purpose being to identify students in the risk zone as early as possible and to offer them support.

### **A few HEIs state that their small size gives them a good overview of the students’ need for support**

#### ***At one HEI, the doctoral students’ study plans are revised annually***

One HEI conducts annual revision of all individual study plans for doctoral students. In this context, needs for support can be identified and followed up.

## **What routines do HEIs have for identifying faculties or departments that need to develop their support for students?**

More than half the HEIs state that they have routines for identifying faculties or departments that need to develop their support for students. The design of these routines varies between HEIs.

A few HEIs state that any problems at faculties or departments are identified at management group meetings<sup>12</sup> at which needs issues are discussed. A few HEIs state that they work using dialogue as a basic tool at all levels of the organisation for highlighting organisational problems. Dialogues are systematically conducted at department, faculty and executive management level. At *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* the management conducts three dialogues with the institute’s schools. These discuss, among other things, student completion and examination, i.e. how the programme students are doing. Discussion takes place using a development plan, action plan, current results and statistics as a basis, so the school’s work with students can be evaluated in dialogue. Its equal opportunities’ plan also prescribes following up these issues.

A few HEIs state that the need for development is identified via the faculties’ follow ups of the students’ results. A few HEIs refer to course evaluations or questionnaires for the students. Results can highlight development needs at department or faculty level and lead to work for improvement. Development needs can also be identified by talking to students. This could be done via a cooperation with the students’ union, mentor activities, the student health services or student representation on decision-making bodies and committees.

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12. At the *Stockholm School of Economics*, issues are dealt with by the school’s highest academic decision-making body, the Faculty and Program Board.

A few HEIs state that a special unit at the HEI, often an educational unit or student unit, is responsible for rectifying any organisational problems at a faculty or department. This could be consultatory support for various areas or programmes, for educational development or issues of equal rights and accessibility. In other words, there are no routines at these HEIs for identifying faculties or departments that need to develop their support for students, in the meaning that there is central and systematic evaluation of the support offered by the departments. It is the faculties or departments themselves that contact the responsible unit when necessary, to order actions that aim to develop support for the students.

In some cases, follow-ups of the faculties' or departments' needs takes place via the network of study guidance counsellors at the HEI or via the department and faculty representatives in the equal opportunities group or its equivalent.

A few HEIs refer to their small size and say that any problems can be solved without formal routines.

At a few HEIs, organisational problems are brought to light using an "*Early Warning System*".

## **What measures do the HEIs have for students who need support?**

The measures for students who need support that are described by the HEIs may have a link to widening participation, but can also be regarded as part of the HE sector's overall task. Pursuant to Chapter 1, Section 11 of the Higher Education Ordinance, HEIs shall "... be responsible for providing students with access to health care, in particular preventive health care intended to promote the physical and mental health of the students. The higher education institution shall also be responsible for other student welfare activities to support students in their studies or facilitate their transition to the labour market as well as otherwise providing students with a sound environment in which to study". In the same way as recruitment and widening participation coincide, but sometimes have no connection, the link between support and widening participation is not linear. Support is not always widening participation, and widening participation does not always entail support. In the context of widening participation, support should not be understood as rectifying failings in students from under-represented groups, rather as adapting the HEIs' environment to other needs than those to which they have been adapted historically.

### **Academic writing, language support and mentor programmes are the most common academic support measures**

Half of all support measures available to all students related to concrete skills that are necessary for completing studies in HE. Almost all HEIs offer students support in academic writing. Swedish language support is offered

at a majority of HEIs. Over half the HEIs offer language support in English and a range of mentor programmes.

Half of the other supporting measures that are available to all students are linked to psychosocial health, which may be negatively affected by studying in HE or may affect studies. In some cases, there are no organised supporting activities for students, but individual teachers make great efforts with individual students. The teachers have an important role in drawing attention to a need for support, but there are disadvantages to not having organised support. Students may be afraid to ask the teacher who will set their grades for support, there is a risk that needs are not seen in time, individual teachers may be overworked and the right to support is not clear or equal. UHR's opinion is therefore that it should not be the responsibility of individual teachers to have sole responsibility for discovering needs for support and taking action.

### **A number of other academic support measures are offered, focus on study technique is the most common**

After academic writing, help with study technique is the most common support measure that is not of a psychosocial character. Support in study technique is offered in the form of lectures, courses and workshops and is often provided by study guidance counsellors, student health services or study workshops. An extensive approach is taken by the *University of Skövde*, where the student support function provides a credit-giving course in study technique.

HEI libraries appear to have a significant function in pedagogy, particularly as regards language and searching for information. Digital language support is either offered on the HEIs' computers or for private download by students, and appears to be increasingly common. Expanded individual supervision for students who are finding it difficult to pass is described by some HEIs, and is provided by teachers, the HEI library or study and language workshops. Supporting measures in communication and rhetoric, provided by resource centres and study workshops, are also described. Career guidance is also perceived as a form of support by some HEIs, and these answers describe lectures, courses and workshops in areas such as CVs, interview training and career planning. Career advice can also be integrated in teaching and thus reaches all students on a course, regardless of background. At the *University of Borås*, teachers who are responsible for a course can, for example, order an integrated career lecture, which is then part of the normal course.

Overall, the organisational forms for the academic support described by the HEIs raise more questions than the actions themselves, which are on the whole very relevant. International research emphasises the importance of teaching in HE being adapted to the target groups for widening participation. It is possible that supporting educational measures located outside the educational situation replace the development of an inclusive HE pedagogy. HE pedagogy thus risks remaining significantly unchanged, and other functions will take over areas of its development work. In order to counteract this development, it is important to consider how teaching relates educationally

to academic writing and searching for information, to clarify when support should be provided outside normal teaching.

### **Support measures linked to psychosocial health primarily relate to stress and anxiety about public speaking**

In general, psychosocial support measures are carried out via the HEIs' student health services. The most common psychosocial support measures that are offered are stress management and related problems such as procrastination and examination anxiety, as well as anxiety about public speaking in the form of "dare to speak" course. Dealing with stress is important, because stress has increased among Swedish students since 2013, and is the students' most common health problem; it is more common among women (CSN 2015). A few HEIs also often support measures for increasing the student's self-esteem. A few HEIs offer individual support counselling or short-term contact with therapists.

Few preventive measures that involve alcohol are described, but the *University of Skövde* offers students the opportunity to fill in lifestyle tests via the internet. Each semester, email surveys are sent to the university's students with questions about alcohol habits and stress, which probably functions as an awareness-raising intervention. Preventive measures relating to alcohol and drugs are of great value because the link between stress and alcohol is well-proven and student life can entail a risk of harmful alcohol consumption<sup>13</sup>.

### **Support measures specifically for widening participation, particularly for new students, can be developed**

Few specific supporting measures are described that are expressly for widening participation in terms of retention and student completion. This may be because of the universal perspective on solutions that historically characterises Swedish society and thus also Swedish HE (Johansson et al 2005). However, international research shows that the target groups for widening participation may have experiences and needs that require specially designed support. For example, women may need continual support in all phases of their academic life due to academic structures, i.e. support to finish her education is not adequate (Mirza, Heidi Safia 2006, Villaseñor et al. 2013).

One way of addressing group-specific needs is, as *Örebro University* has done, to create an internal network at the university for women in research, which offers mentors to doctoral students, among other things. Internationally, measure-focused studies of factors that affect student completion are common (Jones and Braxton 2010). It is therefore surprising that few targeted support measures are described that expressly have retention and student completion perspectives. However, *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* offers "supplemental instruction" on courses with poor student completion, which is one way of designing measures with a focus on widening participation.

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13. Harmful use is defined by the World Health Organisation as an individual experiencing mental or physical damage due to alcohol consumption, which should not be confused with alcohol addiction.

Internationally, new students are a prioritised group for increased retention, and research indicates that support given in the first semester is important, but then decreases in importance (Cholewa and Ramaswami 2015). A few supporting measures that specifically target new students are described. *University West* organises an introduction to HE for all new entrants to HE with the aim of creating security and companionship around starting to study; this is a cooperation between the university's departments, administration and students' union. In association with the students' first course, a lecture in study technique is also offered and streamed.

It is UHR's opinion that measures for widening participation are important, specifically for new students. Specific proactive measures that include all new students focus on both study technique and the social aspects of studying in HE and continue throughout the first semester, may be of value.

### **Subject support and programme-specific support measures in natural science and technology**

Support in mathematics is offered by slightly less than one quarter of HEIs, but is still the most common form of subject-specific support. Mathematics support is primarily available to students studying subjects that focus on the natural sciences and technology; in a few cases it is provided for economics and teacher training programmes. A few mentor programmes that are specific to civil engineering programmes are described. Personal support in Master's essay writing is described in some cases. At one HEI, students on programmes that lead to general degrees are offered support for work on their skills portfolio. In other cases, a few departments hold their own lectures in study technique. "Dare to speak" supervision may also be offered locally.

### **Few support measures specifically for international students**

A few support measures are described for international students. For example, *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* is building up an Academic Resource Centre (ARC) that offers courses in Swedish for exchange and Master's students, as well as mathematics support, career support, help searching for information and study technique. Support that also emphasises the social aspects of student life could benefit international students, who not only need to deal with being students but also to creating networks in another country.

## **What support measures do HEIs have for improving conditions for students with disabilities that are a barrier to studying?**

Pursuant to the Discrimination Act (2008:567), a lack of accessibility is a form of discrimination; a person with a disability is at a disadvantage if a business/organisation does not take reasonable measures to ensure that the person is in a comparable situation to people without a disability. The Discrimination

Act also states that HEIs shall conduct targeted work to actively promote equal rights and opportunities for the students who participate in or apply to HE, regardless of disability. Support measures for students with disabilities are thus regulated by law, and are also important for widening participation. If the HE environment is not adequately adapted, or is perceived as being too difficult to adapt, potential applicants may be discouraged.

The majority of the support measures that are described share a requirement for documented disability, that they are designed in consultation with the HEI's coordinator, but approved by the course examiner. At UHR's discussion forum and hearings, it became apparent that students' certification may need renewing for HE, because functional ability can change with time, for example in cases of neuropsychiatric disabilities. In these situations, support – and thus accessibility and widening participation – is dependent on a medical and administrative process that may entail costs and delays. It is therefore important that there are functioning routines for ensuring accessibility. A number of HEIs also describe the importance of students preparing well in advance of starting HE. Given that notifications of admission can take time, there may however be situations where it is less possible to think ahead, which may negatively affect widening access. How support to students with disabilities works in terms of a functioning reception and provision is also highlighted by a Swedish report as an area that needs researching (Larsdotter, Frid and Krantz 2012).

### **Support measures for improving conditions for students with disabilities that are an obstacle to study?**

#### ***Adapted examination is one of the most common supporting measures for improving conditions for students with disabilities***

A majority of HEIs describe alternative forms of examination as a supporting measure for students with disabilities that are an obstacle to study. Alternative examinations may entail significant adaptations to their design, such as extended examination times, separate examinations, examination in smaller groups, regular tests or a take-home exam. Alternative examination may also relate to how an answer is given, such as taking an oral exam instead of a written one, providing an oral supplement instead of a written one, writing in Swedish rather than English at Master's level. It may also be getting help with writing and access to a computer during an examination, with a spelling programme or software for speech synthesis.

#### ***Mentorship and note-taking support are offered at most HEIs as support for students with disabilities***

Over two-thirds of HEIs also offer mentorship, focusing on study techniques and personal support. The mentors are described as experienced students or specialists. A minority of this mentor support is provided by fellow students, i.e. coursemates who receive payment. Two-thirds of HEIs state that students with disabilities may be offered help with note-taking as a supporting measure. The most common form is that a coursemate is paid for taking notes and then copying them. Alternatively, the student receives a copying



card to be able to copy notes for free. At UHR's hearing it was stated that support with note-taking may result in stigmatisation if the student must contact a coursemate directly and state his or her disability. It is therefore desirable that students who receive help from the HEI with note-taking are able to do so anonymously if they so wish.

***Adapted physical study environment is a less common support measure for students with disabilities***

A small number of HEIs state that their premises are completely accessible to students with disabilities. A lack of physical accessibility has a purely negative effect on widening access and widening participation. It does happen that HEIs inform students that some of the premises are not fully accessible and that it is the students' responsibility to find out where this applies. This sends a signal that risks being a deterrent. If an HEI has not made its premises accessible, the solution to this for the individual student must come from the HEI. Other supporting measures that relate to the general physical environment in general. Over a quarter of HEIs state that their lecture rooms are equipped with hearing loops. Some HEIs offer portable hearing loops. A few HEIs state that they offer break rooms, allergen-free rooms, private studios or specific rooms for students with disabilities. A few HEIs loan desk chairs and sit-stand desks.

***Expanded supervision and adapted study paths as support measures for students with disabilities***

Two-fifths of HEIs state that they offer expanded or specific supervision; language supervision is common in association with major pieces of autonomous work. Supervision in the form of "*supplemental instruction*" from older students also occurs. A few HEIs state that individual study plans can be adapted where necessary. One HEI also states that its departments may offer alternative assignments after educational assessments in relation to the intended learning outcomes and syllabus. However, it is likely that there are more HEIs that would offer an adapted study path where necessary. Adapted study paths are perhaps not more frequently stated because of how the question was interpreted in terms of what a support measure is.

***Accessible study resources as a supporting measure for students with disabilities that are an obstacle to study, obtained via the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media***

The majority of HEIs emphasise that students may loan or order accessible study resources from the Agency for Accessible Media (MTM) via the HEI's library. It is common for course literature to be available as audio books, e-textbooks and braille books, or that the HEI can order them from MTM as new production. Some HEIs say that the HEI may pay for the recording of a book if new production through MTM takes too long. A few HEIs state that they also offer software for speech synthesis, enlargement software and translation pens.

### ***Digital support and technical aids as support measures for students with disabilities***

A quarter of HEIs highlighted digital support software, primarily spelling software. In some cases the student may also download the software to a private computer. A few HEIs state that they have computers and Dictaphones that students may borrow.

### ***Support measures for improving conditions for students with specific disabilities***

Half of the HEIs state that sign language interpreters can be organised via their coordinators at the student's request. Transcription for people with impaired hearing is highlighted by a quarter of HEIs.

For students with dyslexia that is an obstacle to study, the support measures described include a full-time dyslexia pedagogue, specialised support for study techniques, and special help from the HEI's language workshop, supportive teaching and the opportunity to have a dyslexia diagnosis made at the HEI. At *Lund University*, the unit for educational support has the capacity to conduct investigations into reading and writing to identify potential dyslexia. The university offers this as a means of avoiding indirect discrimination. Having the opportunity to be examined by the university has the advantage that it may result in a faster evaluation of the student's needs when studying.

As regards students with restricted mobility, a few HEIs state that wheelchairs are available for loan, and that writing help can be arranged for written tasks and examinations.

For students with impaired vision, a few HEIs offer personal campus orientation, access to braille displays, digital cameras that allow enlargement and larger computer screens, and audio description.

## **Students with special needs or disabilities who want to participate in international exchanges are primarily offered information and contact people**

The most common form of support for students with special needs or disabilities who wish to participate in international exchange programmes is that the HEI offers a specific contact person, which more than two-thirds of all HEIs do. Almost two-thirds of HEIs also inform their students about opportunities to obtain external financial and practical support.

One supporting measure that is described is that the HEI's international coordinators cooperate with Funka. Another is that the HEI provides recommendations to the HEI at which the student wishes to study, describing the forms of support the student has previously received. The *University of Skövde* states that meetings prior to studying abroad and meetings for people returning from studying abroad take place in cooperation between study and careers guidance counsellors and student counsellors. A few HEIs state that

they do not provide any support to students with disabilities for participation in international exchanges, because it has not been relevant.

## **Supporting activities for facilitating the students' transition to the labour market**

The HEIs' support to students for facilitating their transition to the labour market is extremely important. It is of particular importance for under-represented groups, because they often do not have access to the same contact networks as more traditional students. This was also something that was actualised during UHR's discussion forum, where requests for concrete information from HEIs about future professions and their circumstances were submitted by several participants from under-represented groups.

### **Great variety of supporting activities at the HEIs**

There is a great variety of supporting activities that aim to facilitate the students' transition to the labour market. There are HEIs that only conduct a few activities and HEIs that conduct very many activities. Some types of activities are found at all HEIs, others at just a few. The majority of HEIs organise work placement and meetings with employers and alumni. More than half the HEIs organise inspiration days and meetings with researchers. Half the HEIs have mentor programmes. A very few HEIs have changed syllabi to provide tools for increased entrepreneurship. A great many other activities are carried out, from careers seminars and career planning courses, information provision, individual guidance, collaboration with businesses and business accelerators, and investments in entrepreneurship, to increased links to the labour market in courses and programmes.

### **Mentor programmes and placements focusing on the humanities and social sciences**

The survey shows that there are a number of activities that focus on student groups other than those in technology, economy and natural science.

The *University of Borås'* mentor programme is a good example of one that focuses on programme activities in areas that have not previously been the focus of such programmes, namely teacher education and the librarian programme. The *University of Gothenburg*, however, has established placements focusing on the humanities and social sciences to provide opportunities for qualified work experience, increased contact with the labour market and relevant work experience for students without placements on their programmes or who study freestanding courses. Another way of offering placements for students who do not have them as a natural part of their education is to do what *Malmö University* has done in the field of global political studies: organise a placement semester as a freestanding course. This also allows students studying social sciences as freestanding courses the opportunity to have work experience as part of their education.

### **Mentor programmes for all types of study**

Offering all students the chance to participate in mentor programmes, regardless of what they are studying, may also be a way of reaching subjects that are not traditionally included in various support measures. A number of HEIs have chosen this method.

### **Careers guidance and careers service**

One example of comprehensive careers guidance throughout undergraduate education is the “Biologists in the Community” course offered by *Stockholm University*. It runs for all three years of the Bachelor’s programmes in Biology, Marine Biology and Molecular Biology and covers around 200 students at its greatest extent.

All HEIs have some form of careers service and there are many formats for this, depending on the HEI’s focus.

*Karolinska Institutet* has run a careers service solely in English since 2007, for doctoral students and researchers. In 2014, *Karolinska Institutet* decided to provide careers support for Bachelor’s and Master’s students as well. In this way, the experience of the careers service for doctoral students and researchers benefits other students. In order for students to feel that the careers service is really for them too, more careers information and marketing of the Institute’s offering will be provided in Swedish.

### **A broad mix of careers activities are offered at HEIs with heterogeneous student bodies**

The *University of Borås* and *Malmö University* have a great variety of activities that aim to support the students’ transition to the labour market. Both HEIs have a large proportion of students with poorly educated parents and students with foreign backgrounds; activities are designed so that many different capabilities can be identified.

The *University of Borås* has a careers service that offers guidance in everything from help with applications, interview training, laws and contracts, finding new routes to work, careers planning in Swedish and English for students at all levels, from Bachelor’s to doctoral level. *Malmö University* offers students career workshops focusing on networking and performance, CV drop-ins with professional recruiters and mock interviews with specially invited recruiters and HR staff from the region.

### **A few HEIs work closely with the students’ future labour market**

One of the examples of close cooperation between the companies and organisations in which students will eventually work is the *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences’* equine studies programme, which is run in very close cooperation with business. Another example is *Luleå University of Technology*, which also has close cooperation with business. The university’s Career Centre is run in partnership with students and business. *The Stockholm School of Economics* also has close cooperation with business and extensive career management activities, which are planned and conducted in partnership

with the students' union, alumni and the school's partner programme, with 110 participating companies. *Umeå University* also has a couple of degree programmes that are entirely produced in partnership with business, such as electrical power engineering and process operator. On these programmes, businesses take long-ranging responsibility for placements and project work, among other things.

### ***Increased labour market participation in teaching***

The way that work with increased links to the labour market in teaching is a long-term activities is highlighted by *Chalmers University of Technology*, among others, which works strategically with the issue by increasing cooperation with the labour market on its courses/programmes and by CPD for teachers. More knowledge of the labour market and providing good examples inspires teachers; they see the benefit to bringing external parties into their courses and thus lifting the labour market into education.

### ***Work-integrated learning is found on technical courses/programmes, but not only there***

One example of a technical programme with a strong focus on work-integrated learning is at the *University of Gävle*. Among other things, it offers its students Cooperative Education (CO-OP), a form of education in which studying is alternated with periods of work. At *University West*, the overarching profile of the university is work-integrated learning (WIL), also including care and healthcare. It has been tasked by the Government with developing the field of WIL and working systematically and across the university with the development of the students' preparation for working life and the promotion of knowledge development and research in WIL. *Umeå University's* engineering programmes are adapted to the CDIO framework, which means the entire programme is characterised by learning to transfer theory to engineering practice, preparing for the transition to the labour market. On the university's technology and engineering programmes, students frequently conduct their degree projects at companies, giving them good contacts with business.

### ***Investments in entrepreneurship are another way of supporting student transition to the labour market***

There are programmes in which courses in entrepreneurship have been integrated and programmes that have entrepreneurial profiles. There are also programmes that lead to professions in which employment is very unusual and in which running a business is the most natural way to practice the profession.

### ***Entrepreneurship is integrated in various programmes***

Specific courses in entrepreneurship have been included in some programmes at the *University of Gothenburg*. These include the course "Entrepreneurship with Labour legislation" on the Food Service Management programme. Other programmes have entrepreneurship as a prominent part of their profile, such as the newly-started Bachelor's programme in media, aesthetics and cultural

entrepreneurship. At *Jönköping University*, entrepreneurship is included on many programmes and there are courses in which students start businesses. The university is greatly involved in Science Park Jönköping, which encourages the start-up, development and growth of businesses. The support that is given is offered to all students in English, to include international students and recent immigrants.

### ***Entrepreneurship for interested students***

*The Stockholm School of Economics* has a business accelerator, SSE Business Lab, which is an educational model for students who are particularly interested in entrepreneurship. At *University West*, all students can make use of what's on offer at Drivhuset, which works to encourage entrepreneurship and business-ownership among students. The university and other actors (including the region of Västra Götaland and Fyrbodals municipal association) are co-financers for Drivhuset's activities. At *Mid Sweden University*, all students can take part in activities at Frukostklubben, where the university's innovation office invites entrepreneurs and innovators to provide inspiring lectures for students on links to working life and entrepreneurship, career skills and entrepreneurship. *Mälardalen University* highlights the activities of "Idélab", which aims to communicate the importance of entrepreneurial skills to students, staff and researchers at the university.

### ***Entrepreneurship is a necessity in some professions***

For example, the *Royal College of Music in Stockholm* has long worked with entrepreneurship activities and offers free careers advice. There is no obvious employer after finishing a degree in music, and almost all the graduating students have a professional future as freelancers. The college's work with the entrepreneurial aspects of the students' daily life at the college comprises credit-giving courses in the area and, as extra support, careers advice, free lectures and active involvement in various incubator activities.

### ***Planned activities of interest***

Two planned activities have the potential to be of great importance for widening access. One is the "Future" project at the *University of Borås*, which targets potential students with intellectual disabilities. This is a group that has been entirely excluded from opportunities for HE, primarily due to admission rules and attitudes. The second activity is conducted by the *University of Skövde* which, in the autumn of 2016, is planning talks with regional municipalities on widening access and widening participation. If it manages to achieve significant agreement on shared investments in increasing entries to HE, this could have long-term positive effects.

### ***Bridging programmes for immigrant graduates***

The overarching purpose of bridging programmes for people with foreign backgrounds is to make them more attractive on the Swedish labour market.

The HEIs were therefore asked whether they had organised bridging programmes for immigrants with *incomplete* or *complete* foreign HE qualifications in the last two years<sup>14</sup>.

More than half of the HEIs state that they organise bridging programmes for immigrant graduates with completed qualifications. One-third of HEIs state that they organise targeted courses/programmes for immigrants with incomplete foreign HE qualifications. However, the survey shows that several of the measures to which the HEIs refer are actually aimed at immigrant academics with completed HE qualifications.

### **“Korta vägen” (the short route)**

A few HEIs state that they organise bridging programmes within the framework of “Korta vägen”. “Korta vägen” is contract education that is procured and financed by Arbetsförmedlingen and conducted at HEIs, perhaps in cooperation with another actor such as Folkuniversitetet. The aim of “Korta vägen” is to increase the participants’ chances of finding work that corresponds to their qualifications. The project should also prepare participants for HE by supplementing the foreign qualification so it better corresponds to the demands of the Swedish labour market. It is aimed at non-Nordic graduates, or people with at least three years of HE from their home country. According to a few HEIs, some participants have an incomplete HE qualification.

### **CPD for foreign teachers (ULV)**

ULV is a bridging programme for people with foreign teaching qualifications. The purpose is to make participants more employable in Swedish schools or pre-schools. This is done by supplementing their qualification to the level of a Swedish teaching degree, allowing them to apply for teacher certification from the National Agency for Education. The programme varies in length, depending on previous education and professional experience. It is provided by six HEIs which have been tasked by the Government: *University of Gothenburg, Linköping University, Malmö University, Stockholm University, Umeå University and Örebro University*. Stockholm University is responsible for national coordination.

### **Bridging programmes for caring professions**

A few HEIs offer bridging programmes for people with medical, dentistry, pharmaceutical and nursing degrees from third countries (outside the EU/EEA), with the aim of them becoming authorised to practice their profession. These are offered within the framework of the National Board of Health and Welfare’s bridging programme and are financed using specific funding.

*The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences* organise a bridging programme for veterinary surgeons with degrees from countries outside the EU/EEA or Switzerland. This has been commissioned by the Government

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14. Pursuant to the Ordinance on higher education bridging programmes for completed foreign qualifications (SFS 2008:1101)

and is financed using specific funding. To participate in the programme, it is necessary to have a decision from the Swedish Board of Agriculture stating that the bridging programme is necessary for the person apply for Swedish authorisation to practice as a veterinary surgeon.

*Sophiahemmet University* previously offered a course in medical law that was commissioned by Stockholm County Council. It was for nurses and doctors from other EU states who wished to apply for Swedish authorisation.

### **“Candidate programmes”**

*Linköping University* and *Malmö University* offer bridging programmes for foreign graduates that they call “aspirantutbildning” (candidate programmes). These are not commissioned by the Government and do not have any specific funding. They are offered with individual study plans for each student. The length of the programme is therefore individual and decided by how the content of the study plan is designed. *Linköping University* offers a general programme and *Malmö University* offers two different ones, a general one and a management one.

### **Contract education at Malmö University**

For several years, *Malmö University* has offered contract education commissioned by Arbetsförmedlingen. It targets immigrant graduates who do not yet have the general entry requirements for HE.

### **Invandrarakademin at the University of Borås**

*The University of Borås* highlights the Invandrarakademin (IA – immigrant academy), a two-semester programme worth 60 credits. It has been offered since 2002 and aims to facilitate foreign graduates’ establishment on the Swedish labour market through preparatory introductory education. IA includes lessons in Swedish as a second language for foreign graduates focusing on work and society (60 credits) and guidance. After this, there is either a transition to further study or straight to working life. The programme is aimed at people with foreign HE equivalent to at least two years of full-time study. The university says that admissions to IA always include students with incomplete foreign HE qualifications.

### **Bridging programmes for refugees**

*Lund University* states that it has offered people with refugee status extra places on the medical programme. Refugees who have been forced to interrupt their medical degree in their home country have been admitted through special regulations to allow them to continue and/or complete their medical degrees.

### **Courses and assessments of qualifications in Swedish**

A few HEIs offer courses in Swedish for foreign graduates. This includes SFINX, a course at *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* for engineers with foreign degrees who want to study Swedish rapidly. SFINX’s aim is to give recently immigrated engineers good Swedish, technical language and knowledge of the Swedish labour market, to increase their chances of employment in engi-



neering. SFINX is a cooperation between *KTH Royal Institute of Technology*, the county administrative board, Järfälla and the City of Stockholm; it starts with intensive study in Swedish and then moves to classroom observation or HE. Throughout the programme, guidance and an individual study plan is available to SFINX students. After about ten months it is possible to apply for a mentor from a programme for which the Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers is responsible. SFINX also offers help with writing CVs and matching with businesses.

*Stockholm University* offers preparatory and qualifying course in Swedish and specific admission tests in Swedish for immigrant graduates. The best known is Tisus, which is a qualifying test in Swedish for HE.

### ***Bridging programmes for lawyers with foreign degrees***

*The University of Gothenburg* and *Stockholm University* have previously offered bridging programmes for lawyers with foreign degrees. They were organised as part of the Government investment in bridging programmes for foreign lawyers. However, both HEIs have ceased to offer the programme. *Stockholm University* stated that one problem was that the immigrant graduates were largely crowded out by people with Swedish upper-secondary education who were not admitted to a law programme in Sweden and had then studied abroad.

### ***The “Utländska akademiker” project at University West***

*University West* participated in the “Utländska akademiker” (foreign graduates) project with other HEIs from the west of Sweden. The project was run by the County Administrative Board for Västra Götaland from 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2012. It was financed by Arbetsförmedlingen and the European Social Fund. The overarching aim of the project was to create a regional model for more rapid establishment of immigrant graduates, which could eventually be part of a national strategy.

### **No bridging programmes have been offered, but other types of initiative exist**

A few HEIs highlight the opportunities for adapted study paths they offer. Study paths can be adapted for an already admitted student if necessary, for example if someone needs to supplement a foreign HE qualification. This is done by designing an individual supplementary education plan. For example, *Chalmers University of Technology* says that its experience is that people with foreign backgrounds find great benefits from being part of a normal programme. It has therefore chosen to primarily offer programmes. It supports prospective students who wish to build up to a qualification or change their focus, through study and careers guidance and applies credit transfers where possible.

However, it is also stated that individually adapted study paths always require more resources than the standard pattern. They require support in the form of information and guidance, as well as formal evaluations and decisions, e.g. assessment of qualifications and credit transfers from previ-

ous studies. For example, *Malmö University* refers to its many years of experience of education for immigrant graduates, saying that this is a group that requires far more resources than working with ordinary young students. Immigrant graduates often have individual needs for supplementary qualifications and a greater need for structured guidance through their period of study. The university says that this is vital if you are to give the target group a qualitatively sustainable programme for bridging to a Swedish degree or to meet the needs of the labour market.

### **In certain circumstances, more HEIs may start bridging programmes for foreign graduates**

A few HEIs state that they are planning to offer bridging programmes to foreign graduates. More HEIs could be interested in doing so. Among others, *Stockholm University* states that it would be desirable to develop opportunities for immigrants with incomplete psychology degrees to be admitted to the psychology programme, complete it and apply for authorisation. It states that it is currently possible to apply for a place on the psychology programme from the start and then perhaps apply for a credit transfer, but the programme is popular so this is a difficult option. A few HEIs highlight the problem that there is no specific allocation of resources for these types of programmes. This means that the costs of bridging programmes must be weighed against the cost of maintaining good quality on normal courses/programmes. The consequence is that HEIs cannot offer these types of programmes as part of their normal funding for undergraduate education. According to the HEIs, it is necessary to have a targeted commission with specific funding, specifically allocated places, a nationally coordinated investment such as ULV (CPD for foreign teachers) or that relevant actors, such as Arbetsförmedlingen, commission such a programme from the HEI.

## **HEIs websites vary greatly**

### **The HEIs' profile, and current and potential student bodies, influence the focus of widening participation**

A review of websites indicates that an HEI's profile, and the composition of the current student body and potential student body, affect the groups on which work on widening access is focused. At some HEIs, social and foreign backgrounds appear to be prioritised areas. Others, such as technological HEIs, primarily focus on existing imbalanced recruitment as regards gender. Other HEIs discuss widening access in terms of demographic spread, the value of increased heterogeneity or that the student body as a whole should correspond to society.

On the one hand, HE is characterised by competition, ranking lists, excellence and internationalisation and, on the other hand, HEIs must work with widening access, widening participation and equal opportunities. It is clear that HEIs choose different approaches in the texts on their websites. Some, such as the *Stockholm School of Economics*, focus on excellence, while others,

such as *Malmö University* and *Södertörn University*, focus on inclusion and that “everyone” should feel welcome. A third way, which *Karolinska Institutet* has chosen, is to highlight widening access as necessary for creating an excellent HEI. *Karolinska Institutet*’s website is characterised by a use of images and text that indicates that excellence does not have a gender, a skin colour, a religious faith or a particular functionality. A concrete example of this is that the students portrayed on the website reflect heterogeneity as regards gender, skin colour and religion. Another is that the university is clear in its information that they provide extra resources to students with disabilities who want to go on placements or study abroad.

### **Similar structures, but often difficult to find information on HEIs’ websites**

The HEIs’ websites have a relatively similar structure on their start pages. However, it is not always easy to find the information you are looking for once you leave that page. Information is hidden below non-intuitive headings and it sometimes necessary to use many clicks before reaching the desired information. The search function on a number of HEIs’ websites does not work particularly well; there are no hits in searches, despite the information being on the website. In many cases it is better to use Google.

### **Information about HE for important target groups is on some HEIs’ websites**

In work on widening access it is important to highlight the importance of teachers, study and career guidance counsellors and parents when it comes to breaking stereotypical career and study choices. When reviewing the websites, UHR found information adapted to the target group for teachers, children and pupils at pre-schools, compulsory schools, upper-secondary schools and adult education on a number of HEIs’ websites. However, the majority of the websites do not have targeted information of that kind. Very little, if any, information targets potential students’ parents, such as in the major “immigrant languages”. This can be compared with how information is provided in English for foreign applicants and exchange students and their relatives. In this case the information is more detailed and pedagogically structured.

General information about studying and student life is particularly useful for people who already know that they are going to study, but not what or where. In general, there is not enough information for people who are unsure about what HE entails, even if there are good examples. On most of the websites it is necessary to have relatively good prior knowledge of the HEI and HE to know where to look and what for. One of the exceptions is *Beckmans College of Design*, which has recommendations on its website for which preparatory courses are “good to study before applying” for their programmes. This list includes, in addition to the college’s own preparatory courses, such as the one-year evening course in the college’s three subjects that is held twice a week, preparatory courses at folk high schools and independent art schools. Another exception is *Mälardalen University*, which offers hesitant applicants and students the opportunity to contact study and careers guidance coun-

sellors at the university. It also has a number of thought-provoking questions and areas in which the person is encouraged to prepare before meeting the counsellor on the website. The questions are of the type, “who am I”, “where am I going”, “how do I get there”, and a number of points about what to expect from the counsellor during the meeting.

*Uppsala University’s* website has clear information about “getting a degree”, where they explain the difference between studying courses and a programme and reason around what you should think about when choosing a path from the start of your studies. In the text about degrees there is concise, clear information about how to apply. They also state “regardless of what you decide, you should collect your degree”. Students and doctoral students are welcome to “UU KARRIÄR” for support and guidance prior to entering working life. “UU KARRIÄR” offers guidance meetings, CV advice and many careers activities – “Come to us if you need someone to discuss your ideas and questions with”.

*Dalarna University* has a function where applicants and students can tailor-make a personal prospectus, either as a printed version that is sent home or digitally (PDF), which makes the range of courses and programmes more accessible for some groups. *Halmstad University* has an interactive, modern website for applicants and information in various formats: films, interviews with students from various subjects, clear entries to various areas of information, interactive sections, etc.

### **Information in social media**

Information in social media is a means of reaching individuals and groups who probably won’t find an HEI’s website. All the HEIs have some presence on social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Youtube. Many also have films on the HEI’s website and highlight student blogs or digital student diaries.

Others have created Facebook groups specifically to reach under-represented groups. For example, the *University of Skövde’s* Donna HIS, an association that works with inclusive game development and equality. They organise a “Tjejhack” (girl hack) in Skövde. *The University of Skövde* also highlight Isabella and Mathilda’s blog on spelutbildningar.se. They present themselves in this way: “We are in the second year of Game Design at the University of Skövde. We are also active in the Donna association that works with inclusive game development and equality.”

On the HEI’s Youtube channels there are films about what it’s like to study, information about specific programmes or interesting research. There are several examples of series that have been created for Youtube. One example is “Kaffe & 28 kvadrat” from the *University of Skövde*, which has two series of six episodes, and a student blog series and a student pod series from the University of Borås. One of the Youtube films from Uppsala University is aimed at international students or students who speak English and informs them that “being gay is ok” in Sweden.

### **An inclusive approach is important on websites**

The *Tre vägar till den öppna högskolan* (SOU 2004:29) report pointed out that HEIs' prospectuses and brochures were generally populated by young, able-bodied, blonde people. Ten years later, this pattern is still found, even if there is now greater diversity. The reviewed HEIs' websites are dominated by pictures of young people aged 20-25, and photographs of people with visible disabilities are conspicuous by their absence. A few photos are of people with religious symbols, such as a Muslim veil (hijab); these are on *Karolinska Institutet's* and *Umeå University's* websites.

Unlike around ten years ago, not only blondes shown. *Malmö University*, *Karolinska Institutet* and *Södertörn University* are examples of HEIs that have photos on their websites that represent people with different ethnic backgrounds. *Södertörn University* is the HEI with the greatest variation in its photos, in which older people are also shown. *Mälardalen University* has an inclusive approach in its description of the university: "At Mälardalen University (MDH), there are almost 550 students with different types of disabilities. Our premises are adapted to these students. Accessibility is in focus at the university".

### **It is necessary to make academia less daunting**

Even if there are good, interesting examples of HEIs that make the academic world less daunting, and talk about what education is and what it leads to, they are too few. An excellent exception to this is *Mälardalen University*, which has easily accessible, informative and inspiring texts about HE. In general, *Mälardalen University* has an exemplary website from a "promotion" perspective. There is easily accessible information for students with disabilities, how admission points and selection groups work, information about credits, semesters, educational levels, exams and student grants, as well as information about graduating and alumni. Below the heading "Hur vill du studera" (how do you want to study) there is an explanation of the differences between programmes and freestanding courses, studying on site or via distance, and full-time or part-time. The website also has a "listen" function, so most texts can be read in easy Swedish, etc.

The surveyed HEIs have generally compiled information for new students. The information that is presented on the HEIs' websites covers areas from how to get around the campus, room names, timetables, IT support, the intranet, student centres, housing, student grants, Mecenat cards, students' unions, clubs, and stipends, to applications, entry qualifications, admission, registration and roll-calls.

*Malmö University* and *Karolinska Institutet* package the information in an educational manner that does not require formal knowledge of routines, standards and expectations in the world of HE. *Malmö University* has a tab labelled "Bra att veta om högskolestudier" (good to know about HE) with an introduction film and information about the structure of HE (courses, teaching methods, examination, etc.). *Karolinska Institutet* has a tab called "Anmälan och antagning" (application and admission) with a review of admission requirements, applications, what happens next, admission and

application and tuition fees. *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* has information about teaching methods and defines the differences between lectures, lessons, seminars and laboratories. *The Stockholm School of Economics* has brochures and study handbooks about its programmes and rules.

### **All the HEIs have information about prior learning on their websites**

Identifying, evaluating and recognising an individual's collected competence, regardless of whether there is formal proof of it or not, is a central element in work on widening access. Admitting people via prior learning opens up HE to people who partly or wholly lack formal qualifications, facilitates the integration of people with foreign backgrounds in HE and out into the Swedish labour market, and supports lifelong learning. The surveyed HEIs have all, with a few exceptions, information about prior learning on their websites. Many have easily accessible information about what it entails and how to apply regarding prior learning. A few HEIs have extensive information, while for others it is more limited. Those with limited information often refer to UHR's website, [antagning.se](http://antagning.se). This is the website with information about HE, regulations and access to HE, and where applications are made.

*The University of Gävle, Linköping University, Malmö University and Uppsala University* have clear and informative texts on eligibility via prior learning. They explain what prior learning is and how to apply.

### **Study and careers guidance and counselling**

General and programme-specific guidance is available at all HEIs. However, there are considerable differences as regards to how much is on the websites. Several of the smaller HEIs had no study guidance information on the website and instead referred directly to the study and careers guidance counsellor. Examples of well-constructed websites are *Mälardalen University's* and *Dalarna University's*. Several also refer to UHR's websites, [studera.nu](http://studera.nu) and [antagning.se](http://antagning.se), as a complement to their own information.

*The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences* highlights the study and careers guidance counsellors as sounding boards contact people for study and career choices. Supportive meetings are in focus, and they write: "We are here to support and guide people who are thinking about studying, and people who have already begun. All the study and careers guidance counsellors treat what you say confidentially, and our starting point is always to respect the student's life situation and act from a comprehensive perspective". *Stockholm University* has central study guidance, as well as in the departments. Centrally, according to the website, the counsellors help the student to navigate through the range of programmes and courses and provide general information about regulations and studying at the university. A guidance meeting may be about how the student can combine courses, which programmes may suit someone's interests, or the possibility of changing focus.

### **Clear links to working life are vital**

Clear elements of working life and close contacts with the labour market in the form of placements, mentors, alumni networks and other third stream activities with employers are also vital to widening access and widening participation. Information about activities and where to go for careers guidance, for example, is good. A handful of HEIs appear incredibly professional in this regard. However, there is a lack of information about what is integrated in the various programmes and what career opportunities there are on graduation. There is potential here to develop this information and thus encourage people to apply to HE and support applicants to make well-founded choices on applying.

### **Measures to get students to complete their studies**

Once an individual has applied and been accepted, the next challenge is to work on getting to students to be comfortable, develop and remain until the end of their course/programme. This requires effective strategies, support systems and measures so that those who find it difficult or are uncomfortable in an academic environment get the necessary help and support to complete their education. In general, there is plenty of good information about support functions and activities on the HEIs' websites.

### **Activities that contribute to widening participation and a good study environment**

Knowing where to find support is important. For example, *University West* has a *student ombudsman* who functions as an independent party for contacts about the work environment, equality or discrimination issues. The task of the student ombudsman is to impartially listen to the student and help him or her. *Mälardalen University* has a *diversity strategist* to whom students can take questions about equality, discrimination or harassment.

Several HEIs, including *Mälardalen University*, have information in easy Swedish.

Many of them provide information about stipends for students with special needs for financial support to be able to complete their studies. Other HEIs, such as the *University College of Arts, Crafts and Design* provide suggestions to students about how to manage their finances while studying.

*Luleå University of Technology* took part in the local Pride parade in Luleå and *Linnaeus University* participated in the parade in Kalmar, which has a signal value. *Örebro University* has been LGBTQ certified since October 2015 in the field of equality. *Linköping University* has a portal for "equal opportunities" with a policy and plans, list of legislation, information, contact details for people who work with equal opportunities at the university, glossary, blog, newsletter and much more. *Linnaeus University* also has a well-filled webpage on "equal opportunities" with definitions, governing documents, links and information for students and staff. In 2014 and 2015 the university's committee for "equal opportunities" organised a café. The café is open to both staff and students at Linnaeus University.

## **Websites must be accessible**

The Swedish Agency for Participation<sup>15</sup> highlights the importance of language and design for a website to be able to be defined as accessible. The guidelines are that the webpage should be correctly constructed technically, predictable, have a clear structure and understandable, concise language that is adapted to being read on the screen. Additionally, sections should be introduced with a short summary, have a design with the best possible legibility and be possible to read in other formats. Other formats mean that the text can be translated to braille, audio or sign language. To increase legibility, the font size should be 14 points and it should be obvious what are headings, main text or images. The text should also be available as a PDF or Word file so it can be read using the screen reader on a private computer.

## **Information about accessibility at the HEI is important**

A student with disabilities may need adapted information, accessible premises and practical aids to manage studying or other measures that aim to support students through their period of study. For a student with disabilities to have a situation comparable to a student without them, HEIs, according to the Discrimination Act, are obliged to provide practical aids. With a few exceptions, there is good information on all websites about which practical aids are available at the HEI, what is required to receive support, what the student needs to do to get support and contact details to the person or unit at the HEI that is responsible.

A number of HEIs choose to have less information of their own and instead refer to *studeramedfunktionshinder.nu* which is a website on which *Stockholm University* provides overall information about issues relating to studying in HE and disabilities in the study situation. *Stockholm University* has special commitments in the area that include the annual allocation of a shared funding for HEIs, known as targeted national funding.<sup>16</sup>

The *Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences* has clear and simple information about disability. They also have good links for people who need other information, for example they refer to Dyslexiförbundet's help "for finding your way in the app jungle". *Luleå University of Technology* writes the following on their website about rooms and equipment: "More classrooms will be equipped with document cameras, audio equipment and projectors. Don't hesitate to ask the teachers to use them! There are demo rooms with Smartboards, including the chance to have conferences (recording, images can be transferred to your computer). If the lesson is held in a room with Adobe Connect, ask the teacher to record it. The library has digital recorders for recording audio. Please ask the teacher for permission first."

The overall picture of what can be read on the HEIs' websites is that there is generally good readiness to provide practical support to students with

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15. The agency is a merger of two other authorities, Handisam and the Swedish Institute of Assistive Technology. The guidelines that are discussed are from both Handisam and the Swedish Institute of Assistive Technology.

16. Studying with disabilities: [www.studeramedfunktionshinder.nu](http://www.studeramedfunktionshinder.nu) (24-11-2015)



disabilities. It is easy to find information and it is relatively similar on the various HEIs' websites.

## **What are the difficulties or challenges for HEIs in recruiting and educating students with more varied backgrounds?**

### **Challenges of widening access**

#### ***Imbalanced recruitment begins considerably earlier than the date of application***

A few HEIs highlight the problem of how external factors govern more than the HEI can influence. The imbalance in recruitment starts at an early age and is reinforced throughout the educational chain. For HEIs, one of the challenges is that it is difficult to obtain an effect from influencing measures that are late in this chain. It is quite simply hard for HEIs to influence the effects of pupils' choices in compulsory and upper-secondary school. It is also problematic that young people's career choices become conditional at an increasingly early age. For example, the opportunity to change from vocational upper-secondary education to one that is preparation for HE has declined due to recent upper-secondary reforms. Opportunities to study at Komvux adult education have also been limited.

#### ***High entry requirements influence recruitment potential***

A few HEIs believe that the entry requirements affect recruitment opportunities for students with varied backgrounds. This may be the entry requirements for Swedish and English on teacher education or the high, natural science-focused entry requirements for natural science courses/programmes.

#### ***Competition for courses/programmes is a major barrier***

Some HEIs state that the major difficulty with widening access is that there are extremely high requirements for merit ratings for access to some programmes. Pupils who were not motivated during upper-secondary school and thus did not get high grades find it difficult to get into these programmes. These pupils' opportunities are further limited because the current admission regulations make it difficult to get a second chance. This can be a difficulty and a challenge for recruitment to programmes such as medicine. In some cases, competition has also increased for foundation year programmes. This is a disadvantage for people who did not invest in their upper-secondary studies and reduces the chances of recruiting wider student groups to the subsequent programme.

#### ***Upper-secondary school formats and admission regulations are a barrier***

Some HEIs state that it is a problem that the admission regulations for HE are relatively rigid and that developing these regulations is desirable. The

format of upper-secondary education is also of great importance for work on widening access, as one of the conditions for entering HE is that upper-secondary programmes must provide eligibility. As regards widening access, it is therefore important that there are good opportunities to supplement previous educational choices, for example via Komvux adult education.

### **Competence development is necessary**

A few HEIs believe that competence development is necessary, as well as “best practice” for the evaluation of prior learning, and which types of alternative selection are possible for various programmes. A better foundation for the evaluation of prior learning and the application of alternative selection could make it easier for target groups to be admitted to programmes.

### **Poor education in aesthetic subjects and music in schools hinders widening participation to fine arts programmes**

According to the fine, applied and performing arts HEIs, recruitment is negatively affected by cutbacks to aesthetic subjects and inadequate music teaching in schools. *The Royal Institute of Art* believes that the result will be that fewer people have the chance to have a go and to develop in artistic fields. For the *Royal College of Music in Stockholm*, one of the foremost difficulties is that the students that are admitted are new entrants to HE usually need to undergo many years of prior education in music because of inadequate music teaching in schools.

### **Prospective students’ image of HEIs is a big challenge**

Some HEIs state that the image that prospective applicants have of the various HEIs is a big challenge. Hard work is required to supplement and broaden the image of their own HEI as an HEI for everyone, regardless of background.

The challenges differ according to the type of HEI. HEIs in the fine, applied and performing arts may suffer from certain groups not knowing of, or thinking they can’t afford, an arts education. One challenge for *Chalmers University of Technology* is that many potential applicants have an image of it being “for the boys”. For *Sophiahemmet University*, that challenge is to try and change the general opinion that the professional role of a nurse is traditional in a particular way. *The Stockholm School of Economics* believes that its difficulties are partly due to a general perception of the financial and banking industry that has declined, particularly among young women, since the 2008 financial crisis. For *Lund University*, its image as historic and research-focused is a challenge.

### **Low awareness of some HEIs means that they must “reach out” about their existence**

Some HEIs state that they must make an effort to “reach out” with their existence, as awareness of the HEI is low. One of the challenges is therefore to increase awareness of the HEI to make it an option for more applicants.

*The Stockholm School of Economics*, for instance, finds it difficult to reach out throughout Sweden, where local links to a university, such as Uppsala, Lund and Gothenburg, mean that local economics courses and programmes

are more attractive. However, *Linköping University* has the problem that it recruits nationally and only one third of the students are from the county. Conducting outreach activities for student recruitment is therefore an extra challenge. *Mid Sweden University's* challenge is that the entry rates for HE are lower in its region than in Sweden as a whole.

The HEIs also highlight the difficulties of designing and reaching out with information about courses/programmes and about studying in a way that reaches under-represented groups and makes them feel included. This includes people who, for a range of reasons, see barriers to starting HE., e.g. people without the formal entry requirements for HE.

### ***Important to strengthen cooperation with study and careers guidance counsellors in schools***

A few HEIs state that for groups without a family tradition of HE, it can often be necessary to change attitudes to HE. Study and careers guidance counsellors have an important role in this process, which requires ongoing dialogue between this group and the HEIs. *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* also feels that the study and careers guidance counsellors at compulsory and upper-secondary school have too much of a focus on the humanities and social sciences. The HEI therefore sees a need to strengthen its contacts with this group.

### ***Gendered educational choices are a significant structural barrier***

For many HEIs, gendered educational choices are a considerable structural barrier to recruitment. Getting more applicants from the under-represented gender to the courses/programmes that have a very imbalanced gender distribution among the students appears to be one of the greatest challenges. This particularly applies to nursing and some teaching and technology programmes, but also others. For example, the *Stockholm School of Economics* highlights the problem that young women are more likely to choose other programmes than economics than young men are, and that young women are more likely to be attracted by Bachelor's degrees abroad. A few HEIs also state that there are tendencies towards great differences between the number of men and women starting HE, which may also be a problem. For example, *Mid Sweden University's* challenge is that the entry rates for HE are lower in its region than in Sweden as a whole. They are particularly low for men in the region.

The gender distribution among doctoral students is a major challenge, as it reflects the imbalanced gender recruitment at first and second-cycle levels where women are over-represented on care and healthcare programmes and men are over-represented in technology.

In some cases, gendered education choices appear to be a greater challenge than socially imbalanced recruitment. For example, *Halmstad University's* opinion is that it succeeds in attracting students with varied backgrounds, based on the knowledge it has of its student groups. The university is positive towards developing its work on recruiting students with more varied backgrounds, but the challenge lies in how some areas remain gendered.

Some of the HEIs highlight that gendered educational choices are difficult to change in HE and the efforts need to be made earlier. According to the HEIs, this is a national and, in many cases, international problem for which individual HEIs find it difficult to find new methods and solutions on their own. In other words, structural change and new ways of thinking are necessary on an overarching level, with significant shared efforts.

### ***A challenge to recruit people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds***

The HEIs also state that the recruitment of students from educationally backgrounds is a major challenge. This is particularly true for HEIs in regions where rates of entry to HE have been low.

### ***Important to be able to show links to the labour market***

A few HEIs highlight the importance of being able to show the links between HE and the labour market for work with widening access. Courses/programmes with unclear links to the labour market need to have clearer information about what they can lead to. For HEIs in the fine, applied and performing arts, dealing with the prejudices that exist about alumni's chances of earning a living using the knowledge they acquire in HE is a challenge. It is important for these HEIs to show that even if an artistic career may be less stable than a traditional profession, it may also be more satisfying and rewarding.

### ***Difficult to measure the effects of widening access***

Some HEIs state that it is difficult to evaluate efforts to widen access as work on widening access is a long-term activity. The results come many years later and it is difficult to know which measures for widening access actually have an effect. The distance between an action and any result is long, and educational choices are more complex than this. The lack of relevant statistics is also highlighted as a problem as regards evaluating work on widening access.

## **Challenges of widening access**

### ***A lack of previous knowledge***

Some HEIs maintain that new student groups, where many students come from environments with no traditions or experience of HE, have led to greater challenges for HEIs. Increased investment in linguistic expertise, academic writing and scholarly methodology, among other things, have been required. The difficulties are primarily the students' previous knowledge of Swedish, as it is difficult to benefit from teaching at the second-cycle if a student has poor Swedish. This primarily applies to students who have Swedish as a second language, but often also students with Swedish as their mother tongue.

Another aspect of the importance of Swedish skills is highlighted by the *University College of Arts, Crafts and Design*, which states that a lack of Swedish skills is a barrier for foreign teachers and students as regards opportunities to influence activities at different levels. According to the HEI, this must be balanced against the difficulties for students and teachers with Swedish

backgrounds when participating in talks at a high level if they are only conducted in English.

As regards older students, mathematics skills may be a challenge. This is highlighted by *Chalmers University of Technology*, which states that older students who have worked for a number of years have often forgotten a great deal of mathematics. This may mean that they initially need to spend a lot of time recovering that knowledge.

### ***Student completion***

A few HEIs state that student completion is a challenge. The risk of dropping out probably increases if students do not feel that they “belong” at the HEI. It is important to develop strategies to deal with this. It is also important to build up knowledge and create the best possible conditions for the students to study successfully.

### ***Tensions may arise in the student group***

Two HEIs highlight that there can be challenges in dealing with students who have difficulty cooperating, perhaps particularly those that arise between different national or religious groupings among the HEI’s international students. Strong tensions can arise within a student group when courses cover existential issues.

### ***Lack of housing, tuition fees and types of expenses***

For HEIs in the fine, applied and performing arts, the fees for preparatory education and significant material costs during the course/programme can be a challenge when working with widening access. It is also stated that the lack of housing can be a barrier to many in the target groups. They do not have the financial resources to buy a home when there are no student apartments.

### ***Work on widening participation requires a lot of resources***

A number of HEIs highlight a lack of resources as a major barrier to working on these issues, and particularly work on widening participation. The HEIs highlight the importance of achieving equivalent education for students with varied backgrounds. They also state that this means there should be a high density of teachers, varied forms of instruction, high educational quality and enough flexibility to cover each student’s needs. A range of measures require resources for planning and coordination, as well as execution and evaluation.

One challenge is to develop educational forms that fulfil the differing needs that may exist in a group of students. A varied student body often also entails a greater range of prior knowledge among the students. Teaching students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, who are not previously socialised in the conditions of HE, may also require more dialogue, more feedback and greater flexibility from the HEI. The HEIs’ target must be to give all students the right conditions and relevant challenges to achieve the course’s learning objectives. However, HEIs state that it is difficult to offer alternative working methods in the desired way when there are limited resources for teaching time.

They also maintain that difficulties during the course/programme include the need for support in academic writing, and also in Swedish for those students who do not have Swedish as their mother tongue. Supporting students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and other ethnic backgrounds can be a challenge as their needs are so different. In the end, it means offering all students different forms of support, such as language workshops, maths help, introductions to academic writing, to the library, etc.

The HEIs also highlight that the reception of students with disabilities, including students with neuropsychiatric and other psychiatric diagnoses, requires time and knowledge.

Overall, a number of HEIs feel that one of the biggest challenges from the perspective of student support is retaining students, that they are able to conduct and complete their studies and feel good while doing so. Financial resources are necessary to facilitate the support that is necessary for a good learning environment, and to complete the course/programme for a heterogeneous student group. The HEIs state that, however, that the allocation of resources takes place on the assumption that the student body comprises independent individuals who do not have particularly great needs for supervision. A few HEIs state that there is also a conflict between the level of demands, support, resources and the student's own responsibility.

### ***Attitude change is necessary among the HEIs***

A few HEIs maintain that there is a challenge in removing the perception widening access entails low-performing students and giving work on the issues a higher status. They state that there is a concern that widening access may lead to a decline in educational quality. Widening access and widening participation are often associated with extra costs that conflict with other core values, such as research, third stream activities and internationalisation. According to the HEIs, it is a challenge to gain support for and create incentives for everyone at the HEI, at different levels, to work to contribute to the targets and create a strategy that has support and is part of regular activities. It is also stated that issues relating to widening access, just as issues relating to equality, for example, have the most effect when they are integrated into ordinary activities and routines. It is therefore important to implement the issues in the daily work of all areas of the organisation.

It is also stated that the HEIs' educational model and resource allocation system, from a structural perspective, is not designed to reward widening access or heterogeneity in the classroom. Instead, it is students from "academic homes" who are in demand, because these are well-prepared for studying, have high completion rates and allow course/programmes to be similarly designed. This provides greater opportunities for streamlined programmes with a high number of students per teacher.

### **Other challenges highlighted by a few HEIs**

- It is a challenge to provide support to students who need it without pointing them out as being different.

- It is a challenge to meet students with different backgrounds at their level without lowering educational quality.
- Extremely varied backgrounds among doctoral students with foreign backgrounds means that it is not simple to integrate them into the HEI's teaching and activities in a relevant manner.

#### ***Other opinions from individual HEIs***

- It is important to ask what widening access is.
- There have long been poor incentives from the Government for prioritising work on widening access.
- It is necessary to have contact with other public agencies for recent immigrants to get rapid entry to HE.
- As regards the target group that comprises students with foreign HE (started or finished), a more structured and shared responsibility with municipalities and county councils is desirable, so that HEIs can enter the process earlier.
- A clearer, long-term and financed assignment related to HE's role in benefiting from foreign expertise would be beneficial for both the individual and society.
- The task of widening access should be shared with schools and not only be the responsibility of HE.
- It should be clear that the task to HEIs also covers inclusive work after recruitment.
- Work on these issues is complex. Partly because different courses/programmes attract completely different groups, partly because imbalanced recruitment is due to different factors, e.g. gender, ethnicity or social background. It is also stated that, in many regards, work on widening access and widening participation requires an attitude change, particularly as regards the validation of prior learning in people from other countries.
- Widening access and widening participation are not the same as work for equal opportunities. Not contravening the Discrimination Act is not automatically the same as allowing multiple perspectives and experiences to enrich educational activities.
- Social and geographic structures are a strong barrier, not least for the participation of young men from rural areas in HE. Incentives and support for building course/programmes that work for this group, in terms of content, design and distribution, would be an important step in widening access.

## **What are the positive effects of recruiting and educating students with more varied backgrounds?**

### **According to HEIs, diversity has a number of positive effects...**

Some HEIs emphasise that widening access can contribute to increased educational quality in many ways. One of the aspects that is highlighted is that diversity among the students brings new perspectives and broader experiences. This also means that the teachers get new perspectives and better grounding, so teaching can be improved.

HEIs also state that the development of teaching and learning in HE that heterogeneous student groups inevitably leads to is beneficial for all students. The fact that more students with disabilities are pushing for more accessible teaching is also positive for other students.

Another positive aspect of diversity applies to the transition to the labour market. This is because students who study at a diverse HEI are ready to meet a working life with diversity.

A few HEIs and some representatives from students' unions feel that the basic democratic and human rights aspects are much more important to emphasise in the context than quality. Quite simply, HEIs should offer education for the entire Swedish population.

### ***Good and important that widening access is prioritised***

A few HEIs highlight the importance of widening access to and participation in HE. They believe that everyone's opportunities for HE and, in the long run, influence and power, are an issue of democracy and thus an important task for all HEIs. It is important that HE is perceived as a possible, attractive choice for everyone who has the potential to benefit from it.

The HEIs also state that diversity is an aspect of quality. They emphasise the importance of valuing and highlighting the benefits of widening access to and participation in the HEIs' core activities, such as input for education and research, not least for educational development work. Work for a broadly composed student group is pressing from the aspect that students who encounter diversity in their education are better equipped for being active in society.

Overall, work with widening access and widening participation is a "win-win situation" for all the parties involved and should be described as such. The HEIs believe that the issues should therefore be a prioritised area in the agenda for education policy. Not least, the current migrant situation further underlines the relevance of the issue.

According to the HEIs, support and inspiration are needed to develop this work. The Government's interest in and focus on the issues is therefore welcomed and appreciated. The HEIs feel that it is positive that the Government and UHR bring the issue to light. It is also stated that participation in UHR's questionnaire has generated ideas about how HEIs could continue to work



on the issue. The HEIs regard it as positive that UHR is working on the issues and hope that this will lead to more focus on widening access and widening participation in Sweden. They are also looking forward to increased dialogue and cooperation with UHR.

***...and the HEIs are also positive about presenting their work on widening access and widening participation***

The HEIs would like to have a clearer definition, clearer assignment and a specification of targets for widening access and widening participation. On the whole, they are positive to presenting their work on widening access and widening participation. They feel that a requirement to present this means the issue remains relevant and will not be pushed aside.

A number of HEIs also feel that any presentation should be part of the annual report and not a specific presentation. Others feel that reporting every three years is about right, as there will be no short-term changes. One HEI feels that presentation of work on these issues should be built into the new quality assurance system, which would give it weight and longevity. It is possible that HEIs could have different assignments depending on their specialisation. The requirements for follow-ups would thus be HEI-specific and based on their circumstances. The idea is also that any follow-ups and reporting should not just be quantitative, but also qualitative.

It has also been stated that reporting must be asked for by the Government and that failing to meet targets should have financial consequences. A few HEIs state that money is not the problem, instead it is about changing attitudes and clear governance.

**Factors that benefit HEIs' work on the issues**

A few HEIs highlight particular factors that would benefit work on widening access and widening participation.

***Important that the HEIs' task is unambiguous***

The clarity of the task is highlighted as an important factor for the HEIs' success in working with the issues. Clear, measurable targets from the Government, increased funding and a national strategy are necessary if the work on widening access is to have an effect. Clarity is needed about the task's content and the HEIs' responsibility in relation to other public agencies.

HEIs' work on the task would benefit from functional central support. It is also important that work on widening access and widening participation is evaluated.

***Extra resources are desirable***

Some HEIs state that it is desirable for the Government to provide target resources for work on the issues. They say resources are necessary for work to be run successfully, both in the form of covering costs and in the form of the right expertise. These resources could cover the development of new models for integrating the labour market perspective in HE, evaluation of prior learning, language support and CPD, such as a flexible "academic foundation semester".

The addition of extra resources could also lead to HEIs starting bridging programmes. For example, *Linköping University* says that it would be happy to start a bridging programme for nurses with foreign qualifications, if the financial conditions are met. According to *Uppsala University* specific state funding and course packages are desirable, specifically designed for people with foreign HE who need supplementary Swedish qualifications to be able to practice their professions.

***Cooperation with other public agencies and organisations is necessary***

Cooperation and sharing the task with other public agencies and organisations is also highlighted as necessary for work on the issues to be successful.

***Work on widening access should have links to research***

It is also stated that one of the factors for successful work on the issues is having the right expertise. This can be done by linking the work to research, as well as to other activities at the HEIs. Building up research around this work is thus a matter of urgency. For example, it could deal with the effect the composition of the student body has on the HEI, or research into diversity pedagogy. It would be positive if money were earmarked for this research so that it did not need to compete with all the other research that needs to be done.

***More places help widen access***

It is stated that if places in HE decline, under-represented groups have even further to go before reaching HE.

***A certain amount of flexibility in the system is necessary***

One of the opinions that is put forward is that a certain amount of flexibility in the systems, such as for the evaluation of prior learning, is a precondition for equal opportunities. It is also felt that simplification of the admission regulations is desirable and would benefit widening participation.

***The purpose of foundation years should be to widen access***

The importance of foundation year activities is highlighted for work with widening access. It is stated that the proportion of women on technological or natural science foundation years is higher than on the subsequent academic programmes. A foundation year provides an opportunity for people who made the “wrong choice” in upper-secondary school to achieve the specific entry requirements. This group has a higher level of young people from educationally disadvantaged homes. It is stated that foundation years are unfortunately threatened by the applicable legislation focusing on programmes with fewer applicants per place and where the labour market’s needs are great, disregarding widening access.

## **Important development in work with widening access and widening participation over the next few years**

### ***Recruitment measures need to be developed and strengthened***

For some HEIs, work on involving, motivating and recruiting groups with low participation in HE is something that is particularly important to develop. This involves increasing recruitment, primarily of people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and young people from municipalities with low rates of entry to HE. For example, *Dalarna University* wants to work actively on recruiting young men in Vansbro and Älvdalen. For this purpose, it wants to develop support and mentor systems, and create more internet campuses and hybrid programmes.

A few HEIs highlight the need for active work on disseminating knowledge of their existence, which these HEIs feel could lead to widening access. The HEIs wish to do this by measures that include targeted marketing, developing an internet presence and outreach activities. They state that it is important that these measures are interesting and inclusive for students with non-traditional backgrounds, including through the use of appropriate role models. In this work it is also important to analyse which groups of prospective students are reached by these measures.

Acquiring knowledge of the target groups is an important part of work on widening access. A few HEIs emphasise the importance of working on knowledge gathering about the various groups that have low rates of entry to HE, such as by developing relevant statistics. Based on this knowledge, recruitment work could be adapted to reach these groups.

### ***Work on admission issues related to widening access must be developed***

A few HEIs emphasise the importance of working on admission related to widening access, such as evaluation of prior learning and alternative selection. It is particularly important for the *Royal College of Music in Stockholm* to realise the ambition that the high artistic demands of the admissions tests on applicants should also act as a door opener to new artistic expression and under-represented groups.

### ***Retaining students is as important as widening access***

Some HEIs emphasise the importance of working on widening participation, not just widening access. They state that measures are required to retain students, particularly those recruited as part of widening access, so that they complete their education. It is therefore important to develop good routines for introduction, support and follow-ups to ensure that all students receive good, equal opportunities to complete their studies.

Systematic student follow-ups and support can contribute to reducing drop-out rates and strengthen the quality of education. There is particular emphasis on the importance of working on quality assurance for educational support and other support and service to the students. Development of sup-

port measures should cover both a more effective and systematic working method for overall solutions at a system level, and the development of proactive, individually-adapted measures.

One aspect that the HEIs feel can contribute to widening access and widening participation is an awareness surrounding the offering, content, and representation of courses and programmes. A diversity perspective when recruiting staff and intercultural understanding among the HEI's teachers, for example as regards the view of knowledge, is another aspect. It is also important to develop strategies to make the most of the benefits brought about by a varied student body, and to retain the students that are recruited and achieve high student completion.

Overall, the HEIs state that access and participation must be seen in a common context. The HEI that successfully works on widening access can reach new groups of prospective students. At the same time, widening participation and increased student completion may be a more demanding challenge than widening access.

### ***Important to counteract the gender imbalance***

A few HEIs intend to make more effort to change gender imbalances on a number of programmes, at all levels, preferably together with other HEIs and partners.

### ***A clear focus on employment during education may counteract non-completion***

A few HEIs highlight the importance of a clear focus on employment in the course/programme. For example, *Stockholm University* considers that it is important to integrate careers guidance in programmes to create a careers portfolio. This could primarily be part of general degree programmes for which students sometimes question their benefit. Integrated careers guidance would entail a student reflecting on his or her knowledge development and how it can be used and marketed in the future. An element of careers guidance could also provide a direction for upcoming working life. According to the university, these measures could contribute to reducing non-completion.

### ***Support from the organisation is necessary for successful work on the issues***

A few HEIs state that it is particularly important for them to have support for working on these issues from within the HEI. They state that without a shared idea, clear management and a well-supported plan for how work on widening access should be done, there is a great risk that work is mainly done by supporting functions and maybe a few enthusiasts in the departments. It is stated that close cooperation between the supporting and core activities is essential if work on the issues is to have the desired effect. The aim should be to integrate these activities so that all staff, regardless of function, work to develop and facilitate participation and student completion. Successful work on the issues demands that various professions cooperate to provide the right conditions for students to finish their studies.

Establishing strategies and action plans for work on widening access and widening participation is an important element of gaining support. Some HEIs emphasise the importance of well-thought through targets, strategy and action plan. *University West* will work to integrate and implement the issues in its own quality assurance system, linked to the new national system for quality assurance in HE.

### ***Long-term projects rather than selective measures***

A few HEIs emphasise the importance of long-term thinking in work with widening access and widening participation. For example, the *Royal Institute of Art* wants to invest in working more with long-term projects than with selective measures.

### ***Important to cooperate with other actors***

A few HEIs emphasise the importance of cooperation and dialogue with other actors. This primarily involves cooperation with the organisations that meet prospective students, such as schools, Komvux and Arbetsförmedlingen.

The HEIs say that it is important to work with other HEIs, and national organisations, to develop good methods for working with widening access and having shared learning to find good models that work at each HEI. The importance of creating involvement and networks at your own HEI was also put forward.

### ***Development work has already begun***

*Lund University* refers to its internal review of widening access that started in 2014. It has resulted in a suggestion for how work with widening access and widening participation should be developed. The proposed action plan includes suggestions for activities before-during-after, everything from developing school partnerships at an early age, using a readability index (lix) for all texts at the university, developing opportunities for alternative selection, summer schools, measures for recently immigrated graduates, developing activities for outreach and widening participation for students during their course/programme, developing alumni cooperation, etc. Some of the proposed activities are new and others are the development of good examples of activities that are already taking place.

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# **Appendix 1: Widening access in higher education – a brief history**

## **The introduction of the government bill entitled *Den öppna högskolan* – the basis for the work of higher education institutions in widening access**

In 2001 a government bill was introduced: *Den öppna högskolan* (Government Bill 2001/02:15 – Open Higher Education) which stressed the importance of participation in higher education being increased, made equal and extended to new groups. In the Government's view HEIs should be a force for social change and diversity in society and this should be reflected among HEI students.

The bill contained a comprehensive policy for widening access in higher education. Several measures and specific resources were presented that universities (HEIs) should use to widen access. Among other things, people who traditionally do not seek admission to higher education (HE), and also other prospective students, should have the opportunity of enhancing their formal competence through foundation year programmes or have their prior learning evaluated. Among other measures designed to open HE to new groups can also be mentioned new regulations in the Higher Education Ordinance on alternative selection and on requirements for courses in teaching and learning in higher education for permanent employment for senior lecturers and teachers. As a result of the bill, in the autumn of 2001 a provision was introduced into the Higher Education Act (Chapter 1, Section 5) to the effect that higher education institutions should actively promote and widen participation in HE.

In the government bill *Ny värld – ny högskola* (Government bill 2004/05:162 – New world – new higher education) the government's policy is consolidated. In it, the Government states that continued dedicated work and effective efforts are needed to counter imbalanced recruitment to HE.

## **HEIs receive special financial support**

To stimulate HEIs to get started and develop methods to widen access, including evaluations of prior learning, the Government allocated a specific financial contribution in 2001, totalling more than SEK 70 million, which was addressed directly to HEIs. The money was distributed proportionally on the basis of the size of each HEI.

## **A recruitment delegation was established**

To support HEIs in the work of promoting and widening access, on 1 January 2002 the government established a recruitment delegation that had SEK 120 million at its disposal during the period 2002-2004. The money was distributed to about a hundred projects. In 2006 an assessment was made on behalf of the government of the Delegation's work and the activities in the projects (Broady 2006). The evaluation report concluded that, on the whole, the Recruitment Delegation had succeeded in its ambition of initiating and activating work in widening access in HE. At the same time, the evaluators emphasised that on the basis of available statistics they could not see that participation in the country's HEIs had become wider during and after the Delegation's period of activity.

## **The Agency for Networks and Cooperation in Higher Education was established to promote widening access**

The Agency for Networks and Cooperation in Higher Education (NSHU) was established in 2006, with the task of supporting activities for widening access. The Agency was closed down on 31 December 2008, and since then responsibility for widening participation has rested entirely with the HEIs.

## **The HEIs were instructed to draw up action plans**

Another measure designed to widen participation was that each HEI should draw up action plans on how to conduct widening access for students. The HEIs were then to report the outcomes of their measures to the government. The HEIs were assigned with this mission for the first time in the Public Service Agreement for 2002. The assignment was removed in 2010.

## **Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the HEIs to widen access**

The work of the HEIs to widen access was evaluated by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education on two occasions. In 2007 the work of the HEIs to widen access during the period 2002-2006 was evaluated, and in 2009 the period 2006-2008 was evaluated (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2007b, Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2009a). A further two of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's evaluations had a connection to widening access, namely the evaluation of the HEIs' work on gender equality, student influence and ethnic diversity (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2000, Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2003). In the report *Uppföljning av lärosätenas arbete med breddad rekrytering 2006-2008 (Follow-up of the work of higher education institutions to widen participation 2006-2008)* Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2009a) the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education stated, among other things, that many HEIs do sterling work in their reporting back, that

the reports vary considerably, that they focus on different activities, and that several HEIs had provided very limited reporting back of their work to widen participation.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education also noted that the instructions to the HEIs are vaguely formulated and that there is no specification of what aspects of widening participation should be worked with. According to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, this leads to the activities of the HEIs and the descriptions of these activities being based on different definitions.

Work on widening access and widening participation is complex. Various aspects affect imbalanced recruitment to HE and it is important to consider how different aspects interact with each other.

### **The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) was formed**

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) was established on 1 January 2013. According to its instructions, the Council shall, among other things, promote a widening access in HE in accordance with its instructions (Section 12)<sup>17</sup>. According to Section 13, the Council shall counter discrimination and in other ways promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, functional disorder<sup>18</sup>, sexual orientation or age.

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17. *Ordinance with instruction for the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR)* (SFS 2012:811)

18. From 1 January 2015, the term functional disorder has been replaced by disability in the Discrimination Act

# **Appendix 2: Description of the discussion forum with interested parties**

## **The invitation was widely distributed**

In order to get views from under-represented groups in HEIs and from other social actors, the Swedish Council for Higher Education arranged a discussion forum on Thursday 15 October 2015. Some 80 organisations were invited to participate. 57 people representing a total of 45 organisations participated in the forum. It was hoped that a widely diverse group of participants could provide valuable information for the Swedish Council for Higher Education to include in continuing the work with the assignment to map and analyse the work of HEIs on widening access and widening participation.

Although the discussion groups represented several interest groups in different areas, on several points a unanimous picture emerged of the perceptions of problems and solutions. It should be noted that some of the solutions proposed by the groups had already been implemented by the HIEs, but the extent can vary. The image of HEIs as elitist and inaccessible was often described as a problem. Widening access has very good potential for changing this perception.

## **The discussions took place in groups with common denominators**

The participants were divided into six groups, based on the type of organisation they represented, and the discussions took place in these groups. The groups were:

- Interest groups - disabilities
- Interest groups - other grounds of discrimination
- Interest groups - other: students' union, student councils, adult education organisations
- Public agencies - school areas
- Public agencies - other
- Parties in the labour market

## **Everybody's comments were noted**

After a presentation round in the group, each participant noted on post-it-notes the problems and obstacles they experience in attempting to achieve wider participation. These notes were then presented by every one of the participants and were placed on a board grouped in clusters according to

the type of problem or obstacle. Then the participants worked in pairs to develop proposals for solutions to the problems that had been identified. The solutions were also written on post-it-notes but in a different colour and were set up next to the relevant problem or obstacle that they might solve. Then the group discussed common issues.

## **The organisations representing people with disabilities raised the issue of admission regulations and student completion**

Initially, during the discussion forum the participants raised the issue of admission regulations and student completion. Many people with disabilities do not even gain admission to HE. One example that was highlighted was the comprehensive closure of special schools for the deaf that was carried out with the aim of integrating them into the regular schools, which has had a negative impact on academic performance. Young people with disabilities pay a high price when the level of knowledge about disabilities is so low in regular schools that they do not get conditions that would enable them to cope with HE.

### **The group's problem-and-solution inventory showed that barriers are about both attitudes and structures**

The discussion group was in agreement that there are generally low expectations of people with disabilities. The attitude problem means that many who nevertheless have gained admission to HE choose not to talk about their disabilities because doing so could impede them even more. On the other hand they do need to talk about their disabilities in order to get the support they need. To counteract attitude problems it was suggested that HEIs and government agencies should work with positive role models to create expectations both with the individual and at HEIs.

### ***Educating HEI staff about disabilities was considered a central requirement***

Another measure was ongoing training of all HEI staff about different disabilities, their significance and, not least, ways in which one can work to make HEIs accessible. The interest groups would very much like to be mobilised and would very much like to encourage existing students with disabilities, and students with disabilities who have graduated, to be seen as a resource in the work on these issues. What areas of improvement do they see?

The discussion group stated that educational support varies between HEIs. This means that students with disabilities do not receive the same freedom of choice as other students. They are referred to enrol in courses at the HEIs where the right support is offered. But even the route to higher studies is made difficult for reasons that include that adult education at upper-secondary level seems to find it particularly difficult to find interpreters. This means that not all routes are open. The group felt that in general more teaching and less independent study would help in widening access for persons with dis-

abilities. The discussion group also stated that HEIs that are serious about widening access could very easily visit the national upper secondary schools for various disabilities and even independent adult education colleges with pupils with disabilities, to reach out with their recruitment information.

***The sound and light environment was considered especially important for students with disabilities***

It was also pointed out that the awareness at HEIs is low as regards how the physical environment affects learning for students in general, and students with disabilities in particular. The sound and light environments are quite unknown factors compared with such aspects as ventilation, and they affect learning ability dramatically. Apart from all the other factors, a student with neuropsychiatric disabilities who has to be in a noisy environment can simply fail in his/her studies for that reason. The difficulty in arranging placements for students who have disabilities often causes difficulties.

***The group concluded that there is a lack of coordination between education authorities***

The discussion group agreed that a lot of the problems can be traced to public authority level, in terms of opportunities for students with disabilities to get to and through HE. Lack of coordination between the education authorities was often mentioned in the discussions.

The admission system was considered to be a fundamental problem for those with disabilities. Those who come from special schools do not have the necessary grades because the courses have not been included in their education. In that case, how can one qualify for admission? Special schools do not provide the prerequisites for coping with HE. The student finance system is also deficient, in that it does not work together with other support schemes.

***The group saw structural problems at many levels***

One problem for people with disabilities is the distance to the HEI. Local campuses and local study centres can therefore be of great importance because many disabled people feel that moving is too big a step. Just such a thing as obtaining customised student accommodation in another locality is a crucial issue for many of those with disabilities. The discussion group raised the issue of whether it is possible to adjust admissions for people with disabilities. There is very little time between admission and study entry, a short time considering everything that needs to be prepared both at the HEI and for the individual. Good opportunities for part-time study is another important factor for many students with disabilities.

***The group felt that the support systems are not synchronised***

Another thing that the discussion group raised is that the benefit systems do not synchronise with each other and that is something that the individual should be able to receive support for and which further aggravates things for students with disabilities. It means that those who with disabilities do not have the same opportunities as others to study in HE. Those who are already disadvantaged do not get the second chance that others have due to

the systems, regulations and formulas, etc., for different types of education and grant, having been designed independently of each other. The groups repeatedly mentioned that they desired a follow-up and review of the work on widening access in HE, and that an HE School Inspection ought to be required.

**The group concluded that better cooperation would increase access to higher education for persons with disabilities**

There was a very clear desire, in unison, by the discussion group, that prior to the transition to a HEI, there should be better collaboration between the upper secondary schools and the HEIs, for example, the opportunity to complete a placement at the upper secondary level.

**The organisations representing people affected by other grounds for discrimination raised attitudinal and practical barriers**

The participants in the group discussed barriers and potential solutions for the transition to HE which exist at several levels.

**The group explained that the barriers to starting HE are both concrete and abstract in character**

The group discussed how to one prepares to start in HE and what affects the transition to higher education for various groups in society.

It is important to get education in one's minority language as early as primary and lower-secondary school – in the form of mother tongue education – and that there should then be HE courses in the minority language. For minority groups, it is not only about the language grammatically but also that there are cultural differences, such as how to express themselves, how much space one takes up, the contexts in which they are speaking.

A very real problem is that there is no higher education offered in the national minority languages. There is also a problem that knowledge of minority languages is not integrated in teacher training and that there are no teachers graduating who can teach in minority languages. The opinion of the discussion group is that education in minority languages must be introduced and that there is a need to develop course literature in minority languages. It is necessary, for example, that Tornedalians should begin to study HE to a greater extent than is the case today.

**The group emphasised the lack of awareness in HEIs and the students' fear of discrimination**

The discussion group highlighted the fact that the HEIs do not visit the immigrant suburbs, which leads to less awareness of HE in the areas where it may be needed most. Fear and the likelihood of being discriminated against in the labour market at a later stage was also raised as an obstacle to starting in HE. Then it seems easy, as it is unnecessary to study further. The need for young people to work to help with family finances was raised as an obstacle preventing young people commencing higher education in disadvantaged

areas. Another aspect is that Muslims may need to abstain from studying because there are no interest-free student loans. The introduction of interest-free student loans would solve a real problem.

***The group stated that LGBTQ people can be subjected to harassment throughout their schooling***

LGBTQ students risk not getting complete final school grades because of discrimination and harassment, and then have less chance of getting into HE than other young people. Once in HE, harassment may continue and exclude the ability of the LGBTQ students to influence the possibility of engaging in, and concentrate on, their studies. The discussion group emphasised that in addition to harassment and exclusion of LGBTQ students needing to be stopped through the application of legislation and structural changes, so also should the mental ill health that they can lead to be addressed by school health, and support should be offered. The heteronormative character of marketing by HEIs is another obstacle to LGBTQ young people starting HE. Overall, the HEIs presentation of themselves and their offerings is not inclusive. HEI representation should be not only visual but also show good examples, students from under-represented groups who have succeeded.

**Conclusions of the discussion group on the development of work by HEIs**

HEIs' presentation information should be directed to others, and really show that applying for admission to HE really is not unattainable. Good ambassadors from the organisations for under-represented groups would be able to help more young people seek higher education. One strategy might be to organise HEI days for the HEIs that have been most successful in having breadth in their presentations regarding, for example, upper secondary schools in the suburbs. Sweden's young Muslims have done this, and see that the HEIs receive more applicants from their group thanks to this.

**The group felt that the barriers to completing studies at Swedish higher HEIs are mostly about discrimination**

The discussion group's view is that there is a low level of awareness of LGBTQ, functionality and racialisation in diversity councils at HEIs and also a very poor representation of under-represented groups in the councils. The group believes that equal opportunities councils should include representatives of under-represented groups, which would raise the competence level in the councils. Training of staff that also includes department heads is needed for them to be able to do a better job and be able to pursue equal treatment issues at the highest level. Leadership in academia is problematic because academic leadership and administrative leadership are strongly separated. Equal opportunities is considered to be something for the administration, rather than using the researchers' and lecturers' competence for it.



***The group emphasised experiences of unfair grading based on ethnicity***

The discussion group stated that unjust scoring occurs when the under-represented groups do study at HEIs. Students of political science and history who are afraid to write about themes that can challenge the prevailing discourse on such things as ethnic background adapt for the opportunity of entering Master's courses or third-cycle courses. The group has experience of students who have attempted to problematise such things as the perception of Islam, and Muslims have received worse grades because they have not adhered to the prevailing view at the HEI. The lecturer's lack of knowledge can be turned into an "individual" problem - for example, Afro-Swedes are perceived as "angry" when they problematise on the basis of a post-colonial approach. The perception of the group is that students are punished for having more knowledge and experience than the teacher in some issues. Students have also received poor grades because they spoke out when they perceived themselves being discriminated against. When there is only one perspective, a truth, it becomes exclusionary and discriminatory and leads to poorer grades when students do not go along with the white, Western, heteronormative world order. Teachers who do not understand that the criticism is relevant and legitimate find it difficult to change the way they teach and relate to students with different experiences.

***The group described the CIS-normative gendered teachers and toilets as problems***

CIS-normative teachers (teachers who only see the presence of two sexes) are seen as a problem when it comes to LGBTQ students having the opportunity to complete their education. Hetero and CIS-normative social activities such as dinners and doctoral award ceremonies are also parts of the HEI that work to exclude and contribute to LGBTQ young people not completing their studies. Homo and transphobic course literature is another obstacle for LGBTQ youth, as well as patriarchal norms and structures, how we express ourselves and what behaviours are approved. Gendered toilets are cited as a barrier to completing studies for those who define themselves as something other than male or female. It is an effective way to get transgender people and others not to feel welcome. Meanwhile, the problem of gendered toilets is very easy to fix and non-gendered toilets should therefore become the norm in all HEIs.

The national minority groups are at a disadvantage because they speak a different language than the majority language and they feel therefore that they do not belong in HEI.

***The group considered that barriers to starting in third-cycle courses are established early in the education chain***

One barrier among national minority groups to starting in third-cycle courses is that there are few graduates of first-cycle courses and study programmes from minority languages. Heteronormative supervisors were cited by the discussion group as a barrier to starting in third-cycle courses as regards LGBTQ students, that is, discrimination exerted by the supervisor against doctoral students. An overall view in the discussion group was that having

to fight so hard for many years, right from primary and lower-secondary school, against prejudice, exclusion and discrimination, makes students from under-represented groups finally, quite simply, not to be able, or want, to go on to third-cycle courses. This applies, for example, to students from the Afro-Swedish group.

One way to get more students from under-represented groups to apply for third-cycle courses would be to have a greater breadth of research and third-cycle courses. It could be a way to get away from the norm - a white man in a lab coat. Also this requires effective “ambassadors” from under-represented groups, showing that it is possible even for them to take a doctorate and do research in Sweden. An intersectional perspective should also be built on the actual knowledge - to show that there is more than one truth, which could increase the attractiveness of third-cycle courses for under-represented groups.

### **Barriers to the transition to the labour market were described both as specified gender on diplomas and discrimination**

One barrier to the transition to the labour market is that a degree-certificate is written to be gender-specific and people who change legal gender do not receive a new diploma with the correct name and gender. For LGBTQ people this can be stressful before, during and after their studies. For the Afro-Swedish group, the transition from education to the labour market is a huge problem, which affects willingness to study in HE.

### **Other interest groups represented individuals such as students and guidance counsellors**

#### **The group concluded that admission requirements and eligibility are too standardised**

The discussion group considered that the admission requirements are too standardised, and would like a more individual approach. Lack of role models, weak academic self-confidence and bad experience from primary and lower-secondary school can mean that many do not believe they can cope with studying in HE. Flaws in the validation of competence were also emphasised, and that the labour market is better able to take advantage of general knowledge than HEIs do. The discussion group believes that validation and possibilities of alternative selection should be developed more, preferably in cooperation with other parties than the HEIs themselves. It is also important that all upper-secondary education should give provide eligibility for admission to HE.

### **The group concluded that knowledge of higher education and study guidance needs to come early in the education chain**

Lack of early information on entry requirements means that students do not do enough tactical choice of study and therefore study guidance should come earlier in primary and lower-secondary school than it does today. The discussion group considered that information about what HE involves is too difficult to access and that there is a lack of information that could help young people to make balanced study options. Study guidance needs more time for each individual to be able to help in a more far-reaching way. The group also believes that incentives to get a degree are sometimes weak, while problems can arise much later in one's career if one does not have a degree. The group suggested that HE should be made available through more investment in distance education, instead of establishing more HEIs. Another proposal discussed was to open up the vocational HEIs and move some existing HEI programmes to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. This could make the programmes more accessible and give the HEIs the opportunity to refine their mission.

### **The group felt that third stream activities require incentives**

The discussion group stated that there are too few economic and qualification incentives for the HEIs to interact with actors outside academia. But some schools invest and manage to achieve varying degrees of success when it comes to third stream activities. The discussion group suggested that career centres with access to specific resources should be established, to encourage greater cooperation.

### **The possibility of admission to third-cycle courses was described as linked to the subject matter involved**

The discussion group considers that it is difficult to gain admission to third-cycle courses and that, among other things, it is linked to various funding opportunities in various disciplines. They suggest that validation should also be introduced for admission to third-cycle courses.

## **Public agencies for schools also participated in the discussion forum**

### **The group stated that entry requirements are too stringent and that admission regulations are unfair**

Admission regulations were highlighted as a problem, that they are too stringent and that entry requirements are unfair and that the relationship between educational offerings – allocation of places, is skewed. There are too few places for popular subjects. The stringent entry requirements mean, among other things, that for mature students supplementation takes a long time, especially for candidates with foreign qualifications, and also for young people who made the wrong choice at upper-secondary school. The group

was also in agreement that not enough validation is done at HEIs. That the entry requirements are too stringent, especially in Swedish and English, was emphasised, and that a blind eye is turned to the fact that primary and lower-secondary schools, and mainly upper-secondary schools, “let through” students who do not meet HE proficiency requirements.

### **The group felt that work on widening access must begin early**

The discussion group emphasised that work on widening access must begin early. Recruitment, information, guidance and study and career guidance about HEIs must be done as early as in the primary and lower-secondary school years four to six, by all means by showing good examples. Study and career guidance would be needed in several languages for all groups to be reached. The discussion group wanted to take advantage of, and provide role models and possibilities and capture the students early in primary and lower-secondary school with brochures with directed information to various target groups. The group also called for student ambassadors who would visit primary and lower-secondary schools with mentoring systems at the HEIs. The need for role models for pupils in primary and lower-secondary schools is considerable.

The discussion group had examples of both misleading marketing and educational information from HEIs and examples of information that contributes to consolidating gender stereotypes. They saw a lack of knowledge in HEIs of education at other HEIs where, for example, special customised education is available, which means that the student counsellor that a person with disabilities talks with is unable to help. Likewise the group emphasised that there is too little use of real competence, admission tests and alternative selection in HEIs and that working life and professional experience is not taken into account.

### **Cultural and financial barriers were described**

Cultural barriers such as that an applicant with a foreign background is expected to take full-time responsibility in family life and also provide for the family were discussed. The discussion group highlighted that there is fear and ignorance about HEIs in various under-represented groups and the need for targeted student information to parents, in which support rules are explained, to defuse perceptions of student loans and their repayment. Study finance is also a clear obstacle for mature students - sometimes they do not have time to be ready before student finance weeks end, even before they are competent for entry to HEI.

### **Barriers to completion of courses were deemed to be linked to the support that the HEI provides during the courses and to financial prerequisites**

Many types of support can be provided and availability and support during education for students with disabilities is an important aspect of support. The discussion group stated that solution-oriented forecasting for disabili-

ties is needed, focused on what support is needed during the study period. Practical educational solutions for students with disabilities should also be reviewed. There ought to be guides for teachers with tips on how availability can be improved at lectures, etc., and more educational and training programmes for HEI teachers. The educational quality of teaching also affects the ability of under-represented groups to complete their education. Financial barriers to completion of courses were considered to be particularly important for applicants from non-academic homes and for applicants with a foreign background.

## **Other public authorities discussed obstacles that occur early in the education chain**

### **Incomplete grades from lower education levels were considered to be a problem**

Obstacles to commencement of studies in HE that were discussed in the group were that the difficulties begin already at primary and lower-secondary school and upper-secondary school with incomplete grades, lack of marketing, lack of study and career guidance, the absence of identification (not being able to see oneself as a student, or recognise oneself as a student). Other aspects that were highlighted were that the education system is inflexible and prevents the possibility of switching careers in mid-life.

### ***Lack of cooperation between authorities and working life, as well as students' unwillingness to take loans were perceived to be problems***

Finance was also discussed, how the cost of an academic education is communicated, and that some groups do not want to take out student loans or may not take out loans with interest for religious reasons. An unclear labour market and shortcomings in interaction between employers and educational institutions were highlighted as a problem. Deficiencies in cooperation between authorities, for example in terms of guidance, and interaction between authorities and working life were also seen as problems. The solutions to the obstacles discussed were increased systematic cooperation between authorities, HEIs and working life. The discussion group considered that the HEIs have a major responsibility in this. Some very concrete proposals for solutions from the discussion group were: guest lecturers from the world of work, labour market days, study visits to employers, job shadowing, mentors from working life, placement included in the course, alumni activities. Contact between mentors and the labour market should also increase. The Swedish Council for Higher Education and the Swedish Higher Education Authority should, according to the group, have the responsibility of providing facts, data and indicators that can help providers with guidance issues, for example, and work to widen participation. National accord on guidance was also highlighted as a proposal that could resolve some of the problems.

The stringent language requirements for starting at HEIs is another obstacle highlighted, as well as the assessment of alternative qualifications and

competence, prior learning, which are not done to any great extent. The shortage of student housing was another obstacle that the group discussed.

**Obstacles to completion of education were considered to consist both of guidance before choice of study and guidance during study**

Both guidance before studies, and study and career guidance during study are important in relation to students from under-represented groups. The discussion group emphasised that study and career guidance are an educational task and that there should be more support for guidance. Study and career guidance should be integrated into programmes, both at the primary and lower-secondary school level and upper-secondary and HEI level. One question raised was whether the municipalities' guidance can be collected into a central unit. The discussion group considered that a holistic approach to guidance with the student in the centre is needed to really give students from under-represented groups opportunities to complete their education.

Obstacles in the form of inadequate supervision of academic papers were highlighted as a concrete example of aspects that can prevent students from completing their education. Many students fail because of such aspects during their education. Not to feeling at home in a study environment was also considered to be an obstacle for many from under-represented groups.

**Obstacles to transition from graduation to employment were considered to be very much about a lack of knowledge of the labour market**

The group felt that social background is important for the first employment and when there are shortcomings in practice during education they hit particularly hard against students from non-academic homes and with a foreign background. The group considered that many students' lack of knowledge of the employer's requirements for different jobs is an obstacle to the transition to the labour market and therefore guidance is important. In general the discussion group saw shortcomings in contact between working life and the HEIs.

**Labour market representatives emphasised segregation in primary and lower-secondary schools and upper-secondary schools as a significant barrier**

The discussion group was of a very wide composition and a large number of obstacles and possible solutions were discussed.

Barriers to under-represented groups to study in HE were considered to include segregation in the Swedish primary and lower-secondary schools and upper-secondary schools.

That Swedish schools should be equal and have equal conditions, but that segregation still exists in primary and lower-secondary schools and

upper-secondary schools was cited as a major obstacle by the discussion group. Deficiencies in upper-secondary schools were considered to be especially serious, where many of the pupils were considered to lack prerequisites for higher studies, have poor knowledge and incomplete grades, making it difficult to get into HEIs. While admission rules make early study choice important, sometimes vital.

The discussion group highlighted the fact that primary and lower-secondary schools and upper-secondary schools should have a mission to inspire and prompt students to continue studying. The group also considered that the Swedish National Agency for Education should have a mission to inspire and prompt students to study in HE. It was considered difficult to understand the rules (grades and admission process), difficult to understand what the programme is about and what you can work with and sometimes difficult for the individual to understand what study involves. One explanation for this was considered to be inadequate study counselling in primary and lower-secondary schools and upper-secondary schools, it needs to be supplemented with career guidance. When the study guidance does not function, the students were said to be dependent on the advice of family and friends, which can have different consequences for different groups of students.

### ***Poor merit rating, geographical barriers and prior learning were mentioned***

The group highlighted that many people from under-represented groups seek HE and are qualified for it but do not get in because of a poor merit rating, which is a problem in itself. Geographical barriers were also emphasised, that it is a big step for many groups to move far away.

That it is difficult to be accepted on the basis of prior learning is also an obstacle. This makes it difficult to rearrange one's life and leads to people who are suitable for professions that education leads to not getting into them. The group therefore considered that alternative selection should be used more often. Many were stated to go abroad instead, such as Swedish young people who took medical studies in countries where it is somewhat easier to be accepted.

The discussion group emphasised that it is important to not only focus on youth education. Adults and working people also have an increasing need to study in HE and ever more knowledge is acquired in increasingly knowledge-intensive work. Education on offer was therefore considered to need to be adapted to the needs and conditions of working people, which requires flexibility both in form and in study tempo.

### ***Widening participation and student completion was considered to be hindered by many different things***

That the number of places has increased without ensuring quality was considered to be a problem, leading to a lack of quality in some of the education that is provided. A shortage of placement places and supervisors was described, hindering many students. Another thing that the discussion group raised was elitism in academia, which makes it difficult for students from

under-represented groups to fit in. Within academia there is a lack of understanding or willingness to respond to the fact that increasingly competence is acquired from outside and that knowledge grows outside the HEIs. Students from under-represented groups gain entry but risk not being comfortable and drop out. The group speculated that others start courses but quit because they do not see the connection to work. The discussion group considered that the ability of HEI teachers to manage a heterogeneous group of students must be improved, to increase the likelihood that students from under-represented groups will complete their education.

### **Barriers to widening access in third-cycle courses were considered to be both attitudinal and economic**

Lack of role models was considered important also in terms of postgraduate education. The group experienced deficiencies in the admissions procedure and selection for doctorate positions, that HEIs accept applicants who are already known. It then means that admission to third-cycle courses is often based on informal contacts and unexpressed knowledge. Applying for third-cycle courses was considered a big step if one lacks academic role models and there is often a lack of connection between third-cycle courses and working life. The discussion group highlighted two types of financial barrier. The first obstacle is the lack of economic incentive to pursue third-cycle courses. The second obstacle is that there is often a lack of financial means to begin or carry through third-cycle courses. Better prospects in working life for postgraduates are needed. It was also difficult to go from working life into third-cycle courses because of deficiencies in the conditions and remuneration.

### **Poor connections to working life were considered to lead to students not being prepared for the labour market, which affects those with limited opportunities**

The discussion group highlighted the fact that studies do not prepare students for working life and the transition to work is hindered because of poor cooperation and lack of a connection between working life and the HEI. The courses were considered too theoretical or mainly preparatory research, with the result that they are not adapted to labour market needs. Not all students have networks or contacts in the labour market nor someone at home they can ask or discuss with. The weak connection to working life was considered to make the value of higher education unclear. This in turn can cause some groups to not understand why they should study further, or they do not think that higher education is interesting.

The discussion group considered that work experience should be a red thread through the entire programme and that all theory should be linked to something practical. The group considered that outreach to companies of all sizes was necessary to achieve effective cooperation between industry and the HEIs. In the current situation HEIs are considered inaccessible for small and modest-size companies and the HEIs should ask them, "What can HEIs do for you?" A proposal from the discussion group was to introduce a



working life introduction for one year. “The right to be new – graduation does not mean that you are ready.”

## **Appendix 3: HE still has a considerable recruitment imbalance – a statistical picture**

### **There were large differences between different groups in the transition to higher education in the autumn of 2013**

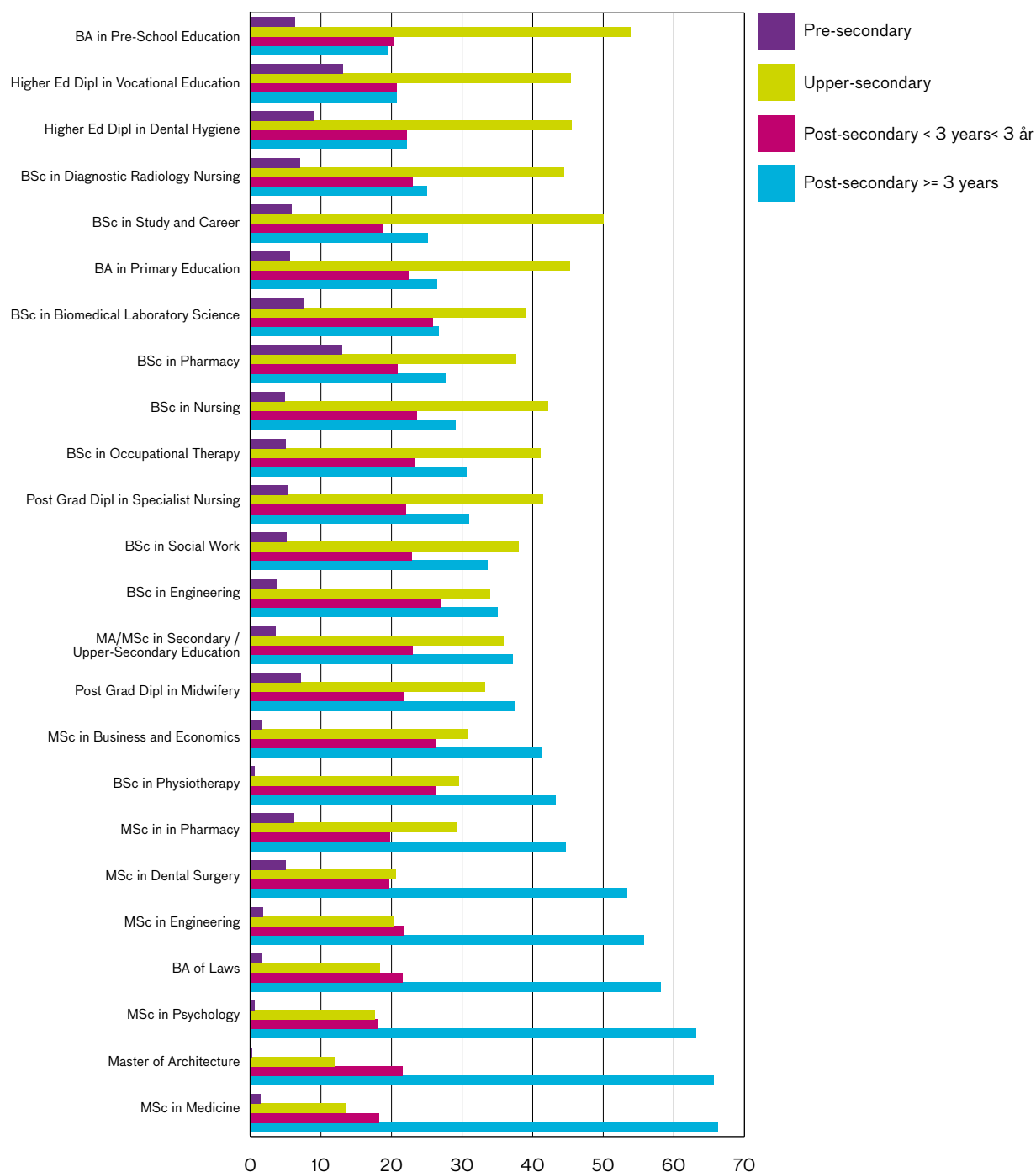
The Swedish Higher Education Authority's Annual Report for 2015 shows that there are large differences between different groups in the transition to higher education (the Swedish Higher Education Authority 2015). Of all 24-year-olds, 44 percent started HE in 2013 and there are big differences between women and men. The differences have also remained relatively constant over a number of years. 51 per cent of women and 36 percent of men had started higher education in 2013. There are also large regional differences in the proportion who commenced higher education and the largest proportions of those who did were in the counties of Stockholm and Uppsala.

The likelihood of commencing HE was also affected by social background and the parents' level of education. The higher the education of the parents, the more likely it is that a person starts studying in HE. This is shown, for example in that of those who were born in 1988 and made the transition to HE, 70 percent had a parent with at least three years of HE and 40 percent of the parents had a three-year upper-secondary education. In other words, young people were almost twice as likely to start higher education if the parents had had HE. Regarding the relationship between social background and the transition to HE, this has not changed over the past ten years, so the social unevenness of recruitment continues.

### **Social background influences the choice of educational orientation**

Social background also affects the choice of degree programme among those who go on to HE. Figure 1 shows the social background of those who were admitted to various vocational courses in the autumn of 2013. There is a clear trend, that people with poorly educated parents choose short courses and less prestigious courses. Pres-school teacher training and medical education are the most extreme programmes, where most of those accepted for pre-school teacher training have parents with low levels of education and most of those accepted for medical education have highly educated parents.

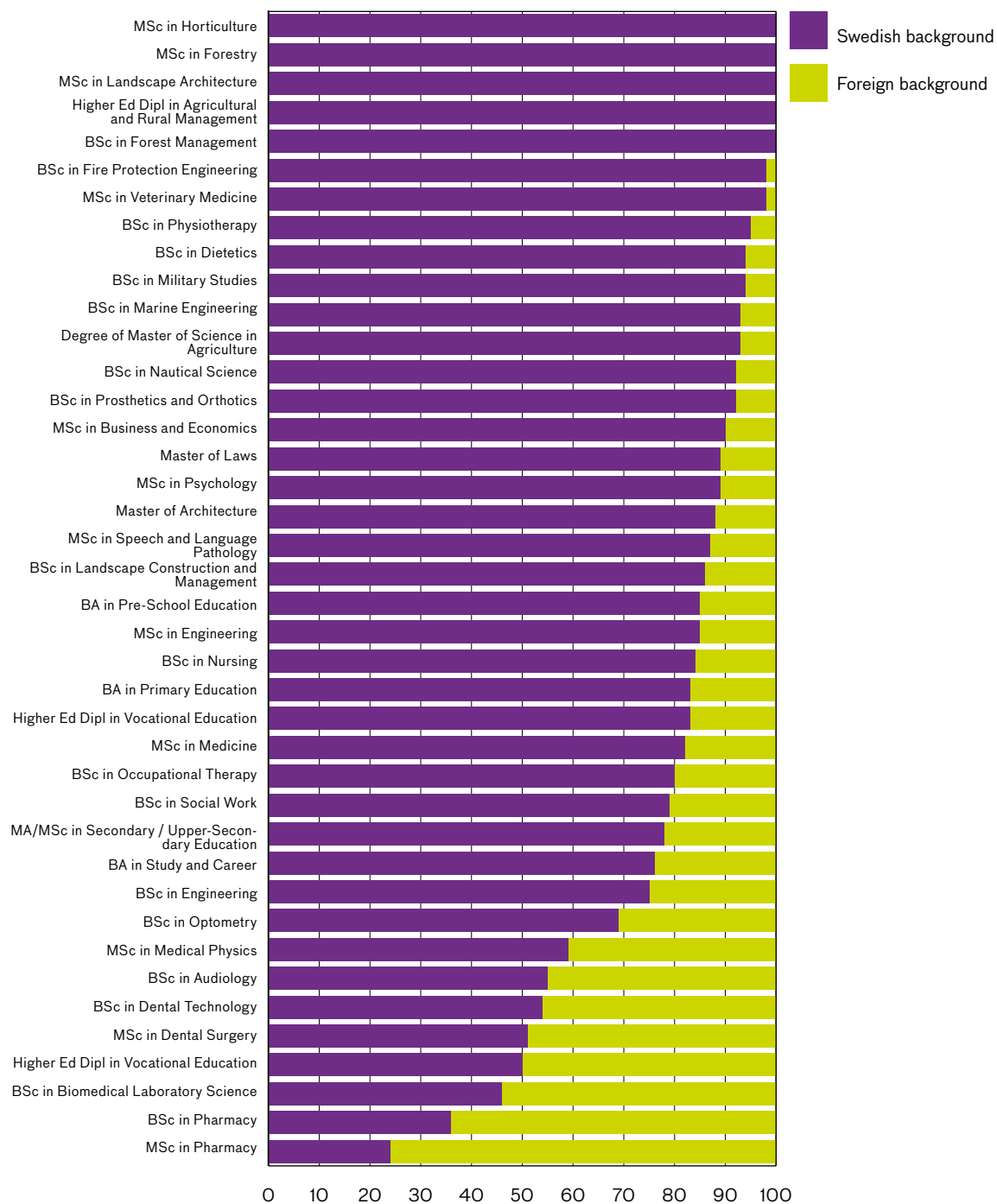
Figure 1. Breakdown of the levels of education of parents of students accepted in the autumn term of 2013 for a number of vocational courses.



However, the recruitment imbalance of those of foreign origin has declined and among those who were either born in Sweden to foreign parents, or who immigrated before the age of seven, the transition to HE has increased markedly. The transition among those with a foreign background is now at the same level as for people with a Swedish background. This is not the case with those who immigrated to Sweden after school start, between seven and 18 years of age, in that group the transition to HE is still significantly lower than for those with a Swedish background.

There are however big differences between the different programmes in terms of whether those who are accepted are of foreign origin. Figure 2 shows foreign and Swedish backgrounds of those who were accepted for various vocational courses in the autumn of 2013. Of those accepted for courses in agriculture and natural resource management none had a foreign background, and of those accepted for pharmacist and pharmacy courses most of those accepted in the autumn of 2013 had a foreign background.

Figure 2. The distribution of students of foreign origin accepted in the autumn term of 2013 for certain vocational courses.



In terms of third cycle level education, there is no skewed recruitment due to Swedish or foreign background. However, distortions in recruitment on the basis of social background are reinforced at basic level and advanced level. The explanation for this is mainly that students with highly educated parents increasingly study in programmes at undergraduate and graduate level that prepare and qualify them for doctoral studies. In this they differ from people from families with less educated parents who are increasingly studying at undergraduate and graduate level more directly in preparation for a profession.

## **Student populations differ between HEIs depending on the courses offered and the composition of the recruitment area**

The Swedish Higher Education Authority produces annual statistics on the backgrounds of HE entrants, in reports and in the database that is accessible for interested parties to search in. The statistics are provided at the end of the Appendix. On the basis of the statistics, it was possible for the Swedish Council for Higher Education to produce HEI-specific statistics on the composition of the student population compared with the national average. The HEIs included in the summary that follows are those that were included in the survey.

In terms of the proportion of HE entrants with highly educated parents (at least three years of postsecondary education) these are greatly overrepresented at national level, and among the HEIs included in the survey that particularly stand out are the artistic HEIs and *The Stockholm School of Economics* which have a significantly higher proportion of HEI entrants than at national level (Table 1). *The Stockholm School of Economics* has, despite this, reduced the proportion of HE entrants with highly educated parents by three percent between 2004/05 and 2013/14. Those HEIs that stand out because they have fewer new students with highly educated parents than at the national level are some HEIs with a predominance of care subjects and the University of Borås and *University West*. *The University of Borås* has increased the proportion of HE entrants with highly educated parents by nine percent from 2004/05 to 2013/14.

The proportion of HE entrants with a foreign background has not changed at the national level from 2004/05 to 2013/14 and is on par with the percentage of people of foreign origin in the same age range in the general population (Table 2). In terms of foreign background there are also major differences between HEIs. *Karolinska Institutet* has the highest proportion of HE entrants with a foreign background and has increased this proportion by 13 percent from 2004/05 to 2013/14. *The Swedish Defence University* has a very low proportion of entrants with a foreign background, mainly because only Swedish nationals may be admitted to many of the courses. Apart from *the Swedish Defence University* the *Sophiahemmet University*, *Beckmans College of Design* and *the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences* have the lowest

proportion of HE entrants with a foreign background of HE entrants with a foreign background. *Sophiahemmet University* and *the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences* experienced a reduction in their proportion of entrants of foreign origin but *Beckmans College of Design* experienced an increase.

The median age of HE entrants has decreased slightly at the national level from 2004/05 to 2013/14, from 22.3 years to 21.7 years of age (Table 3). Variations between HEIs are moderate and the general trend is that age at entry has declined slightly, with a few exceptions.

The proportion of women and men among HE entrants has not changed at the national level from 2004/05 to 2013/14 (Table 4). The technical HEIs and *the Swedish Defence University* are the institutions that have a large preponderance of males, although the proportion of women has increased from 2004/05 to 2013/14. The HEIs that have the smallest proportion of men among entrants are those with more care courses. The proportion has declined in the *Sophiahemmet University* and *the Red Cross University College* from 2004/05 to 2013/14 and at *Ersta Sköndal University College* and *Karolinska Institutet* the proportion of men increased slightly during the same period.

Table 1. HE entrants with highly educated parents per HEI

	Percent (%)		Comparative figure		Change	
	2004/05	2013/14	2004/05	2013/14	Percent	Comp fig
Whole country	30	38	1,48	1,48	8	0,00
Royal College of Music Stockholm	59	64		3,07	2,97	
University College of Arts, Crafts and Design	52	58		2,78	2,71	
Royal Institute of Art	48	53		2,58	2,53	
Beckmans College of Design	47	56		2,54	2,58	
Stockholm School of Economics	70	73	2,47	2,03	3	-0,44
Stockholm School of Theology	45	53	1,83	1,96	8	0,13
Chalmers	38	51	1,85	1,94	13	0,09
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	29	45	1,60	1,88	16	0,28
Lund University	43	53	1,88	1,77	10	-0,11
KTH Royal Institute of Technology	40	53	1,58	1,68	13	0,10
Linköping University	31	42	1,71	1,65	11	-0,06
Uppsala University	42	49	1,72	1,62	7	-0,10
University of Gothenburg	37	43	1,74	1,62	6	-0,12
Umeå University	29	39	1,53	1,53	10	0,00
Örebro University	22	34	1,32	1,52	12	0,20
Karolinska Institutet	38	44	1,48	1,49	6	0,01
Luleå University of Technology	25	35	1,47	1,49	10	0,02
Karlstad University	20	30	1,34	1,42	10	0,08
Stockholm University	42	45	1,49	1,41	3	-0,08
Linnaeus University		29		1,40		
Blekinge Institute of Technology	22	32	1,32	1,39	10	0,07
Jönköping University	18	28	1,20	1,34	10	0,14
Swedish Defence University		37		1,33	37	1,33
Mid Sweden University	21	29	1,30	1,32	8	0,02
Dalarna University	18	27	1,25	1,30	9	0,05
Mälardalen University	21	29	1,27	1,26	8	-0,01
University of Skövde	22	27	1,36	1,26	5	-0,10
Halmstad University	21	27	1,31	1,26	6	-0,05
Malmö University	23	31	1,15	1,22	8	0,07
University of Gävle	17	26	1,08	1,22	9	0,14
Södertörn University	30	35	1,21	1,21	5	0,00
Kristianstad University	14	26	0,94	1,19	12	0,25
Sophiahemmet University	39	38	1,39	1,18		-0,21
University West	15	25	1,05	1,15	10	0,10
University of Borås	18	27	1,03	1,13	9	0,10
Swedish School of Sport & Health Sciences	35	33	1,53	1,09	-2	-0,44
Ersta Sköndal University College	25	28	0,93	0,99	3	0,06
Red Cross University College	27	30	1,01	0,98	3	-0,03
Stockholm University of the Arts						



Table 2: HE entrants with foreign backgrounds per HEI

	Percent (%)		Comparative figure		Change	
	2004/05	2013/14	2004/05	2013/14	Percent	Comp fig
Whole country	16	19	0,95	0,94	3	-0,01
Royal College of Music Stockholm	33	46	1,46	1,64	13	0,18
University College of Arts, Crafts and Design	30	35	1,13	1,17	5	0,04
Royal Institute of Art	21	27	1,08	1,16	6	0,08
Beckmans College of Design	20	24	1,16	1,16	4	0,00
Stockholm School of Economics	16	31	0,76	1,13	15	0,37
Stockholm School of Theology	23	30	1,01	1,12	7	0,11
Chalmers	15	21	1,04	1,12	6	0,08
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	17	10		1,08	0,55	
Lund University	29	27	1,30	1,08	-2	-0,22
KTH Royal Institute of Technology	17	19	1,20	1,06	2	-0,14
Linköping University	8	15	0,82	1,00	7	0,18
Uppsala University	12	21	0,88	1,00	9	0,12
University of Gothenburg	13	19	0,93	0,99	6	0,06
Umeå University	10	18	0,97	0,98	8	0,01
Örebro University	16	20	0,90	0,97	4	0,07
Karolinska Institutet	22	25	0,93	0,96	3	0,03
Luleå University of Technology	13	16	1,03	0,95	3	-0,08
Karlstad University	13	16	0,91	0,92	3	0,01
Stockholm University	13	16	0,92	0,89	3	-0,03
Linnaeus University	15	17	0,96	0,87	2	-0,09
Blekinge Institute of Technology	12	15	0,92	0,87	3	-0,05
Jönköping University		15		0,85		
Swedish Defence University	14	7		0,85	0,37	
Mid Sweden University	8	14	0,77	0,84	6	0,07
Dalarna University	10	12	1,05	0,83	2	-0,22
Mälardalen University	14	14	1,16	0,80	0	-0,36
University of Skövde	13	13		0,80	0,67	
Halmstad University	11	21	0,43	0,79	10	0,36
Malmö University	18	21	0,75	0,73	3	-0,02
University of Gävle	15	15	0,88	0,70	0	-0,18
Södertörn University	15	12	0,97	0,69	-3	-0,28
Kristianstad University	11	17	0,55	0,68	6	0,13
Sophiahemmet University	9	10	0,92	0,68	1	-0,24
University West	17	12	0,87	0,57	-5	-0,30
University of Borås	6	8	0,49	0,46	2	-0,03
Swedish School of Sport & Health Sciences	7	10		0,44	0,53	
Ersta Sköndal University College	25	10	1,16	0,41	-15	-0,75
Red Cross University College		4		0,17		
Stockholm University of the Arts						

Table 3. Median age of HE entrants per HEI

	Median age of HEI entrants		
	2004/05	2013/14	Change
Whole country	22,3	21,7	-0,6
Blekinge Institute of Technology	23,6	20,9	-2,7
School of Sport & Health Sciences	21,9	20,9	
Örebro University	22,2	21,2	
Sophiahemmet University College	27,0	21,3	-5,7
Chalmers University of Technology	21,5	21,3	-0,2
Linköping University	21,8	21,3	-0,5
Uppsala University	21,4	21,3	-0,1
Lund University	21,5	21,3	-0,2
Södertörn University	21,5	21,5	0,0
Karlstad University	22,4	21,5	-0,9
Luleå University of Technology	21,7	21,5	-0,2
Jönköping University	21,9	21,6	-0,3
Stockholm University	22,0	21,6	-0,4
Mälardalen University College	23,0	21,7	-1,3
Royal Institute of Technology	22,8	21,7	-1,1
University of Gothenburg	22,3	21,7	-0,6
Linnaeus University		21,8	
University West	25,1	21,8	-3,3
University of Skövde	22,4	22,0	-0,4
Umeå University	22,3	22,0	-0,3
Malmö University College	23,7	22,1	-1,6
Kristianstad University College	23,5	22,1	-1,4
University of Borås	23,9	22,1	-1,8
Halmstad University	22,1	22,1	0,0
Stockholm School of Economics	21,8	22,1	0,3
National Defence College		22,2	
Mid Sweden University	23,8	22,3	-1,5
Red Cross University College	24,4	22,3	-2,1
Gävle University College	23,4	22,4	
Karolinska institutet	24,1	22,4	-1,7
University of Agricultural Sciences	22,8	22,5	-0,3
Dalarna University College	24,1	23,1	
Royal College of Music Stockholm	23,3	23,3	0,0
Ersta Sköndal University College	29,7	24,7	-5,0
Stockholm School of Theology	26,0	25,0	
Stockholm University of the Arts		26,0	
University College of Arts, Crafts & Design	24,7	26,3	1,6
Royal Institute of Art	24,4	27,5	3,1
Beckmans College of Design			

Table 4. Percentage of women and men respectively in HE entrants per HEI

	2004/05		2013/14		Change 04/05-13/14	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Whole country	56	44	56	44	0	0
KTH Royal Institute of Technology	26	74	30	70	4	-4
Swedish Defence University			30	70		
Chalmers	21	79	32	68	11	-11
Blekinge Institute of Technology	40	60	35	65	-5	5
Stockholm School of Economics	41	59	42	58	1	
Swedish School of Sport & Health Sciences	47	53	43	57	-4	4
Luleå University of Technology	43	57	44	56	1	
University of Skövde	52	48	51	49		1
Royal Institute of Art	45	55	51	49	6	-6
Royal College of Music in Stockholm	42	58	53	47	11	-11
Linköping University	51	49	53	47	2	-2
Lund University	52	48	54	46		
Jönköping University	59	41	56	44	-3	3
Linnaeus University			57	43		
Halmstad University	57	43	57	43	0	0
Dalarna University	56	44	58	42	2	-2
Uppsala University	59	41	58	42		1
Mälardalen University College	58	42	59	41	1	
Örebro University	64	36	59	41	-5	5
Stockholm School of Theology	54	46	59	41	5	-5
Mid Sweden University	64	36	60	40	-4	4
Karlstad University	63	37	60	40	-3	3
Umeå University	58	42	60	40	2	-2
University West	61	39	61	39	0	0
University of Gävle	62	38	62	38	0	0
Stockholm University	60	40	62	38	2	-2
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	58	42	63	37	5	-5
Stockholm University of the Arts			64	36		
Malmö University College	64	36	65	35	1	
University of Gothenburg	64	36	65	35	1	
Beckmans College of Design	58	42	67	33	9	-9
Kristianstad University	64	36	68	32	4	-4
Södertörn University	65	35	70	30	5	-5
University of Borås	64	36	72	28	8	-8
University College of Arts, Crafts & Design	68	32	72	28	4	-4
Karolinska institutet	78	22	72	28	-6	6
Red Cross University College	79	21	82	18	3	-3
Ersta Sköndal University College	87	13	84	16	-3	3
Sophiahemmet University	89	11	91	9	2	-2

### **Description of the statistics of new students per HEI**

All statistics listed in the Appendix are from the Swedish Higher Education Authority and based on official statistics. The data is from the NU database's key ratios, open and accessible to all. It is accessed via: [http:// www.uka.se/statistikuppfoljning/statistikdatabasomhogskolan/nyckeltal.html](http://www.uka.se/statistikuppfoljning/statistikdatabasomhogskolan/nyckeltal.html).

- University entrants are defined as those students who for the first time began to study at the relevant HEI in the latest academic year, and also had not previously studied at another HEI.
- University entrants with a foreign background are defined as HE entrants if they were born abroad or have both parents born abroad, excluding adopted children. Visiting students are not included. The information is given in percent and reported only if the loss is <30 percent.
  - Comparative figures, foreign background, per HEI are comparable figures showing the proportion of foreign background among HE entrants (aged <65 years) at the HEI divided by the corresponding figure for an average of individuals from the same municipalities and of the same age, that is, a number that shows how high the percentage of those with a foreign background would have been if foreign origin played no role in the likelihood to start studying. The comparative figure of 0.50 shows, for example, that the proportion of foreign background among HEI entrants is only half as large as it would have been if the number with a foreign background had been represented among HE entrants to the same extent as in the average of the population of the same age and from the same municipalities.
- The educational level of the parents of the new HE entrants is reported as highly educated parents (postsecondary three years or more), related to low-level educated parents (lower secondary, upper secondary or postsecondary less than three years).
  - The comparative figures for parental education per HE is a comparative figure that shows the percentage of highly educated parents of new HE entrants (up to and including 34 years of age) in the latest academic year at the institution divided by the corresponding figure for an average of individuals from the same municipalities and of the same age, that is, a number that shows how high the proportion of highly educated parents would have been if the parents' education had played no role in the probability to begin studying. The comparative figure of 0.50 shows, for example, that the percentage of highly educated parents among HE entrants is only half as large as it would have been if the number of highly educated parents had been represented among HE entrants to the same extent as of the average of the population of the same age and from the same municipalities.

As regards the HEIs for the fine, applied and performing arts in Stockholm, data on percentage and comparative figures respectively for foreign background and HEI-educated parents only refer to all those starting programmes irrespective of whether the beginner is also a new HE entrant. Additionally, the figure is an average for beginners in the last five academic years. This sep-

arate treatment of the data for the HEIs for the fine, applied and performing arts in Stockholm is justified by the small number of beginners, especially in the HEIs' programmes, and the even smaller number of new students who come directly to these HEIs without first studying elsewhere.

# **Appendix 4: Literature review of research on widening access and widening participation**

## **Focus and limitations in working with the literature review**

This literature review describes scholarly articles that have been peer-reviewed and are about widening access and widening participation from Sweden and the rest of the world. Contextual factors such as student financial aid, degree of privatisation of the higher education (HE) sector, policy directives and a host of other aspects mean that research on widening access from different countries is not fully comparable. The literature review is not comprehensive but aims to inspire reflection and provide a background to the content of the report. The emphasis is on the articles that take a broader approach to an area or articles that relate to certain specific issues discussed in the report. Articles exploring specific systemic effects in different national education system structures have not been included. Nor have comparative national studies been included.

All the Swedish HEIs included in the survey have been asked to contribute their own research, of which a selection of articles has been included in literature review according to the criteria above. The Swedish Council for Higher Education is grateful for the welcome support the higher education sector has given. Swedish research is already contributing to the research situation and has good opportunities of further contributing to the development of the field. A summary of research in English on widening participation shows that a large number of articles and reports have serious methodological flaws (Gorard and Smith 2006, included in Table 1). The authors raise above all erroneous and far-reaching conclusions about causalities, lack of empirical support and the lack of methodological self-criticism. So there is room for the Swedish higher education sector to continue to contribute to both the Swedish and the international discussion by publishing articles about work to widen access and widen participation.

## **Quality and the HEI's role in focus for research on widening participation**

After a review of hundreds of articles, the review shows that the same types of issues and concerns are debated both internationally and in Sweden. The similarities are so obvious that the discourse on widening access, on quality, the HEI's identity and social function can be understood as an international phenomenon.

In the centre there is a clear conflict between what is, and what is not, supposed to be academically appropriate. The starting point for the conflict seems to be the view of the HEI's role, either as a producer of excellent research or as an inclusive educational environment. Fears are expressed that widening access will reduce the quality of education. Even the perception of what quality is, and the significance of it shifts around. Widening access brings matters to a head, while the issues are of importance for the perception of the HEI's role in society in general, and for all students.

## Research on widening participation relates primarily to group-specific prerequisites that should be taken into account

As regards wider participation, research on under-represented groups focuses on what should be considered in order to give them equal education.

## The detailed scientific articles and the main messages from them are presented in tabular form

The articles on widening access and widening participation that are included here are presented in Table 1 in alphabetical order.

Table 1. Presentation of the articles that have been included and their main results

Article	Main Results
Ackerman, Robert and Schibrowsky, John (2007) A business marketing strategy applied to student retention: A higher education initiative. <i>Journal of College Student Retention</i> 9 (3): 7-33.	An American article advocates relational marketing strategies from business as a way for colleges to increase student completion.  The authors argue that the entire university, including administration and teachers should relate to students as businesses relate to their best customers. This seems on one plane as a commendable approach which would make college accessible and welcoming.  At the same time the authors point out that pragmatically there must often be selection made in a commercial context, where customers that cost too much or are not considered to contribute to the HEIs status after their studies for financial reasons cannot be given the same service, which is in conflict with the educational situation and the task of the HEI.
Ahlberg, Anders (2008) Teaching and Learning in hard science research environments: views of academics and educational developers. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 27(2): 133-142	A Swedish survey study, on the basis that senior Swedish HE teachers in research-dominated environments are rarely involved in university teaching to the same extent as new university teachers, explained their attitudes to learning. Senior university teacher described his view of learning and teaching, which were compared to that of educational development leaders. One conclusion drawn was that to reduce the conflict between research and teaching curriculum and research need to coincide more closely.
Alston, Margareth M, and Kent, Jenny (2003) Educational access for Australia's rural young people: A case of social exclusion. <i>Australian Journal of Education</i> 47(1): 5-17.	An Australian article shows by means of surveys, focus groups and depth interviews that the lack of widening access in the Australian countryside is not only a question of provincial survival. It also excludes men and the Australian indigenous population, that is, groups that seek to enter HE less than others.

Anders, Jake and Micklewright, John (2015) Teenagers' expectations of Applying to University: How do they change? <i>Education Sciences</i> 5: 281-305.	A quantitative, longitudinal, British study found a strong link between the will to study at the age of 14 and then to actually do it. The study also found that students who come from non-academic homes had lower expectations of studying in HE, and that their expectations plummeted faster than others.
Angervall, Petra and Gustafsson, Jan (2015) Invited to Academia. Recruited for Science or Teaching in Education Sciences. <i>Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research</i> Published online: 06 Aug 2015: 1-16.	A Swedish article pointing to three different career paths for doctorate students, depending on whether they are invited, regarded as useful, or viewed as "uninvited". Graduate students can, from this, be positioned early as either promising researchers, aspiring university teachers or unsuitable for both research and teaching.
Asmar, Christine Page, Susan and Radloff, Ali (2015) Exploring anomalies in the Indigenous student engagement: findings from a national survey of Australian undergraduates. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> (34) 1: 15-29.	An Australian survey study found that reduced support during higher education studies affects the risk of defection more from students from the Australian indigenous population than students from the majority population.  The relationship could be explained by culture-specific factors such as that students from indigenous people experienced claims to social and economic responsibility for the family during the studies.
Atkins, Nigel, May, Steve and Marks-Maran, Di (2005) Widening participation in subjects requiring data action skills: The MathsAid Project. <i>Journal of Further and Higher Education</i> 29(4): 353-365.	A British evaluation of a programme of support in mathematics and statistics in the form of individual teacher support, student to student support, and internet-based support. The evaluation concludes that the program helped some students with both their long and short-term learning outcomes, but also raises the question of how the program could reach more of those students who have greater difficulties.
Beach, Dennis and Puaca, Goran (2014) Changing higher education by converging policy packages: education choices and student identities. <i>European Journal of Higher Education</i>	A Swedish study based on analysis of policy documents and extensive long-term ethnographic fieldwork found differences between Swedish students' HE choices and students' educational choices based on the students' social capital. The authors describe that students with high social capital in their choice of education takes into account how an institution's status affects their career opportunities, well aware of the economic, cultural and social assets they take part in during their studies. They make their choice with a high degree of academic self-confidence.  The authors describe that students with low social capital, choose HEIs based primarily on employability and convenience principles, based on prioritising their local environment and their relationship to it. They are described as having a lower degree of academic self-confidence.  These patterns of choice are considered likely to have implications for the higher education's structures in the future.
Beaumont, Chris et al (2008) Blended problem-based learning for widening participation: a case study. <i>Innovation in Teaching and Learning in the Information and Computer Sciences</i> 7(1): 44-72.	A British case study evaluated the use of problem-based learning and internet-based tools as a method for widening participation in a learning centre. The evaluation was performed by means of meetings with students, observations of how they used the web-based tools, surveys, focus groups, student performance and student completion. The evaluators were also evaluated.  The evaluation found that education increased the participation of university students' performance during the course, but not the results of the examination.
Berggren, Caroline (2013) The influence of gender, social class and national background on education and work career? <i>Nordic Journal of Migration Research</i> 3 (3): 135-144.	A major Swedish longitudinal study of three cohorts born in the 70s found that immigrants with Swedish higher education had less chance to work at the same level as Swedish Students To have college-educated parents was especially important for students with backgrounds in South America and Africa for the transition to the labour market. The study concludes that the Swedish labour market favours Swedish men in the first place.



<p>Byrom, Tina (2009) "I Do not Want to Go to a Crummy Little University": Social Class, Higher Education Choice the Paradox of Widening Participation. <i>Improving Schools</i> 12(3): 209-224.</p>	<p>A British interview study found that more participants in a summer programme, organised to reach students from non-academic homes early on decided to go to elite schools.</p> <p>The study concludes that it is important before the activities to widen participation to ensure that they reach students who may benefit more from them than students for whom they may have a more marginal role.</p>
<p>Carpenter, Jennifer, Dearlove, Joanne and James, Marland (2015) Student skills and the Bradley agenda in Australia. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 34(2): 284-297.</p>	<p>An Australian survey study found that students who were accepted and helped by lower admissions requirements had lower total scores in "The Learning and Study Strategies Inventory" (LASSI), which measures the ability to study than other students. This is considered by the authors to lead to a need for an educational preparation in the Australian higher education sector in general. Whether LASSI affected the students' final results was not evaluated.</p>
<p>Catterall, Janice, Davis and Janell Fei Yang, Dai (2014) Facilitating the learning journey from vocational education and training to higher education. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 33 (2): 242-255.</p>	<p>An Australian survey study, supplemented by interviews and focus groups, found that the first year of vocational secondary education experienced the first university term as particularly challenging. What were perceived as demanding were the diverse expectations of the students and the institution, the workload, administrative processes and university educational methods.</p> <p>The authors recommend that more information be provided before the commencement of studies to new students about opportunities for mentoring and central literature.</p>
<p>Cholewa, Blaire and Ramaswami, Soundaram (2015) The Effects of Counselling on the Retention and Academic Performance of underprepared freshmen. <i>Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory &amp; Practice</i> 17(2): 204-225.</p>	<p>A quantitative American study found that three to four hours of support to new students from non-academic homes and other under-represented groups during their first term at HEI affected their performance positively. By contrast, the support was of no importance in the students' second term.</p>
<p>Christersson, Cecilia et al (2015) A predictive model for alternative admission to dental education. <i>European Journal of Dental Education</i> 19 (4): 251-8.</p>	<p>A quantitative study compared the dental students admitted through alternative selection with students admitted on high school grades. The alternate selection was based on problem solving, spatial capacity, dexterity, empathy and interview.</p> <p>The group adopted through the alternative selection had a lower dropout rate and a greater proportion of them graduated on time, compared with the group admitted on high school grades. Empathy was considered the most important.</p>
<p>Crawford, Claire and Van der Erve, Laura (2015) Does higher education level the playing field? Socioeconomic differences in graduate earnings. <i>Education Sciences</i> 5: 380-412.</p>	<p>A British quantitative study found that higher social background was associated with higher incomes for university graduates. This despite the fact that students with "lower" social background had comparable skills when they started their university studies and similar work experience afterwards.</p> <p>The authors conclude that what happens to students after graduation is important to increase social mobility.</p>
<p>Ek, Anne-Charlotte (2007) "Varför måste Butler vara så jävla akademisk" ["Why does Butler have to be so damn academic?"]. <i>Tidskriften för genusvetenskap</i> 28 (4) 67-93.</p>	<p>A Swedish experience-based article on how university teaching can evolve to meet students in gender studies. Because gender studies as a discipline has been increasingly incorporated into what the author sees as the Swedish academic education culture there is need for development. The author concludes that an everyday language signals willingness to dialogue with the students, while unusual concepts can serve to be exclusive.</p> <p>The author highlights that marked self-distance and humour can challenge the university teacher's position of power without the teacher losing the authority that expertise gives.</p>
<p>Fincher, Mark, Katsinas, Stephen and Bush, Barbara, V (2010) Executive management team demography and Minority Student Retention: Does the executive team diversity influence the retention of minority students? <i>Journal of College Student Retention</i> 11 (4): 459-481.</p>	<p>A quantitative study of 42 American universities found a positive correlation between ethnic diversity in universities' leadership and student completion of students from ethnic minorities.</p>

<p>Felton, Emma, Vichie, Krystle and Moore, Eloise (2015) Widening participation creatively: creative arts education for social inclusion. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i>.</p> <p>Published online <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1107881">http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1107881</a></p>	<p>An Australian study found, after evaluation by using both questionnaires and ethnographic method, that contact with the student ambassadors from an art college increased the motivation to study of upper-secondary school students from poor areas.</p>
<p>Fleming, Michele and Grace, Diana (2014) Increasing participation of rural and regional students in higher education. <i>Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management</i> 36(5): 483-495.</p>	<p>An Australian study evaluated with questionnaires a program of widening participation access from the provinces and regions of low transition with 3,000 school students. The program ranged from forms seven to ten and was conducted by university teachers and students. In form seven students were introduced to the idea of higher education. In form eight individual strengths of students were highlighted. In form nine students visited universities and made plans. In form ten they used the previous years' experiences in order to develop possible courses and career paths that matched the students' strengths.</p> <p>The evaluation showed that the programme increased the motivation to study in all participants, and especially girls. Interpretation of the results was that the increase was due to the program's depth, intensity and closely linked to the needs of the region's different groups.</p>
<p>Foskett, Nick (2002) Marketing imperative or cultural challenge? Embedding widening participation in the Further Education sector. <i>Research in Post-Compulsory Education</i> 7(1): 79-95.</p>	<p>A British follow-up study on widening participation in which the researchers interviewed the principals of five universities ten years after a similar study had been conducted.</p> <p>Policy documents were also analysed. The author notes that traditional marketing strategies are not viable in the work of widening participation. This is attributed to under-represented groups' economic, social, cultural and local conditions must be taken into account. University sector culture and values must change in order to accommodate audiences for widening participation. The author concludes that the understanding of the widening participation as morally valuable and strategically necessary seems well spread. However, he noted difficulties in that activities to widen participation are conducted in project form and that knowledge of the target group's needs is missing, limiting the anchoring of the work institutionally.</p>
<p>French, Amanda (2013) 'Let the Right One In!': Widening participation, academic writing and the standards debate in higher education. <i>Power and Education</i> (5) third Published online <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/power.2013.5.3.236">http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/power.2013.5.3.236</a></p>	<p>A British discourse analysis of academic writing in higher education describes the relationship between widening participation and perception of students' abilities in this area as a 'moral panic' of universities. This panic must have been around since 1992, when new universities emerged in the UK. Academic writing is considered to be what distinguishes the higher education sector from other social spheres, and provide university representatives with expert status. Fears of worse performance is thus, by extension, on the basis of this analysis the fear of the higher education sector that its status will be reduced.</p>
<p>Geschwind, Lars and Broström, Anders (2015) Managing the teaching-research nexus: ideals and practice in research-oriented universities. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 34(1): 60-73.</p>	<p>A Swedish study of three Swedish universities found that despite a close relationship between research and teaching being an ideal in the Swedish higher education sector, there is in reality an informal division between research and teaching staff. Both survey and interview methodology were used to get both managers' and teachers' opinions. The contradiction between research and teaching were resolved by managers having teaching at the university carried out by teachers who are do not do research. Senior researchers were admittedly tied to teaching but devoted themselves mainly to research. These authors presume that these pragmatic strategies perpetuate the division between research and teaching.</p>
<p>Gorard, and Stephen Smith, Emma (2006) Beyond the 'learning society': what have we Learnt from widening participation research? <i>International Journal of Lifelong Education</i> 25 (6): 575-594.</p>	<p>A British summary of British research on widening participation concludes that a great deal of research on widening participation is beset with serious methodological problems. The authors rise above all to erroneous conclusions about causalities, lack of empirical support whole or in part, a lack of methodological self-criticism, and that some articles in the strict sense are pseudo-scientific.</p>

<p>Harrison, Neil and McCaig, Colin (2015) An ecological fallacy in higher education policy: the use, overuse and misuse of 'low participation neighborhoods'. <i>Journal of Further and Higher Education</i> 39(6): 793-817.</p>	<p>A British statistically oriented study found that the general focus of British HEIs on activities for widening recruitment in regions with low transition led to a systematic distortion of the aims of the interventions. There had been a conceptual confusion of under-represented groups and regions. The majority of students from the groups that the HEIs wanted to help were actually in areas with high participation. A large number of young people in areas with low participation in which the activities were carried out did not belong to the under-represented target groups.</p>
<p>Hayton, Annette, Haste, Polly and Jones, Alison (2015) Promoting diversity in creative art education: The case of Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London. <i>British Journal of Sociology of Education</i> 36(8): 1258-1276.</p>	<p>A British evaluation of a support programme with the aim of broadening the recruitment of applicants to an artistic university where the student population largely came from the upper and middle classes. The support programme involved study visits to the university, portfolio workshops, assistance with university applications, interview training and summer school. The support programme proved to be successful since it was assumed that there was a lack of social capital among students and that the programme was implemented in an interactive way.</p>
<p>Hill, Mike, Fergy, Sue and Marks-Maran, Di (2006) Widening participation in nursing through progression agreements between a university and two further education colleges: a case study. <i>Journal of Further and Higher Education</i> 30(3): 255-268.</p>	<p>A British case study describes successful collaboration between a university and two independent adult education colleges. Special courses were developed and given by the independent adult education colleges. Those who completed the courses were competent to enter the university's nursing courses.</p>
<p>Anthony Hoare and Johnston, Ron (2011) Widening participation through admissions policy - a British case study of school and university performance. <i>Studies in Higher Education</i> 36(1): 21-41.</p>	<p>A British quantitative study compared students from municipal upper-secondary schools who were accepted at an elite university with lower upper-secondary school grades than students from private upper-secondary schools who were accepted at the same university. The study, which had a large data set, found no differences between the student groups' exam results at the university.</p>
<p>Hook, Genine, A (2015) Performatively queer: sole parent postgraduates in the Australian academy. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 34(4): 788-800.</p>	<p>A queer theoretical case study of ten single Australian doctoral students concluded that single parenthood can affect wider participation negatively. The negative impact was attributed to a heightened responsibility for childcare, housework and economy, underpinned by discursive notions of gender that links women's bodies to childcare.</p>
<p>Jones, Willis and John, Braxton (2015) Cataloging and comparing institutional efforts to Increase student retention rates. <i>Journal of College Student Retention</i> 11(1): 123-139.</p>	<p>An American quantitative study of 54 teaching institutions' efforts to broaden participation found that institutions with high student completion spend less time and resources on evaluation. This is because of less perceived need and also cost factors.</p> <p>The most common activity for broadened participation was study of their own HEI's environment and the students' experience of it. Differences existed regarding evaluation methods. Institutions where students lived on campus proved to use less statistically complex methods, while institutions where students commuted used multivariate models to a greater extent. There was no difference in the level of activities to combat dropout, either between universities from states with high or low student completion, or institutions with accommodation on campus, and commuting students.</p>
<p>Jones, Norah and Lau Sze Man, Alice (2010) Blending learning: widening participation in higher education. <i>Innovations in Education and Teaching International</i> 47(4): 405-416.</p>	<p>A British case study of a project that used internet-based pedagogy, so-called 'blended learning', for widening participation. Surveys, focus groups and documentation were used in the evaluation. The evaluation found that 'Blended learning' was successful in terms of widening participation, promoted entrepreneurship and offered support to under-represented groups in an innovative way. However, traditional higher education teaching methods proved hard to change.</p>

<p>Kiuhara, Sharlene and Huefner, Dixie (2008) Student With Psychiatric Disabilities in Higher Education Settings: The Americans with Disabilities Act and Beyond.</p> <p><i>Journal of Disability Policy Studies</i></p> <p>19(2): 103-113.</p>	<p>An American survey of difficulties that students with mental disabilities can face in the higher education environment. Mental illness onset is usually between the ages of 18 and 25, the ages when most young adults begin studying at HEI. Mental illness often requires both call treatment and pharmacological treatment and the side effects of the medication can lead to concentration problems. Side effects and disease episodes can lead to high absenteeism from studies and the student must also deal with the stigma that being open with a mental disability can involve. The authors recommend that the HEI itself should work actively to dispel myths and prejudices about mental disabilities and that support for students with mental disabilities should be increased and include study planning to help integrate certain predictable difficulties such as absence.</p>
<p>Lang, Harry (2002) Higher Education for Deaf Students: Research Priorities in the New Millennium. <i>Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education</i></p> <p>7(4): 267-80.</p>	<p>An American literature survey of students with hearing impairments in higher education. An overall difficulty described is that the student is dependent on support to be able to take part in teaching. The support itself may be stigmatising and have social consequences.</p> <p>Social aspects are described as they may be more important than what can usually be assumed for flow, especially during the student's first year. Also cited is that there is extensive empirical support that students with hearing loss definitely get a smaller amount of information from teaching situations than students without disabilities. Both class size and the HEI teachers' teaching style may, for example, affect the extent to which students can actively participate in the discussions that are central to higher education.</p>
<p>Lightfoot, Nick (2010) Interpretations and practice of widening participation: a case study of an academic school within an English post-1992 University. <i>Improving schools</i> 12 (3): 196-208.</p>	<p>A British case study of a university's approach to widening participation. After interviews with HE teachers, the author concluded that the HEI bases its status on subject knowledge, not on learning and student development. The author believes that clear assignments from government are required for a change in this to be realistic, the HE culture itself does not encourage educational change.</p>
<p>Mampaeya, Jelle, Huismana, Jeroen and Seeber, Marco (2015)</p> <p>Branding of Flemish higher education institutions: a strategic balance perspective.</p> <p><i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 34(6) Published online <a href="http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07294360.2015.1024634">http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07294360.2015.1024634</a></p>	<p>A Belgian case study of Flanders' five universities found that institutions with different status distinguish themselves in marketing terms from their competitors by use of language. The two universities that had high status defined quality as having consistent excellence in all areas of research. Universities of lower status were more selective in their opinion of their own research.</p> <p>However, all universities use excellence as a concept as regards their own teaching.</p> <p>Elite universities used more restrictive descriptions of their approach to social equality. Universities with low status used more broad and inclusive definitions.</p> <p>Elite universities defined the university's third mission in more broad and abstract terms. Universities of lower status were more concrete and emphasised regional development and employability.</p>
<p>McAleavy, Gerry Collins, Catherine and Adamson, Gary (2004) Adult Learning in Northern Ireland: Investigating further education policies for widening participation.</p> <p><i>Research in Post-Compulsory Education</i> 9(1): 83-104.</p>	<p>A Northern Ireland questionnaire study examined what barriers adults from non-academic homes experienced at the prospect of possibly commencing higher education studies. What mainly emerged were retarding perceptions about not being able to cope with university studies, practical difficulties such as functioning child care, having sufficient financial resources and concerns about travel times. Adults also preferred the thought of being taught in groups rather than individually, to get emotional and practical support.</p>
<p>McCulloch, Alistair and Thomas, Liz (2013) Widening participation to doctoral education and research degrees: a research agenda for an emerging policy issue.</p> <p><i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 32(2): 214-227.</p>	<p>A British literature review of existing research on widening participation and postgraduate studies in Britain. The authors conclude that doctoral studies have historically been a neglected area within widening participation, but find signs of a positive change after analysing the policies of 129 Universities for widening participation.</p>

<p>Portnoi, Laura and Kwong, Tiffany (2015) Employing Resistance and Resilience in Pursuing K12 Schooling and Higher Education: Lived Experiences of Successful Female First-Generation Students of Color. <i>Urban Education</i> 0042085915623333, published online 30 December, 2015 doi: 10.1177/0042085915623333.</p>	<p>An American interview study of successful women from non-academic homes with Latin American and Afro-American backgrounds describes that the women, despite a willingness to study at HEI, met with resistance already as students in elementary school. Teachers and counsellors could dissuade students from HE, but could also be the first to raise the idea of higher education. The women's families were described primarily as supportive. Getting an education to improve the family's situation was a common motive. The study's overall conclusion is that the students succeeded through bracing themselves against the resistance and actively determined to disprove the expectations of those around them. According to the authors the women exercised resistance by succeeding.</p>
<p>Reed, Richard King, Anna and Whiteford, Gail (2015) Re-conceptualising sustainable widening participation: evaluation, collaboration and evolution. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 34(2): 383-396.</p>	<p>An Australian evaluation of a mentoring programme focused on ethnicity concluded that for successful long-term efforts to widen participation it is necessary to have a breadth of activities that are evaluated reflectively. They must be implemented in cooperation with the business community and within the framework of a comprehensive approach to widening participation.</p>
<p>Renn, Kristian, A (2010) LGBTQ and Queer Research in Higher Education: The State and Status of the Field. <i>Educational Researcher</i> 39 (2): 132-141.</p>	<p>A review of research on LGBTQ and Queer in higher education in the United States concludes that this has focused primarily on three areas, visibility, campus climate and students' identities and experiences. Identity research has increased the most but applied queer theoretical perspective is still applied to a small degree and research is based on binary gender, male and female. Research on trans people is missing to a considerable degree. Qualitative research is often less based on less convenient selection and quantitative research on non-random convenient selection. Research on visibility and campus climate has filled, and fills an important function in making HEIs accessible and addressing discrimination. It is recommended that future research should focus on the relationship between primary and lower-secondary school and higher education, teacher and leadership training in higher education, policy perspectives on LGBTQ. And how LGBTQ impacts on globalization and internationalisation in higher education needs to be focused on. Although queer theory in the strict sense is opposed to binary gender identities and sexual orientations based on these, the author sees a pragmatic value at present in using categories in the research on HE students' situations.</p>
<p>Snellman, Kaisa et al others (2015) The Engagement Gap: Social Mobility and Extracurricular Participation among American Youth. <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i> 657(1): 194-207. (657)1: 194-207.</p>	<p>A US quantitative study found that since the 1970's, US school children from the upper middle class have become increasingly active in student associations with the topic of and focus on school sports activities.</p> <p>Young people from the working class, on the other hand, have reduced their participation in them. A possible association is described between these activities, higher education studies and future income.</p>
<p>Soria, Krista, M and Stubblefield, Robin (2015) Knowing me, knowing you: Building Strengths awareness, belonging, and persistence in higher education. <i>Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory &amp; Practice</i> 17 (3): 351-372.</p>	<p>Very comprehensive intervention to support 1,421 new students at a US university found a positive correlation between the intervention and that students do not drop out of after starting their studies. The intervention consisted of all students answering a questionnaire that defined their strengths. During the university's introduction week this perspective was connected to again. This was done partly in the form of small discussion groups led by older students, on the basis of the new students' strengths. The qualitative evaluation indicated that the students' knowledge of themselves, confidence and contact with other new students was facilitated by that the strengths became a common "language" that facilitated making contact with others and a deeper understanding of them.</p>
<p>Stuart, Mary (2011) The impact of engagement with extracurricular activities on the student experience and graduate outcomes for widening participation populations. <i>Active Learning in Higher Education</i> 12 (3): 203-215.</p>	<p>A British survey study found that adult students and students from ethnic minorities gave less time to activities organised by the university and instead prioritised family, religious activities and activities on their own. Students with a working class background put more time into working in their spare time than in the university's extracurricular activities.</p> <p>But both former students and employers saw the university's extracurricular activities as key indicators for employment, and were used to separate out job seekers in terms of whether they could fit into the company culture and demonstrate leadership skills.</p>

Thomas, Glyn (2014) Closing the policy-practice gap for low-SES students in higher education: the pedagogical challenge. <i>Higher Education Research &amp; Development</i> 33(4): 807-820.	An Australian interview study involving 12 universities found that although widening access had been successful at HEIs, the HEIs had less focus on making use of students' experience and diversity for developing HE education once they were there.
Thomas, Susan et al (2014) A Qualitative review of literature on peer review of teaching in higher education: An Application of the SWOT Framework. <i>Review of Educational Research</i> 81 (1): 112-159.	A British literature review of qualitative studies of peer reviews, in which HE teachers review each other's teaching, as a way to develop educational methods in HE. The authors conclude that peer review can be a good way to begin educational development and developing HE educationalists. Difficulties were considered to be that the HE teacher's professional role was expanded, lack of time and that teachers may experience that academic freedom is threatened.
Thunborg, Camille, Bron, Agnieszka and Edström, Eva (2012) Forming learning identities in higher education in Sweden. <i>Studies for the Learning Society</i> (2-3).	A Swedish biographical interview with six Swedish students with different ethnic backgrounds concluded that the students experienced academic exclusion that was based mainly on class and age. The students developed different types of learning identities which to varying degrees adopted the academic environment's view of what a good student is. Learning Identities could be total identification with the academic environment's vision of being a 'good student', autonomous and independent, or liquid and ambivalent. A pragmatic, more vocationally oriented learning identity was also described. 37 interviews with university teachers which were also conducted indicated that regardless of field there was a common academic ethos and it was primarily HE teachers in vocational programs who saw learning as a holistic process.
Thunborg, Camille, Bron, Agnieszka and Edström, Eva (2013) Motives, commitment and student identity in higher education - experiences of non-traditional students in Sweden. <i>Studies for the Learning Society</i> 245 (2): 177-193.	<p>A Swedish interview study with 48 students from under-represented groups investigated the reasons for beginning university studies, to drop out of university studies and to finish the studies. The motives for beginning HEI studies was interest in the subject, changing life path, getting a better life and higher social status, intellectual stimulation, having something to do, helping others and trying out studying.</p> <p>Reasons for them interrupting their studies were to change direction in their HEI studies, lack of interest, motivation and discipline, and experiencing difficulties with studies linked to exclusion.</p> <p>Reasons for continuing were the expectation of success both from oneself and from the environment. Students with immigrant parents mentioned the pressure to succeed in Sweden. Another reason for continuing was to prove that it was possible, if the students were the first in their family who studied at HEI. The last motivation was to want to become someone, especially in professional life, but not in academia per se.</p>
Watson, Jo (2013) Progression routes and attainment in occupational therapy education: the Impact of background characteristics. <i>British Journal of Occupational Therapy</i> 76(12): 520-527.	A British quantitative study of four cohorts of students at a British university in a programme for occupational therapists found that neither upper-secondary school grades, age at commencement of studies, sex or socioeconomic background influenced degree diploma. In contrast, the study found that male sex and lower socioeconomic predicted lower grades at different levels within the education, as well as reduced likelihood of getting a degree with an honours award.
Villaseñor, Maria, Stefani Reyes, Maria och Muñoz, Imelda (2013) Mujerista mentoring for Chicanas/Latinas in higher education. <i>Journal of College Student Retention</i> 15(1): 49-64.	<p>An overview of American research on mentors for American women of Hispanic background, in which the authors also use their own experiences from different hierarchical positions in the academic system. The authors recommend that mentoring is conducted without assimilation to the dominant culture being the goal.</p> <p>They also recommend that mentors for Hispanic women takes into account culture-specific conditions, such as parents' views on what education pays off and the expectation that daughters shall start a family. Mentors are not themselves need to have Hispanic backgrounds, but should be aware of the culture-specific factors. Also explained was the need for continued support for Hispanic women even after their studies, to facilitate further career development in academia.</p>

<p>Voigt, Kristin (2005) Individual choice and unequal participation in higher education. <i>Theory and Research in Education</i> 5(1): 87-112.</p>	<p>A British literature overview of qualitative research on how ethnicity and coming from a home not familiar with study affects widening access in four areas: space for choice, likelihood of being able to select different options, perceived gains and losses with different options and access to information. Class and ethnicity mean that the choice of whether to study or cannot be a non-option. For students from homes not familiar with study the option of studying at HE, for students from homes familiar with study, the option of not studying does not exist. Negative expectations about discrimination and a lack of ethnic diversity respectively can influence the choice of institution. Perceived or real risks of student loans also appeared to differ between homes familiar with study and homes not familiar with study. The difficulty of not being able to take out student loans without interest for religious reasons is likely to exclude students from a Muslim background. Lack of information on the status of different HEIs, actual costs of study and what is required for further study, are distinguishing factors.</p>
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# **Appendix 5: A selection of good examples of the work of higher education institutions to promote widening access and widening participation**

## **The selection of good examples**

This appendix presents a number of good examples of the work of HEIs in connection with widening access and participation. The aim is for HEIs to be inspired by and learn from each other. The examples may also be used as a starting point for similar activities by other HEIs. It is hoped that the work of HEIs in connection with broader recruitment will be stimulated in this way.

It is important to emphasise that this list of good examples is far from exhaustive. Many more examples could be cited, but it is not possible to present all of these due to a lack of space. UHR's objective has been to select a broad spectrum of activities to illustrate the way in which it is possible to work on different aspects of the assignment. As the circumstances of HEIs for working on widening access vary, a further aim was to select examples that can be used by other HEIs with similar profiles. There are also other types of good examples that can be considered to be universal.

## **Criteria for the evaluation of good examples**

### **A broad approach**

Successful work in connection with widening access for HEIs requires a broad approach. The work relating to widening access concerns not only recruitment measures, but also a number of coherent elements. In order to achieve results in their work relating to widening access, HEIs must adopt a holistic perspective. It is not sufficient to simply work with one element; rather HEIs must work systematically and conscientiously across the entire field, from information and recruitment initiatives, via different retention measures, to support measures in connection with the transition to the labour market.

### **A clear structure**

A clear structure at the HEI for the work on the assignment is a prerequisite for the work to be both sustainable and successful. For this, it is necessary for each HEI to define what the assignment relating to widening access means



for the HEI in question. Through their own definitions, HEIs can focus on the aspects of widening access that are relevant to their own work on the assignment. For this, it is necessary to acquire an understanding of the HEI's own student population. Each HEI should formulate a clear goal or several goals based on this understanding regarding what is to be achieved. It should be possible to monitor the goal. In order to work effectively and successfully on the assignment, it is important that each HEI draws up a strategy for the work containing questions and an action plan that includes activities to achieve the goal and a clear division of responsibility.

### **Anchoring within the organisation**

It is very important that the work relating to widening access and widening participation is anchored within the organisation. There is a considerable risk that the work will be unsuccessful if there is no common concept, clear governance and an anchored plan regarding the way in which the work in connection with widening access is to be performed. The establishment of strategies and action plans for the work relating to widening access and widening participation is an important aspect of the anchoring work.

### **Long-term commitment and perseverance**

In order to achieve long-term effects, the HEIs must carry out the work in connection with the assignment with long-term commitment, purpose and in an integrated manner. Changing recruitment patterns or the image of an HEI requires patience and cannot be achieved through short-term projects or point-based measures.

### **Cooperation**

Cooperation is an important part of the work relating to widening access. Collaboration is required between a number of players in order for the work to be successful. Such players include schools, folk high schools, study and career guidance counsellors, the Swedish Public Employment Service and trade and industry. Collaboration with other HEIs is also desirable. Above all, HEIs with similar profiles and circumstances should work with each other and thereby learn from each other's experiences. In connection with this, UHR wishes to highlight the sharing of experiences which takes place via "Include", which is a network which currently has 22 member HEIs and has the aim of strengthening knowledge of widening access and widening participation.

### **Other aspects**

Other aspects characterising good examples of the work on the assignment include the following:

- Monitoring and evaluations of the initiatives must be carried out;
- The students must be involved in the work;
- Specific results must be achieved;
- The initiatives must be innovative;
- The education must have a clear focus on the labour market;
- There is a basis for the research.

## **Good examples of strategic and organisational aspects linked to the work relating to widening access**

The appendix to Prioritised activity development 2016-2020 (Prioriterad verksamhetsutveckling 2016-2020) at *Chalmers University of Technology* includes certain quality indicators and target parameters relating to widening access. At a basic level, the HEI follows the figures for socioeconomic diversification as defined by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) via Statistics Sweden (SCB): Level of parental education and foreign background. The HEI also monitors gender distribution, age distribution and geographical diversification in terms of applicants per place. At Master's level, the percentage of students from other countries and the number of countries is being monitored. In its survey response, *Chalmers University of Technology* pointed out that accessibility for disabled persons is also included, as is the inclusion of LGBTQ persons and various religious practitioners under the concept of widening access.

The *University of Gothenburg* stated in UHR's survey that 19 percent of the HEI's entrants are either born outside Sweden or have parents who were both born outside Sweden, which corresponds to the national average. However, compared with the catchment area, the HEI stated that the recruitment of entrants with a foreign background was three percent lower. The *University of Gothenburg* has therefore commissioned a survey of student backgrounds from Statistics Sweden, which includes persons with a foreign background. The results are stated as being similar to those in the Swedish Higher Education Authority's annual report, but allows analyses to be performed of the differences between disciplinary domains.

The *Stockholm School of Economics* has conducted a pilot study regarding the reason why young women avoided finance as a study area at both foundation and advanced levels, which aims to create better conditions to attract more women to the study area of finance. The project is called "Room for Someone like Me? Women's Perceived Barriers to Studying and Working in Finance".

*Dalarna University* has a programme for "Next Generation Learning (Nästa generations lärande, NGL), which the HEI has been working on over the past year. Within the framework of the programme, the HEI has worked on collaborative web-based learning in real time for many distance and web-based courses that can remove geographical or practical barriers for new groups of students. The goal of the programme has varied over the years, but has overall led to even more vocational education and training (VET), e.g. for teachers and nurses, being accessible to people who would otherwise have been unable to participate because of their background or life situation. It must also be possible for the education to vary in length. In the same way, web-based extension courses can help professionals who are already in work and who would otherwise have been prevented from applying for HEI courses for practical reasons. *Dalarna University* has stated that 74 percent of the HEI's students aged 36-50 use web-based studies and that 67 percent of stu-

dents who are carers use web-based study. Around 18 percent of students on campus use web-based study. Web-based courses are overrepresented among educationally disadvantaged homes, where 69 percent of people use web-based study.

The *University of Borås* uses the MaNet male network to provide support for men in VET that is typically the domain of women. The network, which aims to strengthen men in their professional roles and their studies in a study and professional environment that is predominantly female, primarily focusses on promoting more equal education and professions. This has had a positive impact, and during 2015 it was extended from covering teacher training courses to also include male students on health sciences programmes. Collaboration with the City of Borås was also initiated during the spring of 2015. The network meets four times a year and offers mutual support regarding both major and minor issues affecting men at pre-schools.

*University West's* profile "Work Integrated Learning" (Arbetsintegrerat lärande, AIL) has since its inception in 1990 represented a key element in the attractiveness of the HEI to a broad spectrum of applicants. A conscious strategy of the HEI has been to be clear in addressing working life within the framework of the programme courses at the HEI. According to the HEI, it is likely that this has contributed to students with an interest in the HEI's labour market links perceiving the "threshold" for higher education courses as being somewhat lower than would normally be the case. The HEI stresses that it has the highest percentage of students in the country from homes in which parents have no postsecondary education.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* works systematically with a structure in which the overall business plan is determined by the vice-chancellor, and the common goal is then broken down into separate business plans to accommodate the individual ambitions of the work units. The overall activity plan for the HEI for 2015-17 (determined by the vice-chancellor on 15 December 2014) contains four goals in the area of "Education at first and second-cycle levels". One of the goals concerns widening access and is worded as follows: "Strengthen and develop the work relating to broader recruitment, student completion and establishment." A number of specific initiatives are set out here as sub-goals to provide quality assurance for retention and student completion. According to the plan, the goal of continued active work relating to widening access and retention will be rolled out with the activity plans over the coming years. *University West* assesses performance indicators in order to determine why men perform worse than women at the HEI in terms of student completion on programmes. The HEI has an admission rate of 34 percent for men, yet has an examination rate of 26 percent for men, with the largest difference apparently occurring within teacher training and general Bachelor degrees.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* has commissioned statistics from Statistics Sweden regarding the backgrounds of employees and students with the categories of native-born with at least one parent born in Sweden, native-born with two parents born outside Sweden and foreign-born, including country of origin and continent. The HEI states that, from an international

perspective, it has an unusually high percentage of foreign-born students at 37 percent, and that 63 percent of the student population was born in Sweden. Furthermore, the HEI states that its Master's programme is dominated by foreign-born students or so-called "free movers". It is also more common for students with a foreign background with a knowledge of Swedish to apply for three-year education courses than students with a Swedish background, who prefer five-year programmes.

The *Linköping University* Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences action plan for "Equal conditions" contains a goal for widening access for education courses and higher student completion. The faculty intends to analyse the information available regarding newly admitted students' gender, previous home municipality and age, etc. and, based on the findings of the analysis, will formulate proposals for measures to increase the recruitment of under-represented groups. It also intends to formulate information material in such a way that all students feel welcome.

*Linköping University* will analyse the information available relating to retention and the time it takes students from starting their studies until they take their higher education examination. Depending on the results of the analysis, the HEI will adopt measures to ensure that the educational environments and tuition are adapted to all groups of students regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or other religious beliefs, social background, sexual orientation or disability.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology's Vision 2027* and associated development plan establishes visions and goals for equality and diversity. The overall goal here is formulated in various qualitative and quantitative ways. These can then be found in a number of action plans and, in particular, in the *Action plan for equality, diversity and equal treatment at KTH 2014-2016 (Handlingsplan för jämställdhet, mångfald och lika villkor vid KTH 2014-2016)*. A definition of widening access and widening participation has not been formulated, but the meaning that the HEI associates with the concept is interwoven in the goals and activities. It emphasises that the HEI's biggest problem is still male dominance on courses/programmes, in terms of both first-cycle and third-cycle study programmes, and in the faculty.

*Lund University* commenced a project during 2014-2015 to investigate the work relating to widening access and widening participation at the HEI. According to the HEI, the project has created an opportunity for a broad discussion and inventory of activities to promote widening access and widening participation across the entire HEI. The HEI believes that the project has in this way contributed to the anchoring and visualisation of the work in connection with the issues. Many views have been aired and collated through discussions with students, teachers, researchers, managers, study advisers, communicators, career advisers and other administrators.

The external views of pupils at secondary schools and upper secondary schools and their teachers and study and careers advisers have also been collated by *Lund University*. The HEI claims that this has provided a good insight into how it is viewed by prospective students and how contacts with schools can be developed. The HEI has also had discussions with players involved

with the reception of new arrivals in Sweden during the course of the project, including the Swedish Migration Board and the Public Employment Services, and has identified deficiencies in communication regarding the validation and supplementation of higher education. UHR considers this to be a good example of how to proceed in a systematic manner.

## **Good examples of the work of HEIs with widening access for education at first- and second-cycle levels**

*Beckmans College of Design* has for several years been working in the municipality of Botkyrka on a project entitled “City and fashion” (Staden och modet). The project aims to put design in the context of future lifestyle. A class in year 2 at *Beckmans College of Design*’s Fashion programme has been working with pupils from Botkyrka Folk High School. The students and pupils conducted research relating to Botkyrka and created a distinct vision for the future based on this research. The lifestyle or culture that they found served as the starting point in the next stage for fashion design. Each student designed a small collection of two to five outfits in 2D (sketches and illustrations). A garment or accessory will also be turned into a 3D prototype. The illustrations and prototypes will be displayed as part of the “Dressing Swedish” exhibition at the Multicultural Centre in the winter.

*Blekinge Institute of Technology* has been focussing on upper secondary schools with a high percentage of pupils with foreign backgrounds. *Blekinge Institute of Technology* has stated that the photographs in all of its prospectuses and brochure material illustrate diversity and that it has an internal marketing handbook.

The *Swedish Defence University* worked with the *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* at an information day at Rehab Station Stockholm to inform young people with acquired disabilities of the potential to study at an HEI and the support that is available.

The *University of Gothenburg*’s social worker programme has a long-standing collaboration with Angered upper-secondary school teachers and pupils. Social worker students complete placements in semester five. Pupils who are placed in Angered meet a class studying economics at Angered upper-secondary school for a period of five afternoons. They get to know each other during the first three sessions and plan a joint assignment. During the fourth session, pupils must visit three different primary and lower secondary schools in Angered, both as a single group and in small groups, and talk about the journey from year nine to upper-secondary school and on to HE. Upper secondary school pupils get to work with students and learn a lot about the HEI and university courses and the route towards these courses.

The *University of Gothenburg* has invested SEK 3 million per year in recent years in order to promote the development of freestanding courses, as this is considered to be very important, e.g. for the HEI’s funding agreement targets and work relating to lifelong learning.

Courses have been organised at the *University of Gothenburg* in order to widen access to the HEI's programmes in the fine, applied and performing arts. The Valand Academy, one of three departments in the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, offers a summer course in collaboration with the Angered cultural centre. Another department at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, the Academy of Music and Drama (HSM), offers a one-year preparatory music course "The Music College" in collaboration with the folk high school in Angered. The course is aimed at under-represented groups for HDK's courses. The Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts has also received development funding in order to draw up a proposal for a new interdisciplinary basic course in art aimed at new target groups which is intended as a recruitment platform for motivated and talented applicants from under-represented backgrounds. In the autumn, the Valand Academy invited independent art schools in Sweden to a one-day seminar to discuss ways of promoting widening access. This meeting is an important step, as the recruitment base for the departments' courses at first-cycle level primarily originates from these preparatory schools.

The *University of Gothenburg* has admitted groups from Fryshuset i Göteborg from the project "Find the right one" (Hitta rätt), adolescents and young adults (aged 16-30) who are experiencing difficulties in accessing the labour market or finding employment. The visit is organised centrally by the HEI's communication unit with the participation of different units and personnel categories such as communicators, study advisers, senior lecturers and researchers, in addition to student ambassadors from various courses. The visit to the HEI is aimed at providing an overview of what university courses entail and enabling visitors to attend the HEI in a more informal atmosphere.

The Department of Law at the *University of Gothenburg* operates the HEI's "Law clinic" and was the first law programme in Sweden to operate a law practice. The basic concept is that law students can provide free legal advice under the supervision of university lecturers. A 'law clinic' can be structured in many ways. The Department of Law's law practice builds on cooperation with voluntary organisations offering free legal advice in various forms. An important basis in the HEI's organisation of the law practice is to create courses in topics of significant social relevance to provide law students with the opportunity to combine theoretical studies with applied studies out in the field. In November 2014, the continuation course "Practical human and welfare law" (Praktisk humanjuridik och välfärdsrätt) commenced as an optional part of the law programme at the University of Gothenburg.

*Dalarna University* has distributed the periodical "Dynamit" to all pupils in year 9 in Dalarna with the aim of demonstrating that good courses and interesting professions are available in the region. The HEI also carries out targeted school projects aimed at secondary school girls in order to encourage more girls to apply for the technological programme at Lugnet Upper Secondary School. The *University of Borås* has a partnership with the upper secondary schools of Almås and Viskastrand in the form of an activity plan for each upper secondary school year. In year one, which is mandatory, information is provided concerning entry to the HEI ahead of the students' individual

choices. In year two, pupils choose different activities based on their interests within the framework of a common “college course”, which involves activities such as “shadowing” a student and doing work studies at the “mattestuga” centre for extra maths help. Year three is optional. Information meetings are held at this point and former students from the same vocational upper secondary schools talk about their route into HEI courses.

The *University of Borås*’ central study adviser visits adult education courses in Borås, Svenljunga and Mark each semester to motivate and inform people about the opportunities for HE courses in general and about the University of Borås. The HEI also invites groups from adult education courses in the municipalities to its open house session and to meet course and careers advisers in connection with a study visit each semester.

The *University of Borås* works with healthcare providers in order to assess the actual skills of applicants for healthcare courses and specialist healthcare training. For example, a midwife with employment experience from a country outside Europe is working as part of a team on a ward, and her performance will subsequently be used as a basis for an assessment and possible validation of her skills.

The *University of Gävle* regularly accepts study visits from recently arrived refugee children in year eight, and every academic year arranges for its student ambassadors to visit the Swedish Public Employment Services and associated players.

The *University of Gävle* has student ambassadors who market the HEI on many different occasions. These student ambassadors visit around 40 upper secondary schools in the region annually and talk about the HEI and HE.

*Halmstad University* states that the HEI participates in Näktergalen, which is a voluntary mentor project for unaccompanied adolescent refugees (aged 16-18), which can help to get such people to consider higher education as a possibility.

*Kristianstad University* has arranged study visits for upper secondary pupils from the National Upper Secondary School for Physically Disabled Students and pupils at other specialist upper secondary schools.

*University West* pays for its education fairs and refreshments for visitors in order to give pupils from upper secondary schools in the local area an equal opportunity to attend the fair. The aim of this is to provide information and offer inspiration for studies at HEI level. Other HEIs are also invited to exhibit.

*University West* has, as part of the project “Men as pre-school teachers” (Män till förskollärarutbildningen), performed inspirational activities aimed at selected groups, and has for example invited unemployed people formerly employed by Saab, as well as a selection of young people from the surrounding area.

The *University of Gothenburg* works closely with the municipality of Ängelholm’s children and education organisations relating to “Doctoral Students in Learning” (Doktorander i Lärande, DIL). The parties are working together to establish lasting activities where research students meet children and pupils in the municipality’s organisations. Research students inspire and disseminate knowledge relating to interesting and topical research areas

during these meetings. The municipality has initiated partnerships with departments at Lund University and Halmstad University relating to the new initiative. The HEI hopes that this type of close contact will increase the level of interest in the subjects among many children and pupils, and will hopefully contribute towards reducing the thresholds that some young people currently experience with respect to studies at academic level.

*Jönköping University* is carrying out a project with the aim of promoting widening access through visits to upper secondary schools in Jönköping County. Information regarding the way in which HEI courses are run is given by students (two to three individuals) in a classroom situation with good potential for dialogue and questions. An important aspect of the information is to demystify HE and to awaken an interest in further study. Pupils are also offered the chance to visit the HEI during the information session, which is something that many choose to do. The project offers guided tours of the campus area and refreshments together with the students, and also allows plenty of time to ask questions. Another activity that has been offered is the chance to “shadow a student”, i.e. to follow a student for a day, which several pupils signed up for and completed. *Jönköping University* is carrying out a student ambassador project, where students and study advisers visit upper secondary schools in particular in order to disseminate information about HEI courses, primarily targeted at upper secondary school programmes with traditionally low initial participation levels.

*Karlstad University* has a “College year” (Collegeåret), which acts as a bridge between upper secondary school and the HEI. The College year is aimed at people who need to supplement or update certain aspects of their qualifications and are uncertain about making the transition to HEI study level. The HEI wants to create the opportunity for more people to feel that they can apply for courses at university level. The College year aims to demystify starting life at an HEI and provide an insight into how courses are run at an HEI and to offer good conditions for further successful study.

A “Search for technicians” (Teknikerjakten) project has been under way since 2004 at *Karlstad University* with support from the Ljungberg Fund. The project is a partnership between Karlstad University, schools in Värmland (ranging from preschool to upper secondary school), and commerce and industry in the region. The goal is to get more young people interested in engineering and technology and natural sciences and to apply for natural sciences or engineering and technology programmes at upper secondary school, and ultimately higher education in the longer term. It has been noted that the number of pupils on natural sciences and engineering and technology upper secondary school programmes in the Karlstad region has risen markedly.

The engineering and technology programme at *Karlstad University* saw the number of first choice applicants increase by 37% between 2004 and 2011, while the corresponding figure for the natural sciences programme increased by 55 percent during the corresponding period. In 2006, more activities also included school projects in the region’s upper secondary schools to ensure that the increasing numbers of young people choosing natural



sciences and engineering and technology at upper secondary school would also go on to study at university. The number of first choice applicants for the natural sciences and engineering and technology programmes at Karlstad University has risen by 99 percent since the autumn of 2006. The biggest rise can be seen in the area of engineering courses. "Search for technicians" projects are also under way at *Dalarna University* and at the *University of Gävle*.

*Karlstad University* has been carrying out the "Children's University" (Barnens universitet) project for the past seven years. The HEI wants to show that research is fun and interesting, how a dialogue with children can influence their later education choices in life, and perhaps also that new issues may arise from children that may influence the research of the HEI. Children aged 8-12 are welcome to meet professors and senior lecturers and hear them talk about a specific topic. Parents, grandparents and teachers can accompany children at the back of the university lecture hall when they meet researchers. It is the children who are the focus in this particular case, and questions will often arise later at home, and conversations with children regarding natural sciences and engineering and technology will continue. Many of the children who attended the "Children's University" in its first year have gone on to study as students at the HEI. Coaches to the Children's University from various places in Värmland are coordinated within the framework of the "Search for technicians" project and run on six Mondays during October and November. *Karlstad University* has participated in the local "Pride festival" to meet people who the HEI believe could be difficult to reach via other channels and activities.

The *Royal Institute of Art* started its "Critical Habits" course (giving 60 credits) from the 2015-2016 academic year onwards in order to reach a new group of applicants with experience of architecture, activism, art and academia.

*Halmstad University* participates in the "Science safari project". This project goes out on the road using a specially built coach, which acts as a form of science centre on wheels, and visits schools and public places around Halland. The objective is for the coach to visit all secondary schools and upper secondary schools in Halland during the period leading up to 2017. The HEI participates in the "Science safari project" with the objective of highlighting the education and research performed at the HEI in natural sciences and engineering and technology. A further objective is to use the coach for student recruitment purposes to increase levels of interest in these subject areas.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* holds the "Tekla Festival" once a year. This is an engineering and technology festival for female pupils up to the age of 18. For a full day, they can try out robot programming, game design, protein purification, 3D printing and lots of other activities in a mixture to suit everybody, regardless of ability or previous knowledge. The Tekla Festival is described as being for people who like to build, create and test new things, and for people who like music, robots, wires, playing games or being creative with others. Or for people who are curious about the above, but have not tried it before. The "Tekla Festival" is arranged by *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* in partnership with Robyn, with Atlas Copco, EA DICE, Ericsson,

NCC, Scania and Spotify as partner companies and Creuna as web partner. Participants under the age of 15 must be accompanied by an adult. The festival is interspersed with practical workshops with motivational speakers.

*Halmstad University* is also carrying out a project where school classes get to work on programming. The HEI has also concluded a one-year project under an integration project entitled “School in the middle of the city” (Skolan mitt i byn), where 20 children from year five from Andersberg School and Snöstorp School attended the HEI once a week to learn how to program apps for Android using App Inventor.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* and *Stockholm University* run the Stockholm House of Science (Vetenskapens hus) with the support of the City of Stockholm, offering activities aimed at school pupils up to and including upper secondary school age.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* has a student chat facility on its website, where prospective students from across Sweden can put questions to student ambassadors immediately before the application deadline for HEI courses.

*Linköping University* runs the “LuMiNk Academy” (LuMiNk Akademin) in partnership with the municipality of Norrköping and Mirum Galleria in Hageby. This project commenced during the 2015-2016 academic year to motivate pupils at Söderporten in Hageby to undertake HEI studies through mentorship.

*Linköping University* monitors the recruitment of women to engineering and engineering and technology courses annually, but states that it is difficult to determine the extent to which various activities have led to changes. However, a gradual increase in the recruitment of women has been established over the long-term, particularly in the case of engineering students. The HEI also regularly monitors the recruitment of international students to engineering and engineering and technology courses, but states that it is even more difficult to attribute any changes to individual activities for this group, particularly following the introduction of tuition fees, which has led to a sharp decline in the number of international students.

*Linköping University* states that activities are evaluated after they have been implemented, and the HEI has for example monitored whether or not upper secondary pupils have chosen to commence HEI level studies at the HEI following “Campus week” (Campusveckan) as a result of their participation. Within the framework of “Good Neighbours” (Goda Grannar), *Linköping University* arranges “After School” help with homework for pupils in years 4-9 in connection with the pupils’ own primary and lower-secondary schools in partnership with the student association Engineers Without Borders (Ingenjörer utan gränser). The Board for School Cooperation (Nämnden för skolsamverkan) (NSS) at *Linköping University* was originally geared towards recruiting students within the fields of engineering and technology and natural sciences, particularly at upper secondary school. Its current position on recruitment is now generally different, and the focus for NSS is aimed more at initiatives earlier in school. Commencing in the autumn of 2015, NSS arranges a “Science day” (Vetenskapsdagen), which is an annual collaborative workshop for teachers in primary and lower and upper secondary schools, as well

as for trainee teachers. The aim is to inspire teachers in their educational situations, partly by listening to lectures and participating in research-related study visits to departments at the HEI. The goal is for teachers to boost the level of interest among their pupils in engineering and technology, natural sciences, mathematics and computer science and for continued study.

*Linköping University* uses so-called “Missionaries” (Missionering) with the aid of “home comers” (hemvändare), where Linköping University students visit their old upper secondary schools.

*Luleå University of Technology* participates in work and training days arranged by local study centres and the Swedish Public Employment Service in the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten.

*Luleå University of Technology* has coordinated group guidance and evaluation exercises for primary and lower secondary schools with the aim of obtaining an overview of how young people feel about education and professions in order to generate interest in the long-term for higher education courses, regardless of background, and gender, and to encourage more people to apply for engineering and technology courses.

*Luleå University of Technology* arranges a summer engineering and technology week for girls in year eight.

*Luleå University of Technology* considers the HEI’s student ambassadors to be an important part of the work in providing a broad target group with the opportunity to meet representatives/role models from the HEI in various ways and in different contexts. The credibility of student ambassadors is considered to be important in enabling individuals to make good choices regarding courses and course locations, regardless of background, gender and previous experience of studies.

*Luleå University of Technology* offers a recently established “Include” network for girls within the field of computers and engineering physics. The network has arranged taster courses for upper secondary school girls.

*Luleå University of Technology* offers an activity for primary and lower secondary schools known as “Search for engineering and technology” (Teknikjakten), which aims to generate interest in engineering and technology ahead of upper secondary subject choices for both boys and girls. This also involves evaluation exercises as a tool for young people at upper secondary school on professional programmes and for primary and lower secondary school pupils.

*Lund University* offers “UJIK”, which is an independent distance education course aimed at young people from non-academic backgrounds. The course has been designed as a taster course with a low entry threshold, and besides subject content, also provides study skills. At the same time, the course is at aimed a high academic level, and the 20 students with the best results are offered a place on the law programme.

*Lund University’s* preparatory Master’s study programme in English aims to give what the HEI considers to be talented international students an opportunity to develop their academic English prior to embarking on courses at the HEI, and to ensure a global student population and diversity.

Within the framework of “Girls at engineering school” (Flickor på teknis), *Lund University* invites girls on engineering and technology and natural sciences upper secondary school programmes to spend three days at the Faculty of Engineering to gain an insight into courses and working life as an engineer.

*Lund University* uses “supplemental instruction” together with schools in Skåne to inspire pupils to continue into higher education. Students from the HEI act as mentors for pupils at primary and lower secondary schools.

*Lund University* offers additional education places for people with refugee status. This includes refugees who have been forced to discontinue their medical training in their home country who have been accepted under a special arrangement for the medical programme to carry out and/or complete their medical training.

*Malmö University* has a long tradition of working with and for immigrant university graduates with a need to obtain supplementary academic qualifications. The funding available to the HEI is primarily in the form of funds allocated to ordinary education places, known as ‘student allowances’.

*Malmö University* allows all classes in year three at an upper secondary school in Malmö to visit the HEI library to gain an insight of what it is like to study.

*Malmö University* participates in the “Folk high school collaboration” (Folkhögskolesamarbetet) in order to present higher education as a real alternative for pupils at folk high schools in Skåne, and has a focus on widening access. The “Folk high school collaboration” includes the holding of information days for pupils, continuing professional development days for teachers and mentoring activities, with information, inspiration and guidance. Each HEI has 5-6 mentor schools and provides individual guidance sessions to the pupils of each school.

*Malmö University’s* partners include the City of Malmö, Region Skåne and the Faculty of Engineering LTH in “TeknikCollege Skåne”, and includes the promotion widening access for engineering courses. Among other things, “TeknikCollege Skåne” includes supplemental learning (SI), the “Young researchers” (Unga forskare) exhibition and the “Zip” (Blixtlåset) competition.

*Malmö University* has summer placements to inspire young men (aged 16-19) to take up higher education courses and professions in schools and health/care settings. The project is a partnership involving the City of Malmö/Young in Summer (Ung i sommar).

*Mid Sweden University* has a structured and long-term collaboration with school principals, teachers and pupils regarding issues relating to school development, the region’s education cycle and the supply of skills. The HEI wants to contribute towards increasing the higher education initial participation rate for higher education courses and to be a player in the supply of skills for the region. Through close cooperation with the region’s municipalities and school principals in the regional development network (RUN), the HEI is working with principals to promote learning and sustainable regional development. This has also formed the basis for a structured and long-term

cooperation with the region's pre-schools, primary and lower and upper secondary schools.

*Mid Sweden University* has now established partnerships with all upper secondary schools in the region. Each upper secondary school in the region and each department at the HEI has its own coordinator. This has an individual network which holds regular meetings. The HEI arranges and coordinates activities for upper secondary school pupils for all three year groups in upper secondary school, which is done in order to establish long-term contact and contribute to increased initial participation in higher education courses.

Every year, student ambassadors from *Mid Sweden University* visit a number of upper secondary schools and upper secondary school fairs throughout the region. The aim of the visits is to inspire and motivate upper secondary school pupils to focus on their studies and start thinking about what they want to do. As the student ambassadors are active students mid-way through their courses, they can offer a current insight as to what it is like to study at a university, study techniques, what student life is like and what led them to choose the courses that they chose.

*Stockholm University of the Arts* carries out training initiatives in areas where it has a low percentage of applicants. The HEI has started offering new courses, such as "Street dance", in order to attract "new" groups of students. The HEI works purposefully to communicate in a way that is accessible to as many people as possible.

At *Mälardalen University*, the central study advisers organise an event called "UMIL" (mid-life education/utbildning mitt i livet), which is a one-day event which is aimed at reaching students who have been in professional work for a number of years. UMIL is marketed by the Swedish Public Employment Service, Komvux adult education service and other upper secondary adult education courses.

*Stockholm University* arranges interactive science theatres for children aged 6-8 and runs the collaborative "Physics show" (Fysikshow) project, which visits schools and participates in events relating to natural sciences.

*Stockholm University* is visited by upper secondary school pupils with one or more disabilities to learn about what it is like to study with a disability and the support that is available.

The *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences'* student recruitment staff work with a target group adapted to the HEI's business concept with respect to prospective students, and attractively packages, presents and makes accessible what is unique about the *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences*.

The HEI's concept can be summarised using the words "personification, diversity and shaping the future". Personification relates to portraying and highlighting the HEI's students and giving the HEI a "face", while at the same time creating a personal appeal. The HEI's students are portrayed in images and text through a photo campaign. The HEI wants to give students a voice and the opportunity to say how they want to be and to make a difference to the future. Diversity is about changing the homogeneous student composition at the HEI and, through a particular form of address, design and arenas, attracting the broader target group the HEI is interested in reaching,

and demonstrating that the HEI's students have good conditions for being involved in and shaping the future, both during and after their education. The concept was planned as widening access, but has been opened up to a wider group.

*Södertörn University* has, since the beginning of 2013, worked on the basis of the special needs and circumstances of Romani as a minority language, e.g. by getting Romani people to progress to higher education and working to address the issues that the formal education of the minority continues to be low and that formal skills in Romani are lacking at HE level. The HEI has held dialogues with representatives for the Romani minority, both as part of an external reference group and through the Romani bridge-builder course with a focus on the school run by the HEI. The HEI has also appointed a new research manager for Romani studies, which has helped to strengthen international contacts in the area.

*Södertörn University* has also appointed a senior lecturer in teaching and learning with a focus on Romani teacher training and a Romani adjunct teacher together with a number of Romani contacts, such as native language teachers and people interested in the Romani language, which has helped to develop in-depth knowledge regarding the educational situation and needs of the minority. A continuing professional development conference in Romani has been held in cooperation with professor Yaron Matras at the University of Manchester. The HEI has also initiated a closer cooperation with other national minority languages through representatives for another four minority languages from other HEIs that participated in the reference group meeting arranged by the HEI.

*Uppsala University* arranges "Girls' week" (Tjejeveckan), where secondary school girls can try out activities relating to natural sciences and engineering and technology. This school event is carried out as a partnership between the HEI and Vattenfall. The event gives girls the opportunity to go on study visits, e.g. to a Vattenfall facility, and to try out exercises and experiments (building/programming Lego robots, building photovoltaic cells and meeting other female students, etc.) They also get to visit the National Museum of Science and Technology in Stockholm and to make radio and TV programmes based on their experiences during this time. The events comes under the framework of the HEI's diversity-aware teaching and learning.

*Uppsala University* also invites a broad spectrum of people to visit the HEI's interactive Augusta Ångström exhibition, at which physics, chemistry and engineering and technology phenomena are presented. Around 500 pupils per year participate.

*Uppsala University* has also run the diversity agency ESMeralda for a considerable period of time. Since 2004, ESMeralda has been working to raise awareness of, and combat, social and ethnic recruitment imbalances at the HEI. This was started by Uppsala Student Union, and since 2007 has been largely financed by Uppsala University and Uppsala Municipality. The capital letters in the name of the organisation stand for Elev, Student, Mångfald/Möten (Pupil, Student, Diversity/Meeting). The target group consists of secondary school pupils, and also upper secondary pupils to some extent,

primarily those from non-academic homes and/or with non-Swedish ethnic backgrounds. ESMeralda is currently carrying out four projects with the aim of combating social and ethnic recruitment imbalances within the HEI, namely *homework, student ambassadors, shadowing and the Hayat mentorship project*. ESMeralda involves almost 100 students each academic year and meets almost 2,000 school pupils.

*Uppsala University* also has home ambassadors, engineering, technology and natural sciences students that return to their old upper secondary schools. Around 50-70 class visits are conducted annually.

Örebro University has “Line 14” (Linje 14), which was established as a partnership between Örebro Municipality and the HEI in 2003 with the aim of motivating and stimulating young people growing up in educationally disadvantaged backgrounds to take up further study. This venture was initially financed as a project by the Ministry of Education and Research’s recruitment delegation. A joint decision was reached by Örebro Municipality and Örebro University regarding co-financing after the project showed positive results. The aim of Line 14 is to reduce exclusion and increase integration. The venture currently has three collaborative schools in residential areas characterised by low education cycles and high unemployment rates among adults. The majority of young people involved in the cooperation work have a foreign background and many have only recently arrived in Sweden. “Line 14” offers a unique way of breaking patterns regarding initial participation in higher education among young people with foreign backgrounds growing up in areas where few people know someone who has gone on to further study. Activities are carried out in the form of help with homework, study technique courses, workshops, study support, cooperation with study advisers, parent meetings and study visits for young people to Örebro University. An important feature of Line 14 is the group of student ambassadors who work with young people in the participating residential areas/schools on an ongoing basis.

## **Good examples of the application of admission regulations by HEIs with the aim of promoting widening access**

Maritime education courses at *Chalmers University of Technology* provide guaranteed admission for students who have worked at sea prior to commencing their academic studies. The HEI stresses that this is an excellent way of widening access, as it can for example involve people coming from families that have been involved in fishing for generations and therefore do not have an academic background.

At the *University of Gothenburg*, admission to the behaviourist programme has been organised in such a way that 25 percent of the places are allocated to applicants who have at least four years’ employment experience in at least 50% FTE positions. The HEI has stated that the outcome varies from year to year. More men are admitted in certain years, while in other years somewhat

older students or students with a non-Swedish background are admitted. The HEI notes that these three groups are under-represented on the programme. In certain areas, the HEI has observed increased heterogeneity, although this is small compared with the large number of young female applicants.

The *University of Borås* uses an alternative selection procedure for 30 percent of places on the following courses with the aim of achieving widening access: Organisational and human resource development in society, for which applicants are selected by ranking their employment experience with an upper limit of 96 months. The textile design programme, for which applicants are selected by ranking their educational knowledge/experience of pattern construction and sewing amounting to at least 20 weeks full-time with an upper limit of 100 weeks. The “preschool teacher education for active pedagogic workers” programme, for which applicants are selected made by ranking the applicant’s professional experience of pedagogical work in pre-schools, covering at least 60 months in a 50% FTE position and a maximum of 120 months. The “preschool teacher education for active pedagogic workers” programme for active childminders and other staff at pre-schools without a higher education. The validation of prior learning and formal qualifications is included, which reduces the duration of the training and means students can work part-time alongside the course, and some work placement assignments may also be located in the workplaces. The HEI invites prospective applicants and their managers to an information meeting.

*University West* applies a special selection procedure for a third of the places for its social pedagogy programme and for courses in 3D animation and visualisation, both with 180 credits. The social pedagogy programme is a course with a high number of applicants. The HEI states that the aim of the alternative selection procedure is to broaden the recruitment basis and take into account other qualities besides those measured using grades and Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Tests. Applicants must write a personalised application, containing a description of their previous experience, interests, motivation and expectations. Applicants are called for interview in stage two and given a written assignment. The HEI’s monitoring of admissions in 2014 indicates that the special selection procedure promotes widening access in a number of ways. Of the applications who were admitted, 65 percent were not admitted on the basis of their grades or Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Tests. The applicant who obtained the best result in the special selection procedure had low grade credits, while the person who came last in the special selection procedure had a waiting list number of 803 in the grade selection. Both of these students had hitherto passed all courses. Around 30 percent had a non-Swedish ethnic background and 30 percent were men, compared with 10-12 percent for the student group overall.

*Dalarna University* allocates a third of places to its construction management programme to motivated applicants who, in addition to general entry qualifications, have employment experience corresponding to at least two years’ full-time employment in the construction industry. Applicants must also enclose a personal letter. The aim of the alternative selection procedure is to recruit older applicants with employment experience.



*Karlstad University* applies an alternative selection procedure in the form of guaranteed admission for students who have completed the so-called “College year” (Collegeåret). The College year is run by the HEI in cooperation with folk high schools and adult education. The target group consists of people who have no complete final school certificate.

*Linköping University* has found that students with employment experience are in a minority on several of its courses/programmes. A number of faculties have therefore trialled a special selection procedure: the speech therapy, medicine, nursing and social work programmes and Bachelor’s programme in human resources and work sciences.

*Lund University* offers “UJIK”, which is an extended introductory law course which gives guaranteed admission to the law programme for the 20 students with the best results. The HEI also applies an alternative selection procedure for its subject teacher training programme. The HEI’s collaboration with two folk high schools in Skåne has resulted in a preparatory teaching profile being created in the folk high schools concerned. Pupils who complete the profile and receive a minimum student assessment score of three are guaranteed a place on the HEI’s teacher training programme.

For courses in human rights at the *Stockholm School of Theology*, applications may also be made on the basis of merits in human rights, for example certificates issued through work, folk high school education in human rights or voluntary work for an organisation.

*Stockholm University* is working on a government-commissioned assignment to develop and provide testing in Swedish for HEI courses (Tisus). According to the HEI, “Tisus” is a vital tool for giving all prospective students with no qualification in Swedish a chance to acquire a qualification in an alternative way other than through formal studies at upper secondary school. The HEI stresses that experience has shown that students who are approved in the test go on to successfully complete a variety of courses.

*Uppsala University* uses an alternative selection procedure for admissions to programmes aimed at human resources and employment issues, and for the economics Bachelor’s programme. In both cases, there is a special selection group for people who have been in employment for at least four years.

## **Good examples of the work of HEIs relating to widening access for third-cycle education**

*Chalmers University of Technology* conducts a common employee survey annually covering the whole of the HEI. The results of the survey for doctoral students indicate that the majority of problems are related to gender. Men are generally overrepresented, although there are considerable discrepancies in the gender division between doctoral students for the various programmes, and this reflects the same distribution as is found for the various courses. There are also differences for doctoral students who speak Swedish and English respectively and how they perceive their situation as doctoral students.

One way of addressing the situation would be to impose a requirement for all doctoral students to undergo performance appraisals with their supervisors.

*Chalmers University of Technology* has “search committees” that work to achieve a more even gender distribution amongst people recruited for doctoral studentships, and some departments hire recruitment firms in order to obtain a more representative selection in connection with recruitment.

The *Swedish Defence University* does not have any doctoral students who have been admitted to the HEI because it is not authorised to issue qualifications for courses at third-cycle level. However, a number of doctoral students are affiliated to the HEI in various ways. An assessment has been performed for these people in the form of a survey with questions relating to parental education cycles and grounds for discrimination. However, no analysis based on these perspectives has been prepared.

The *University of Gothenburg*’s strategy “Vision2020” highlights the following strategies: to work towards third-cycle courses being an important qualification in the labour market, including in areas outside academia, to increase the recruitment of doctoral students with external employment and to develop international exchange programmes for doctoral students. New systematic and interfaculty benchmarking projects with a focus on third-cycle courses have been introduced, and questions relating to the supervision of doctoral students and the need for courses in teaching and learning in higher education have been highlighted.

The *Stockholm School of Economics* appointed a Diversity and Equality Manager in 2015, who was tasked with conducting assessments at the HEI. An assessment of doctoral students is likely to be carried out in 2016.

*Halmstad University* conducts a “doctoral student barometer” every three years to gain an understanding of the situation of doctoral students, and this also asks questions regarding the background of doctoral students. The over- and under-representation of groups in terms of gender follows the same patterns as for first-cycle level. The majority of people in information technology and innovation science are men, while the majority of people in health and lifestyle are women. Halmstad University obtained authorisation to examine doctoral students under its own auspices relatively recently. As the numbers are manageable in terms of obtaining an overview, the third-cycle committee submits annual reports to the research and education committee regarding the doctoral students who are admitted.

*University West* carries out a number of activities with the aim of promoting widening access for courses at third-cycle level. The HEI has preparatory research course aspects at first-cycle/second-cycle levels in connection with academic papers and degree projects, and also on an ongoing basis during courses. The HEI arranges various types of meetings with the aim of informing students about what is involved in taking a doctorate, meetings where school pupils visit the HEI and meetings where researchers and doctoral students visit schools to talk about and discuss research. The HEI is also an active participant in “Research Friday” (Forskarfredag) and the “Researchers’ Grand Prix” (Forskar Grand Prix), where school pupils are invited to participate in and arrange research seminars for the general public.

*Karolinska Institutet* produces annual statistics relating to gender distribution. Women are overrepresented on third-cycle courses, although there has been a weak trend towards a more even gender distribution over the years. Amongst the group of doctoral students admitted for the period 2012-2015, the gender distribution for those with “foreign qualification courses” is more even (50 percent men) compared with those with Swedish first-cycle qualifications (42 percent men). No assessment has been performed with respect to socioeconomic background.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* monitors statistics on an annual basis and conducts an annual doctoral student survey. The number of students admitted, active students and students who hold a doctoral degree is weighted towards men. The distribution is generally around 70-30, but varies considerably between subject areas. Men are more satisfied with their education and believe that they receive more support and supervision than women. They also find the research environment more stimulating. Those who obtained a PhD were more satisfied than those who obtained a licentiate. Those who completed their education were more satisfied with their education than those who failed to complete their education.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* wants to help break gender marking with respect to third-cycle and engineering courses, and both female and male role models must therefore be highlighted in societal information. By arranging a mentor programme in both Swedish and English and monitoring and rectifying deficiencies highlighted in the doctoral student survey, the HEI hopes to promote the recruitment of female doctoral students.

*Linköping University* carries out doctoral student assessments at faculty level for gender and origin through the doctoral student survey. At HEI level, the gender distribution between women and men is even (47 and 53 percent respectively), although there are differences between disciplinary research domains. In the disciplinary research domain of engineering, women are an under-represented group (25-30 percent), while in the disciplinary research domains of the humanities/social sciences and medicine, men are an under-represented group (around 35-40 percent). In the discipline of engineering, female doctoral students believe to a somewhat greater degree than male doctoral students that the requirements relating to their research affect them negatively outside their third-cycle course. With regard to doctoral students with a foreign first-cycle qualification, the percentage figure for this has increased in recent decades. This increase appears to have stabilised at around 40-50 percent.

*Luleå University of Technology* stated that specific types of assessment are carried out annually in connection with the work on the annual report. With regard to the gender balance, the men normally represent two thirds of the total number of doctoral students, which can be explained by the fact that a large percentage of doctoral students in the discipline of engineering have traditionally been men. The biggest gender imbalances can be seen in both the Department of Computer Science, Electrical and Space Engineering and the Department of Health Sciences.

No assessment of the number of foreign doctoral students at *Luleå University of Technology* has been performed. Within the humanistic and social science disciplines, the majority of new recruits are normally aged 40 or above (67 percent in 2014), and aged 29 or younger in the discipline of engineering (63 percent in 2014). This is because it is more common for people with previous employment experience to be admitted to the disciplines of education and health compared with that of engineering. No analysis has been performed of any consequences of the age differences.

*Lund University* has carried out no studies of third-cycle courses with a specific focus on widening access, although these issues are covered in different ways in several of the HEI's reports. The HEI's reports include accounts of the age, gender, disabilities, social background, ethnic background and sexual orientation of the HEI's doctoral students. Women are less satisfied with their professional life as doctoral students than men, while doctoral students working alone are less satisfied than doctoral students working within the framework of a research team.

*Lund University* works with children and pupils at schools and pre-schools in Ängelholm, which is a district where few people go on to higher education. The schools are visited by committed research students working in various disciplines. Research students who participate get the opportunity to inspire a target group curious about their research. *Malmö University* is developing a programme to inspire first-generation students to apply for courses at second-cycle and/or third-cycle level. Within the framework of the programme, students will be inspired and developed in their subject fields and given the opportunity to establish contacts in the research community, both in their own field and in interdisciplinary environments. The various parts of the programme will make participating students competitive in their applications for third-cycle courses.

*Malmö University* reviewed statistics from Statistics Sweden before starting work to create the programme to inspire first-generation students to apply for courses at second-cycle and/or third-cycle level. The statistics show that 33 percent of the students from Malmö University who went on to a third-cycle course between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 were first-generation students, compared with 45 percent first-generation university graduates for first-cycle courses.

*Mid Sweden University* analyses statistics from Statistics Sweden once a year regarding women and men and parental education cycles (every two or three years). These analyses show that Mid Sweden University has a somewhat higher number of women than the national average and a lower education cycle among the parents of students. However, Mid Sweden University is much more in line with the national average, as a result of an application process for advertised posts that is open to students from across the entire country as well as other countries. Foreign research students are in the majority for certain subjects.

*Mälardalen University* intends to carry out an assessment with the aid of a doctoral student survey, which will be conducted by the faculty board in the early autumn of 2016. *Umeå University* conducts a leaving survey every year for students who are due to complete a doctoral degree. One of the questions

relates to the educational background of parents. In 2013, the response rate was 78 percent, and 55 percent of respondents had parents who had completed at least three years of study for a higher education degree. In 2014, the response rate was 80 percent and 50 percent of respondents had parents who had completed at least three years of study for a higher education degree. No other assessments have been carried out.

At *Uppsala University*, the Division for Quality Enhancement, Academic Teaching and Learning has analysed data gathered through a survey study based on gender. An analysis was also carried out of the differences between the perceptions of doctoral students as regards whether they had a Swedish or a foreign first-cycle qualification. A new doctoral student survey was distributed during the spring semester of 2015, and the processing of this is under way. This round will also include the preparation and publication of corresponding analyses relating to gender and Swedish/foreign first-cycle qualifications.

*Uppsala University* specifically monitors doctoral students and active doctoral students in relation to gender in certain disciplinary research domains. The disciplinary research domain of medicine and pharmacy for example monitors the admission of doctoral students and active doctoral students in relation to gender. There are currently no major deviations from an even gender distribution. A comprehensive study has been carried out concerning the presence of doctoral students who have been awarded a stipend, which is of importance as regards widening access. The HEI is working to ensure that all doctoral students have employment.

*Uppsala University's Action plan for broader recruitment 2014-2016 (Handlingssplan för breddad rekrytering 2014-2016)* states that the need for widening access will be taken into account in connection with all recruitment initiatives and in information concerning courses at second- and third-cycle levels. Labour market links will be emphasised in information aimed at prospective students at second- and third-cycle levels in order to demonstrate the opportunities that exist in the labour market after students complete their studies.

## **Good examples of the work of HEIs relating to widening participation**

For many programmes at *Chalmers university of technology*, study advisers are working on support activities such as “supplemental instruction” (SI), where older students and SI managers are trained in the SI method and receive supervision during the course. The aim of this is to increase the benefit that students get from the education and to boost student completion. There are also activities that contribute to the personal development of students, such as lectures and monitoring concerning time management, courses in career planning and group dynamics.

During the spring of the first academic year at *Chalmers University of Technology*, individual course monitoring takes place, where students with low performance levels are offered an appraisal using pre-prepared questions

to reflect on what may be causing their problems. Students who opt to discontinue their studies complete a discontinuation form and give the reasons behind their decision during an appraisal with a study adviser. *Chalmers University of Technology* has comprehensive routines. The disciplinary domain leaders and programme coordinators monitor the work relating to student welfare issues and hold regular meetings with the programme team, which provides students with follow-up on an ongoing basis. *Chalmers University of Technology* also conducts student welfare inspections annually through a systematic working environment assessment for all programmes. The work is carried out based on a checklist of questions which are aimed at highlighting and identifying any problems in the working environment for both groups and individuals. It is the responsibility of programme coordinators to act upon and follow up any problems that are identified.

*Chalmers University of Technology*' Section for Student Services has analysed the factors that affect student completion and drawn the following conclusions: the first semester is critical; student background (engineering foundation year programme, grades, Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Tests) do not impact on student completion rates; and culture and stress factors needs to be investigated to enable appropriate measures to be implemented.

The *Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences* supplemented its introductory programme in 2014 with an introductory course component for all its programme students with a focus on academic writing and the significance of higher education courses.

The *Stockholm School of Economics* states that the faculty is working on individual "peer evaluations" concerning how teaching sessions and lectures are carried out from a "gender awareness" perspective.

*Dalarna University* states that monitoring is being carried out concerning the credits that are awarded to first year students in collaboration with the respective programme coordinators. The approach may vary depending on the programme/disciplinary domain/academy. At the *University of Borås*, the HEI's student ombudsman and administrator for student legal matters offer a drop-in service where students can discuss any questions they may have and receive support in the event of harassment or discrimination.

The *University of Borås* continually addresses widening participation in its teaching and learning in higher education first-cycle course worth 15 credits, partly through content (lectures, workshops and literature seminars) and partly through examinations. The compulsory literature includes chapters and articles on norm-critical perspectives, which are addressed in the form of seminars and discussed in relation to the educational assignment both in general and didactically. The HEI is striving for an intersectional perspective and is working on the assignment at interdepartmental level.

Lecturers at the *University of Borås* can ask for an integrated careers lecture to be included in an ordinary course.

*Kristianstad University* uses its concept of "Universal Design for Learning" (Universell Design för Lärande) (UDL) to make courses more accessible to students and, in turn, to increase student completion rates and boost student employability. The coordinator for students with disabilities has presented

the concept, partly through workshops at collaborative meetings, to the study programmes board, at departmental meetings and programme area meetings and for quality enhancement purposes. Within the framework of courses for teaching and learning in higher education, the coordinator gives lectures on UDL and allows participants to adjust their course syllabi on the basis of the concept, ranging from information and communication regarding the course to teaching and examinations.

The *University of Skövde* is making a concentrated effort with regard to an excellent learning environment, where work is being carried out to develop the dimensions of culture, quality and infrastructure. The aim is for the work to have an impact on all processes that affect students. Initiatives and activities are being carried out, e.g. within the areas of basic values, cooperation within the HEI, student completion, student focus, student influence, administrative processes and physical learning environments. The work was originally initiated in project form, but has since switched to being a permanent activity through the establishment of a board to strategically drive the development of the excellent learning environment. Students are given the opportunity to complete online lifestyle tests at the *University of Skövde*. Every semester, e-mail surveys are distributed to students at the HEI containing questions regarding drinking habits and stress, as an intervention.

At the *University of Skövde*, the student services function offers support measures in the form of a study technique course which leads to credits.

The *University of Skövde's* student services function is developing a model for systematic student follow-up with the cooperation of the departments and programme coordinator lecturers in particular, where contact is made with students who are lagging behind in their studies. A system support method known as "TUSS" (a Swedish abbreviation for "Early Warning System Skövde") has been developed to provide an overview of the path that students take through their studies. The aim is to obtain a clearer overview of student results and identify any problems/barriers during the course. The ultimate goal of the monitoring is to identify needs, make changes/improvements and implement support measures to facilitate the student's study situation.

The *University of Skövde's* Department for Health and Education is aiming to be LGBTQ-certified. There is a specific plan for the implementation of education as an initial step in this process.

*University West's* "Student square project" (Studenttorgsprojektet) is currently under way and is being carried out as two sub-projects known as "Service centre" (Servicecenter) and "Information square" (Informationstorg). The "Service centre" sub-project involves the establishment of an accessible and common service centre on the ground floor of the HEI to facilitate overall accessibility to services for students, staff and external visitors. The "Information square" will provide people with a one-stop solution to obtain qualified support activities for students, such as library services, study and career advice, student health, study-promoting activities, an academic writing support centre and certain IT support activities.

*University West* states that several of its departments are working systematically to monitor credits awarded through LADOK at an early stage during

courses in order to identify any students who are unable to cope with their studies. There is also close contact between the departments and the student services functions in order to facilitate the identification of students, but the work is not systematic and requires further development. Additionally, certain programmes (e.g. nursing) have inbuilt “barriers”, where certain requirements must be met before people can continue their studies.

*University West’s* work relating to the “TRACKIT project”, which was initiated in 2015, has fulfilled a strong need for the HEI to focus on joint work in connection with broader recruitment and participation. Issues affecting many categories of staff have been highlighted and discussed jointly and have been met with strong commitment. A number of sub-projects have now commenced, and the HEI hopes to be able to present more specific results from the initiatives in a couple of years. *University West* organises a higher education access programme for all new students with the aim of creating security and solidarity when students begin their studies. This is being carried out as a partnership between the HEI’s departments, management and students’ union. In connection with the first course, a lecture in study techniques is given, which is also streamed.

*Jönköping University’s* courses are offered at four different specialist HEIs, and the HEI therefore has both general routines and routines that are specific to the specialist HEI. The HEI monitors the credits that are earned by each student per semester for the respective academic years. There are also so-called “barrier courses”, which are intended to determine whether students should be given the opportunity to meet the requirements for progression in good time. Regular course and programme evaluations are also carried out. These can provide an indication that certain subtopics or particular disciplines are proving to be particularly problematic.

*Karolinska Institutet* refers to the assessments that are performed during placements, where students are assessed with the aid of an established assessment template. If a student is at risk of failing a clinical course/course component, the student will be informed of this both in writing and verbally. An action plan will be established so that the student knows what is required in order to achieve a pass.

At the *Royal College of Music in Stockholm*, a specific profile is offered for applicants living in Sweden who have a high level of competence and/or background in folk and art music from other cultures within the framework of the Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Music.

Every programme at *KTH Royal Institute of Technology* has a study adviser who monitors students on the programme during the course and contacts those who appear to be lagging behind on the basis of the credits they have earned. A seminar series is run in parallel with the mathematics courses during the first year of the engineering course. A poor result or low attendance in the seminar series indicates that a student may be lagging behind. The programme’s course coordinator will therefore be informed of the students’ participation and performances at these seminars.



*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* assesses its students' approach to, and experience of, the HEI, the course and the learning environment in a midterm survey, which is carried out after several years of study.

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology* offers "supplemental instruction" in courses with low student completion rates. The HEI is also gradually developing an "Academic Resource Centre" (ARC), which offers courses in Swedish as a foreign language for exchange and Master's degree students.

*Linköping University* is renowned for its well-organised reception activities for new students. Every year, around 1,500 mentors are trained by the HEI in areas such as "equal conditions" and the reception policy at the HEI. Particular emphasis is placed on the fact that the reception must be inclusive for all students. The Student Health Care Centre is responsible for ensuring that mentor training is provided to all mentors who receive new students at the start of a semester. The training aims to convey a good approach for the mentors and to offer perspectives, knowledge and methods for receiving new students. The mentor training is arranged in cooperation with the students' union and is provided in two parts. The first part is completed in May and is carried out in the form of joint faculty training, where mentors from different programmes meet at joint lectures. The second part is run by the students' union and involves group discussions concerning the role of mentors.

*Linköping University* places emphasis on its close and daily cooperation with the students' union in order to facilitate good participation in the activity. This is reflected in the meetings and various training elements, as well as in the ongoing, daily contact between the students' union and staff at the HEI, e.g. via the student council, the student management council, CAMO-stud (central working environment representative for students) meetings and local student cooperation groups, etc.

At *Linköping University*, study advisers monitor the various programmes and draw up individual study plans for students who are unable to progress to future semesters as result of barriers. The monitoring routines differ between the faculties to some extent.

*Linköping University* uses its regular student and doctoral student surveys to identify many developmental needs. These surveys have a high response rate (55 and 64 percent respectively) and were carried out in 2015 for the fourth and third time respectively.

At *Linköping University*, the HEI's strategy group for "equal conditions" and the "Forum for gender studies and equality" co-funded and arranged various events and activities during 2015 with the aim of highlighting and challenging heteronormativity

At *Luleå University of Technology*, the programme advisers for all programme students monitor students after their first term on the programme. The aim of this monitoring of study results is to find out how the students who achieved few credits are doing in the early stages of their time at university and to identify them early in their education. This could for example concern well-being, requirements, re-examinations and study techniques and keeping them updated about the help that is available to them. At *Lund University*, the whole university is involved in the monitoring of students'

early results. A number of faculties systematically use what is known as an “Early Warning System”. Within other faculties, the study advisers for the various courses are involved in the monitoring of the students’ results. At *Lund University*, the Pedagogical Support unit has the capacity to carry out pedagogical reading and writing tests in order to identify cases of dyslexia. The HEI offers this service as a means of preventing indirect discrimination.

Within the framework of the “Focus on the student” (Studenten i centrum) project, *Malmö University* has developed a system support method known as an “Early Warning System”. The aim of this support is to monitor course results in order to seek out students who do not take their credits and offer them support at as early a stage as possible. The method identifies students who during their first term of study do not have any approved results from examinations after five weeks, ten weeks and a full term. Monitoring can be carried out at faculty or course level (degree programme and courses). In connection with the ten-week survey, an e-mail is sent out to the students who have not taken any university credits, with information on the support that is available at the university (e.g. study guidance, the FUNK database, student health, etc.). The support that is available is both varied and comprehensive, as well as both group-oriented and individual. A pilot study was initiated in autumn 2015 to test the “Early Warning System”.

*Malmö University* states that the support initiatives that are offered to students at the university must be integrated into the teaching insofar as is possible in order to reduce the need for individual support initiatives. Continuous monitoring and changes to the form and content of the teaching are carried out, with the aim of adapting the teaching to the circumstances and needs of the students. The teaching must reflect both the unique nature of the courses and the various objectives, motivations and circumstances of the students. According to the university, this has resulted in the development of teaching forms which are suitable for all students.

*Malmö University* states that the university is working on the dialogue as a fundamental tool at every level within the organisation. According to the university, this dialogue is a quality-driving working method and pivotal to the exchange of experience, monitoring, feedback and planning. In the ongoing quality assurance work, dialogues are carried out systematically at department, faculty and vice-chancellor level. Before dialogues take place, various background information relating to performance levels, student completion, response rates to course evaluations, disciplinary matters, etc. are analysed and discussed. These describe factors which are of relevance to both the development and quality assurance of courses, and form an important basis for analysis in the ongoing quality assurance work that is carried out by departments and faculties. Action plans are drawn up for development areas of importance, with monitoring taking place in connection with the next dialogue.

*Mälardalen University* has a resource centre which acts as a hub for the support that is available to university lecturers relating to university pedagogical development and student support concerning study techniques and academic writing, CeSAM. The activity carried out within “CeSAM Student”

is aimed at all students and includes a two-year project with “supplemental instruction” (SI). In the long term, all students at the HEI will be offered support concerning study techniques and academic writing throughout their education, with the aim of achieving good study results in order to prepare students for their professional careers, improve their chances of passing an examination and ensuring a high level of quality in their degree projects. This was initially tested on eight courses within the university’s four disciplinary domains.

*Stockholm University* states that many departments monitor their students’ results and contact students who do not keep up with the normal rate of study. These students are offered alternative study paths and get help with regard to motivation and study techniques.

The *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences* state that there are issues within the cross-university course evaluations concerning administration, information and discussion climate, among other things, and that the study/social survey raises such issues. The programme study directors are responsible for monitoring the course evaluations via course administration departments and report back to the programme boards. This feedback is given regularly.

At *Umeå University*, a norm-critical perspective has been adopted in two courses in university pedagogics and learning support, a basic course and a continuation course, for administrators and representatives for equal conditions. The HEI states that power- and gender-aware pedagogics are applied to varying degrees in all courses, which was clarified and deepened during 2016.

*Umeå University* has a three-term internal course which was held in 2014-2015 concerning the teaching of power- and gender-awareness which was taken by two thirds of the staff. The course included a theoretical basis and pedagogical application, partly through a norm-critical perspective and based on the discrimination grounds.

*Uppsala University* states that study results are monitored by the departments in order to identify needs for support, as laid down in the *Guidelines for study and career guidance at Uppsala University*: “study and career mentors at local level are primarily responsible for programme- and subject-specific monitoring of students’ study results”.

At *Uppsala University*, norm-critical and inclusive teaching is an ordinary element of the university’s pedagogical foundation courses and supervisor courses for university lecturers. Every year, the Unit for Quality Enhancement and Academic Teaching and Learning (KUUP) offers and conducts many consultations in the university’s departments where these issues are the primary focus. An example is the university pedagogical foundation course, where course participants read research-based texts from the area and participate in a morning seminar which is completely devoted to these issues. The courses entitled “student supervision” and “doctoral student supervision” also include a morning devoted specifically to norm-critical and inclusive supervision.

According to *Uppsala University*, evaluation exercises where these issues are updated and problematised ensure that all participants are presented

with the pedagogical opportunities and problematic situations that are associated with the ambition to consciously teach with a norm-critical perspective. KUUP also offers a continuation research circle known as “Inclusive teaching”, where key texts with a norm-critical perspective are considered at seminars. Many of the course coordinators in the unit are specialists in the field, and the unit has published many periodicals and brochures which are used in the HEI’s own pedagogical courses and by other HEIs, e.g. *Könsmedveten forskarhandledning* (Schnaas 2011) and *Mångfaldsmedveten pedagogik för universitetslärare* (Wickström 2011). These texts have a consistent focus on diversity and gender in the broadest possible sense and combine this with a norm-critical and intersectional perspective.

*Uppsala University* has started to carry out “welcome calls”, where the HEI’s students call new students in order to welcome them to the university and answer any questions they may have.

*Uppsala University* has started to enable students to meet female lecturers on courses where women are in the minority amongst both students and lecturers at an early stage in the course.

In spring 2014, *Uppsala University* developed a special course concerning diversity- and gender-aware pedagogics. In addition to the regular course activity, a number of consultations are arranged every term at the request of individual departments and faculties. Two development projects carried out by the Unit for Quality Enhancement and Academic Teaching and Learning have specifically considered this topic and led to the following reports: Johan Wickström (2011), *Mångfaldsmedveten pedagogik för universitetslärare* and Ulrike Schnaas (2011), *Könsmedveten forskarhandledning – teoretiska perspektiv och praktiska erfarenheter*.

Örebro University states that all departments monitor study results, both after the first examination and after a year’s study. This monitoring results in students with special needs being offered specific support. In the case of some courses, e.g. the Doctor of Medicine programme, students can be identified through what is known as a “handover conference” once a term.

At central administrative level, Örebro University has carried out activity development with a focus on equality and gender equality throughout the university’s organisation in order to increase inclusion amongst both staff and students. This activity development at the HEI encompasses information dissemination, activities, courses, lectures, seminars and collaboration with the student union and student sections.

At Örebro University, work has begun on the establishment of an internal university network for women within research with the aim of offering mentoring to research students.

## **Good examples of the HEIs' support measures to aid the transition of students to the labour market**

*Chalmers University of Technology* has adopted a long-term approach to the issue of labour market affiliation by promoting working life collaborations as an integral part of courses and by developing the competence of lecturers. Through a better understanding of the labour market and by presenting good examples, lecturers become inspired and can see the benefits of including external parties as an integral part of their courses. They incorporate the labour market into the courses through the external lecturers.

*Göteborg University* has created work experience places with a focus on the humanities and social sciences in order to give students the opportunity to gain work experience and make contact with the labour market, and give work experience to students who have no such experience on their course or who are taking freestanding courses. They offer independent work experience-oriented courses developed in collaboration with alumni and professionally active people. One of these courses is "Political scientists in working life", where the students acquire knowledge and skills which are sought after in the labour market. The course consists of three parts: working in the public sector, writing and communication in working life, and introduction to project management.

*Göteborg University* has specific entrepreneurship courses which have been included in certain courses. This applies for example to the course "Business planning/entrepreneurship with employment law" within the administrative dietitian programme. Other courses have entrepreneurship as a prominent part of the programme's profile, such as the recently started Bachelor's degree programme "Media, aesthetics and cultural entrepreneurship". The aim of this programme is to combine theoretical courses within media and aesthetics with cultural entrepreneurship, giving students an education within the humanities and an understanding of how to carry out projects within various cultural areas.

*Göteborg University* is working on network-building and conferences, with a focus on interaction to promote widening access and inclusion. For example, they organised a conference with the theme of "help with homework" in November 2014 in the district of Hammarkullen, with participants from the local municipality, schools, non-profit associations and local organisations.

At *Göteborg University*, all the School of Business, Economics and Law's foundation programme seminars concerning careers and self-leadership have been integrated into the course.

*Stockholm School of Economics* also has a close partnership with commerce and industry and is heavily involved in Career Management activities which are planned and carried out in collaboration with the Student Union, alumni and the school's partner programme with 110 participating businesses. The students get help to decide on the career path they want to follow, improve their job application skills and expand their contact network with commerce

and industry. A Bachelor's degree programme is being carried out entirely in collaboration with commerce and industry ("Retail Management") and has also resulted in a new model for business collaboration called "Retail Clubs". It acts as a three-year trainee period for the students and is being expanded in 2016 to include all Bachelor's degree students within the framework of "Corporate Clubs".

*Stockholm School of Economics* has an enterprise accelerator, SSE Business Lab, which largely acts as a pedagogical model for students with a particular interest in entrepreneurship. Enterprises seeking to develop their business that have successfully applied to become a laboratory partner are allocated a workplace in the laboratory for eight months free of charge. During this period, they are able to interact with the other nine to eleven enterprises which are there at the same time and with students who are interested in setting up their own business. The laboratory is wholly funded by the HEI.

The *University of Borås'* mentor programme is a good example of a mentor programme which is aimed at a regular part of the programme activity within areas which have not previously been under the spotlight as regards mentor programmes, i.e. the lecturer programmes and the librarian programme. Students come into contact with and have regular meetings with people within the school sector, the library and information service sector, enter into a dialogue and are invited to visit workplaces. They are planning a similar mentor programme at Master's level.

The *University of Borås* has a careers service which offers guidance concerning everything from help with applications, interview training, law and contracts, finding suitable new paths to employment, career planning for students at every level from foundation to doctoral student level (in both Swedish and English). They also offer open lectures concerning CVs and applications, laws and contracts, interview techniques, how students can find jobs and "mingle schools", which are offered to both Swedish and international students. Programme administrators are offered the chance to integrate career planning in their course programmes, as has been done within the engineering, library, economics and social and behavioural science programmes. This is sometimes done on isolated occasions and sometimes with progression starting in year 1 with elements throughout the study period.

The *University of Gävle's* technical courses have a strong focus on work-integrated teaching. For example, they offer their students "Cooperative Education" (CO-OP), a form of education where studies are interwoven with periods of work. This means that three-year courses take four years to complete, as the students have almost a full year's work experience. The students can apply for positions in a company as early as the end of the first year and are paid during their periods of work. The HEI has found that the experience that students gain through the practical periods helps them with their theoretical learning, while the experience gained during the practical periods are appreciated by both the students themselves and the lecturers at the university.

*University College West's* overarching profile is "Work-integrated learning" (AIL), which also covers orientations such as health and care. The HEI has been tasked by the Government with developing the AIL area and work-

ing systematically from a cross-university perspective to develop student preparation for employment and drive knowledge development and research within AIL. Since 2011, they have had the right to award qualifications at researcher level within the area and to carry out researcher education within pedagogics and informatics with a focus on AIL. In the presentation of each of the university college's education programmes, a description is given of how the AIL dimension has been incorporated into each programme, through VFU, CO-OP, mentor systems, field studies, projects or other forms. Within the framework of "Topic Career", activities are offered to support students as they prepare for employment, as a complement to the AIL elements in the individual course. *University College West* has set up "Drivhuset" (The Greenhouse), which all students can benefit from and which is aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment amongst students. The university college is participating with other players (including Region Västra Götaland and Fyrbodals kommunalförbund) in the funding of Drivhuset's activities.

*Jönköping University* replied that entrepreneurship permeates many courses and there are courses where students can start businesses. The university is heavily involved in "Science Park Jönköping", which promotes the start-up, development and growth of businesses. The support that is given is offered to all students in English in order to include both international students and new students.

Since 2007, *Karolinska Institutet (KI)* has offered a careers service for doctoral students and researchers, exclusively in English. In 2014, KI decided to also provide careers support to foundation course and Master's degree level students. To ensure that the students feel that the careers service really is intended for them, more career information and marketing of the HEI's services will be provided in English. During spring 2015, an inventory was prepared of the foundation courses under the international Master's programmes and in focus groups with students in order to identify the needs for a career service. The basis will result in a report with proposals for key career activities and good examples to provide inspiration.

*Luleå University of Technology* also works closely with commerce and industry. Their "Career Centre" is run in collaboration with both students and commerce and industry. The centre acts as an arena for many players and provides support to students in their transition to employment and self-employment. They regularly carry out alumni surveys in order to monitor the establishment of alumni in the labour market. The *Royal College of Music in Stockholm* has for many years been involved in activities within entrepreneurship and offered free careers advice. Once music students have passed their examinations, they have no clients or employers open to them, and virtually all graduates pursue a professional career as a freelance musician. This imposes exacting demands on their education, as a very high level of artistic and technical competence, a strong ability to reflect on one's own learning and that of other people, along with a good ability to organise one's professional career in relation to a freelance market, are essential. The HEI's work relating to the entrepreneurial aspects of the students' everyday lives at the college consists of credit-entitling courses within the area, along with

additional support in the form of the provision of career advice, free lectures and active involvement in various incubator schemes.

Within the area of global political studies, *Malmö University* has a different approach to offering work experience opportunities to students who do not have such opportunities open to them on their courses. They organise a work experience term, which gives students taking social science subjects as independent courses the opportunity to gain work experience within the framework of their course. Master's students at the university can also opt to gain research experience by working with a researcher for a term.

*Malmö University* offers students career workshops with a focus on networking and self-presentation, CV drop-ins with professional recruiters and HR personnel from the region. The activities are offered in both English and Swedish. Job vacancies and degree projects are advertised to students via the "Future Finder" job portal. The aspirant course, a supplementary course for people who have completed a foreign education, starts with a course with a career focus as a basis for the individual study plan.

*Mid Sweden University* offers all its students, regardless of the orientation of their students, the opportunity to apply to join the mentor programme which they have run since 2011, with one mentor per student. The programme initially covered around 40 students/mentor pairs. In 2015, this number is now in excess of a hundred pairs per year. The mentors find new employees, while the students benefit from role models in working life and access to their mentor's network, which in turn leads to opportunities for both jobs and board assignments.

*Mid Sweden University* offers all its students the chance to take part in activities organised by the "Breakfast Club", where the university's innovation office invites entrepreneurs and innovators to give inspirational talks to students and organises lectures concerning working life affiliation, entrepreneurship and career competence. *Mid Sweden University* also includes aspects of entrepreneurship and innovation which can be integrated in existing courses.

*Mid Sweden University* has participated in many projects in collaboration with the region's county administrative boards and regional associations, municipal authorities, the Swedish national employment service and local industry stakeholders. The aim has been to encourage more adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds to go on to higher studies. The university notes that, within the framework of these projects, networks have been built up and contacts have been created between players and stakeholders. Activities have been carried out for and with adolescents and young adults, and paths into the university have been opened up.

*Mälardalen University College* highlights the activities of "The Idea Lab" (Idélab), which is aimed at disseminating entrepreneurial skills amongst both students and staff and researchers at *Mälardalen University College*. The aim is for the students to feel that there are good opportunities to nurture their own initiative and to make something out of the ideas and the creativity that they themselves possess. "Idélab" helps students by offering knowledge, networks, creativity and the qualified management and develop-



ment of concepts from idea to finished business concept. In accordance with a decision issued by the vice-chancellor, all students must visit “Idélab” at least once during their education. MDH Alumni enables contacts between the HEI and former students to be maintained, so helping the students in their transition to working life.

*Stockholm University* offers a course entitled “Biologists in society”. This course runs throughout all three years of the Bachelor’s degree courses in biology, marine biology and molecular biology and, now that it has been fully developed, it is aimed at around 200 students. The aim is to raise awareness of the competences that the course gives, how best to prepare for life after studies and where the jobs of the future can be found. Two afternoons a month are devoted to this. The students get the chance to meet alumni, employers, researchers, recruiters and unions. Within the natural sciences field, a survey entitled “After studies - natural scientists in employment” is carried out every four years. In this survey, former students answer questions concerning their education and their path to the labour market. The answers give current and potential students a picture of the labour market and possible future employers. The surveys have also resulted in changes being made to courses.

The *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences’* equine science programme is carried out in very close partnership with the industry, and the fact that the industry is also involved in, and co-funds, the course gives students a very close link with their future employment. The activities are designed so that they can be used by all students and are given in both Swedish and English. The career seminars are broadcast live to all campus locations and are available via a link on the university’s careers website. They cover both traditional career issues such as entrepreneurship and how work is “created”.

*Umeå University* offers a couple of courses which have been entirely developed in partnership with industry, e.g. in electrical power technology and process operation. In these courses, the industry takes considerable responsibility for work experience, project work, etc.

*Umeå University’s* engineering courses are fully compatible with the CDIO framework, which means that the entire course is permeated by learning to apply theory to engineering practice with the aim of preparing students for the transition to the labour market. On the technology and engineering courses, students largely carry out their degree projects at companies, giving them good contacts in industry. In the case of some of the Bachelor of Science in Engineering courses, they have CO-OP activities, which means that the students are assigned a host company which they then carry out their project work and a summer job at, while in the case of some civil engineering courses, it is compulsory to carry out project work at a company.

## Good examples of websites which promote widening access and widening participation

*Beckmans College of Design* gives recommendations on its website concerning the preparatory courses which should ideally be taken before prospective students apply for their education programme. In addition to the college's own preparatory courses, the course list includes the eight-year preparatory course within the college's three subjects in the form of evening classes two days a week, preparatory artistic courses at folk high schools and independent art schools.

*Skövde University College* refers to the blog of bloggers Isabella and Mathilda, which can be found at spelutbildningar.se. They introduce themselves as follows: "We are in our second year in Computer Game Development Design at Skövde University College. We are also active in the Donna association, which works to promote inclusive game development and equality." *Karolinska Institutet's* website is characterised by image and language use which indicates that excellence does not have a gender, a skin colour, a religious affinity or a certain functionality. A specific example of this is that the students depicted on the website reflect heterogeneity as regards gender, skin colour and religion. Another example is that the university is clear in its information that they offer additional resources for students with disabilities who wish to study or gain work experience abroad.

*Linköping University* has a portal for "equal opportunities", with a policy and plans, a list of legislation, information, contact information for people who work on issues relating to equal conditions at the university, a glossary, blog, newsletter and much more. *Linnaeus University* has a comprehensive page on "equal opportunities", with definitions, government documents, links and information aimed at students and staff. In 2014 and 2015, the university's committee for "equal opportunities" arranged "Café Equal opportunities" (Café Lika villkor). These cafés are open to both students and staff at Linnaeus University.

*Luleå University of Technology* writes the following on its website concerning premises and equipment: "Many lecture halls will be equipped with document cameras, audio systems and projectors. Please do not hesitate to ask the lecturers to use them! There are demonstration halls which also have a Smartboard and conference facilities (recording, images which can be transferred to your computer). If the lecture is held in a hall with Adobe Connect, ask the lecturer to record it. The library has digital tape recorders for recording sound. Please ask the lecturer for permission first."

*Malmö University* has a tab called "Useful information about university studies" (Bra att veta om högskolestudier), which includes an introductory film entitled "How the university works" (Så funkar högskolan), and information on the structure of the higher education (courses, teaching forms, examinations, etc.).

*Mälardalen University College* offers uncertain applicants and students the chance to contact a study and career adviser at the college. They also have a number of thought-provoking questions and areas, which the person is asked

to prepare for before their discussion with the study and career adviser on the website. These questions are of the type, “Who am I?”, “Where do I want to go?”, “How do I get there?”, along with a number of points about what to expect from the study adviser during the discussion. The university college has an inclusive appeal in the description of the HEI: “Here at Mälardalen University College, we have around 550 active students with various types of disability. Our premises have been adapted to meet the needs of these students. Accessibility is a priority at the college”.

*Uppsala University’s* website presents clear information about “Taking examinations”, which explains the difference between reading courses and programmes and what to consider when choosing a path right from the start of your study period. The text about examinations includes concise information about how to apply for examinations. They also state that “Regardless of what you decide, you should take your examinations”. Students and doctoral students are welcome to contact “UU KARRIÄR” for support and guidance before they make the transition to employment.

# Appendix 6: Survey questions

## Section 1: General information about the higher education institution (HEI)'s work on widening access and widening participation

### **1. a) Has the HEI formulated its own definition of widening access/ and or participation? More than one answer may be selected**

- ☐ Yes, a common definition has been formulated for the entire HEI  
*Please state the definition, when it was established and at which level in the organisation (e.g. senior university officers, administration, Board of Governors):*
- ☐ Yes, there are several different definitions as some of the HEI's faculties/departments have formulated their own definitions  
*Please give an/some example(s) of the definitions formulated at faculty or departmental level. Please state when they were established:*
- ☐ No, no definition has been formulated, but one is being developed. Please state when it is expected to be finalised:
- ☐ No, no definition has been formulated  
*The HEI has no definition of its own. But uses the same as... (Please state the definition under Comments)*

### **1. b) Comments:**

### **2. a) Has a common target been formulated for reducing any recruitment imbalance identified at the HEI?**

- ☐ Yes  
*Please state the target and when the target was established:*
- ☐ Yes, a common target has been formulated and some of the HEIs faculties and institutions have formulated targets of their own. Please give an example/some examples of common targets and targets at faculty or institutional level. Please state when it/ they were set.
- ☐ No, no common target has been formulated but some of the HEI's faculties/departments have formulated their own target  
*Please give an/some example(s) of the targets at faculty or departmental level. Please state when the target/targets were established:*
- ☐ No

**2. b) Comments:**

**3. a) Is there an overarching HEI strategy for work on widening access and widening participation?**

☐ Yes

*Please state the type and name of the document and outline the main content of the document. Please state when the strategy was established:*

☐ No, there is no established strategy, but one is being developed

*Please give a brief account of what it will involve and when it is expected to be in place:*

☐ No

**3. b) Comments:**

**4. How has the HEI organised its work on widening access and widening participation?**

**5. a) Has the HEI worked towards incorporating and implementing the commitment to widening access and/or participation in the organisation as a whole over the past two years?**

☐ Yes

*Please give a brief account of activities undertaken and action taken in order to incorporate and implement the commitment to widening access and/or participation in the organisation:*

☐ Yes, but only in certain faculties/departments

*Please give an/some example(s) of the activities that have been undertaken at faculty or departmental level. Please state the reason why it was decided only to work with certain faculties/departments:*

☐ No

**5. b) Comments:**

**6. a) Has the HEI surveyed its student body over the past two years with reference to the incidence of and conditions for over and under-represented groups?**

☐ Yes

*Please state the results of the surveys. Which groups are over or under-represented? Are there differences between different courses and study programs within the HEI? What knowledge has been gained about the conditions for over and under-represented groups?*

☐ No, but the HEI is planning to conduct a survey

*Please describe briefly how you are planning to conduct the survey and when it is expected to be completed:*

☐ No

**6. b) Comments:**

## Section 2: The HEI's work on widening access at first and second cycles

### **7. a) Has the HEI undertaken particular activities aimed at schoolchildren over the past two years in an effort to rectify any recruitment imbalance that has been identified at the HEI during the last two years?**

- ☐ Yes, activities have been undertaken. Please describe the activities undertaken under Comments, see 7c below..Please describe the activities undertaken. Which groups of students were they aimed at? What was the outcome/what did you want to achieve?
- ☐ Yes, and there are plans for more activities  
*Please describe the activities the HEI is planning to undertake. Which groups of students will they be aimed at? What results are expected to be achieved?*
- ☐ No, but there are plans to undertake particular activities  
*Please describe briefly the activities the HEI is planning to undertake. Which groups of students will they be aimed at? What results are expected to be achieved?*
- ☐ No. Please leave any comments under Comments, se 7c below.

### **7. b) Which of the following particular activities aimed at school children has been carried out? More than one answer may be selected:**

- ☐ Work with student ambassadors/mentors
- ☐ Outreach work, e.g. with students or researchers who visit schools
- ☐ Sampling the life of a student for a day/a few days
- ☐ Supplementary tuition
- ☐ Awareness-raising activities
- ☐ Research courses
- ☐ Study visits to the HEI
- ☐ "Open-house days"
- ☐ Collaborative project between the HEI and a school or schools
- ☐ Other activities, namely:

### **7. c) Comments:**

### **8. a) Has the HEI undertaken special activities aimed at groups other than schoolchildren over the past two years in order to rectify any recruitment imbalance identified at the HEI? More than one answer may be selected**

- ☐ Yes  
*Please describe the activities undertaken. Which groups were they aimed at? What was the outcome/what did you want to achieve?*
- ☐ Yes, and there are plans to undertake more activities  
*Please describe briefly the activities the HEI is planning to undertake. Which groups will they be aimed at? What results are expected to be achieved?*
- ☐ No, but there are plans to undertake special activities  
*Please describe briefly the activities the HEI is planning to undertake. Which groups will they be aimed at? What results are expected to be achieved?*
- ☐ No

**8. b) Comments:**

**9. a) Has the HEI followed up the activities undertaken over the past two years in order to rectify any recruitment imbalance identified at the HEI?**

☐ Yes

*Please describe briefly the result of the follow-up. Have the results been used for further analyses and improvement measures? Please describe how:*

☐ No

**9. b) Comments:**

**10. a) Has the HEI arranged courses and study programmes to broaden the prospective students' skills over the past two years, for example introductory programmes or a foundation year?**

☐ Yes

*Please indicate and briefly describe the courses and programmes arranged. You are welcome to make comments:*

☐ No

**10. b) Comments:**

## **Section 3: The HEI's application of admission regulations**

**11. a) Does the HEI believe that assessing prior learning contributes to widening access?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**11. b) Does the HEI assess prior learning even if an application does not have formal documents to support it?**

**11. c) Comments:**

**12. a) Has the HEI used the "alternative selection" process over the past two years in order to widen access, either for up to a maximum of one third of the places on a course/ courses (in accordance with Chap. 7 Section 13, clause 3 Higher Education Ordinance) or with the consent of UHR (in accordance with Chap. 7 Section 15 of the Higher Education Ordinance)?**

☐ Yes

*Please describe how the HEI has used alternative selection to widen access:*

☐ No, but the HEI is planning to use alternative selection to broaden recruitment

*Please describe how the HEI plans to use alternative selection to widen access. State when and the course/courses for which the use of alternative selection is planned:*

☐ No

**12. b) Comments:**

**13. In the opinion of the HEI, what barriers, if any, exist in the present admission regulations when it comes to working with widening access?** *Please describe any barriers:*

**14. If the HEI had greater freedom than the present admission regulations permit, how would the procedure for admission to the HEI be structured in order to rectify any recruitment imbalance identified at the HEI?** *Please describe:*

## **Section 4: the HEI's work on widening access in third-cycle education**

**15. a) Is there an established overall HEI strategy for widening access in third-cycle education?**

☐ Yes

*Please state the type and name of the document and outline the main content of the document. Please state when the strategy was established:*

☐ No, there is no established strategy, but one is being developed

*Please describe what it will involve and when it is expected to be finalised:*

☐ No

**15. b) Comments:**

**16. a) Has the HEI surveyed its own doctoral students over the past two years with reference to the incidence of and conditions for over and under-represented groups?**

☐ Yes

*Please describe the result of the surveys. Which groups are over or under represented? Are there differences between different courses and study programs within the HEI? What knowledge has been gained about the conditions for over or under-represented groups?*

☐ No, but the HEI is planning to conduct a survey

*Please describe how the HEI is planning to conduct the survey and when it is expected to be completed:*

☐ No

**16. b) Comments:**



## Section 5: The HEI's work on widening participation

**17. a) Has the HEI taken any action in order to improve participation and inclusion for students at the HEI over the past two years?**

☐ Yes

*Please describe:*

☐ No

**17. b) Comments:**

**18. a) Within the past two years the HEI has worked from a norm-critical perspective within the context of higher education courses to improve the teachers' knowledge of**

sex/gender ☐ Yes

sexual identity ☐ Yes

ethnic origin ☐ Yes

religion or other belief ☐ Yes

disability ☐ Yes

sexuality ☐ Yes

age ☐ Yes

social background? ☐ Yes

**18. b) Comments:**

**19. a) Are there procedures at the HEI to identify problems at an early stage when it comes to students in need of support?**

☐ Yes, there are standard HEI procedures

*Please briefly describe these procedures:*

☐ Yes, there are procedures but only in certain faculties/institutions

*Please give an/some example(s) of procedures in place at faculty or institutional level:*

☐ Yes, there are both common procedures for the whole HEI and procedures at certain faculties and institutions. Please provide an example/some examples of common procedures and procedures at the faculty and institutional level.

☐ No

**19. b) Comments:**

**20. a) Are there procedures in place at the HEI to identify problems when it comes to faculties/departments with development requirements for giving support to students?**

☐ Yes, there are standard HEI procedures

*Please briefly describe these procedures:*

☐ Yes, there are procedures, but only in certain faculties/departments

*Please give an/some example(s) of procedures in place at faculty or institutional level:*

☐ Yes, there are both common procedures for the whole HEI and procedures at certain faculties and institutions. Please provide an example/some examples of common procedures and procedures at the faculty and institutional level.

☐ No

**20. b) Comments:**

**21. a) What measures for students in need of support are available at the HEI?** *More than one answer may be selected*

- ☐ Language support in Swedish
- ☐ Language support in English
- ☐ Support in academic writing
- ☐ Mentoring program
- ☐ Other support measures, namely:

**21. b) Comments:** *Please describe the support measures available. State also who is eligible for the respective support measures:*

**22. What support measures are available at the HEI to improve conditions for students with disabilities that are obstacles to the study situation?** *Please state the support services available or post a link to compiled information if there is one:*

**23. What support is available for students with special needs and/ or students with disabilities that are obstacles to the study situation to participate in international exchange programmes?** *More than one answer may be selected*

- ☐ There is a special contact person/there are special contact persons  
*The HEI advises that there are opportunities for obtaining financial and practical support*
- ☐ No support is provided
- ☐ Other, namely:

## **Section 6: The HEI's support measures for employability**

**24. a) Has the HEI undertaken special activities in order to support students' transition to the labour market over the past two years?**

- ☐ Yes, activities have been undertaken.  
*Please briefly describe the activities undertaken. Please state which groups of students these activities were aimed at. What was the outcome/what did you want to achieve?*
- ☐ Yes, and there are plans to undertake more activities.  
*Please describe the other activities that the HEI is planning to undertake. Which groups of students will they be aimed at? What results are expected to be achieved?*
- ☐ No, but there are plans to undertake special activities.  
*Please describe the other activities the HEI is planning to undertake. Which groups of students will they be aimed at? What results are expected to be achieved?*
- ☐ No

**24. b) The following activities have been undertaken.** *More than one answer may be selected*

- ☐ Mentoring programmes
- ☐ Internships
- ☐ Inspiration days
- ☐ Meetings with alumni
- ☐ Meetings with employers
- ☐ Meetings with researchers
- ☐ Other activities

**24. c) Comments:**

**25. a) Has the HEI organised any supplementary activities/bridging programmes for refugees/immigrants with incomplete higher education over the past two years?**

- ☐ Yes

*Please state the activities/programmes that have been arranged:*

- ☐ No

*Please describe what would be required for the HEI to commence such activities/ study programmes:*

**25. b) Comments:**

**26. a) Has the HEI organised any bridging programmes for immigrant graduates over the past two years to ensure their skills are better adapted to the Swedish labour market? According to the regulation on HE that complements completed foreign HE (SFS 2008:1101).**

- ☐ Yes

*Please indicate the study programmes that have been organised:*

- ☐ No

*Please describe what would be required for the HEI to start such study programmes:*

**26. b) Comments:**

## Section 7: Concluding questions

**27. What are the difficulties or challenges for the HEI in recruiting and educating students from a wide variety of backgrounds?** Please describe:

**28. What does the HEI think is the most important thing to develop during recent years when it comes to the HEI's work on widening access and participation? What are the most important challenges in the work?** Please describe:

**29. What support would the HEI like from the UHR in its work on widening access and participation (more than one answer may be selected)?**

- ☐ Conferences
- ☐ Workshops
- ☐ Educational initiatives
- ☐ Development of the website studera.nu
- ☐ Please state any information and/or tools that studera.nu may be lacking:
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Please state:
- ☐ No support required

**30. a) Is there any activity, any project or any operation the HEI has carried out during the last two years as part of the mission to widen access and/or participation that you would like to highlight as a good example?**

- ☐ Yes. Please state the activities/projects/operations that you would like to highlight as good examples and describe them, if they have not previously been described in the survey.
- ☐ No

**30. b) Comments:**

**31. Other comments**





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