

Procedure for Governing Documents

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Responsible administrative unit	Office of the President
Responsible administrator	Tove Holmqvist and Anna-Karin Orsmark

Description:

The purpose of the *Procedure for Governing Documents* is to make it as easy as possible for all members of staff to follow the rules that govern the University's operations by creating a clearer hierarchical structure with uniform titles of governing documents. This will create the conditions for University-wide implementation and follow-up reviews of the governing documents.

Introduction

Higher education institutions are governed by laws, regulations, and ordinances approved by the parliament and the government. In addition, Stockholm University is governed by internal documents approved in accordance with the applicable decision-making and delegation policies. This means that the governing documents are approved by a number of bodies, from the University Board and down, both in the academic line of management and within the administration. Each governing document is binding for the target audience, which means that the target audience must be subordinate to the approving authority. The decision to repeal a governing document is made by the same body that approved the document. The overarching governing documents, which are approved by the University Board, the President, or the Director of Administration, are currently available under Rules & Regulations on the University's website. In connection with the adoption of this procedure, a new collection of regulations on the web will be developed. This collection will initially include the University-wide governing documents, and it will eventually also include the governing documents of the scientific area boards and the faculty boards. Currently, governing documents relating to the scientific area or faculty level can be found on the website of the respective scientific area or faculty. Department-specific governing documents can be found on the departments' websites.

The purpose of the *Procedure for Governing Documents* is to make it as easy as possible for all members of staff to follow the rules that govern the University's operations by creating a clearer hierarchical structure with uniform titles of governing documents. This will create the conditions for University-wide implementation and follow-up reviews of the governing documents. The procedure applies when approving new governing documents or revising existing ones.

Types of governing documents

Stockholm University divides its governing documents into five different types: strategies, policy documents, plans, regulations, and procedures. All types of documents, except policy documents, can be found at all levels within the University. Below follows a description of each type, as well as who approves documents that apply to the whole University.

- The University's **strategies** define the overall intentions of the University's operations and cover a period of four years. Strategies are activating in nature, i.e., they are geared towards action. The University's strategies should be put into practice at the scientific area, faculty, and department levels.
Approving authority at the central level: University Board.
- **Policy documents** define general intentions and the University's position in the area covered by the policy. They are valid until further notice. Policy documents are normative in nature, i.e., they regulate, in a broad sense, the room for manoeuvre

within the covered area and often need to be supplemented by other types of governing documents.

Approving authority: President.

- **Plans** define as concrete objectives or measures as possible for the relevant area and cover a limited period of time. There are different types of plans, including **action plans**. Plans are activating in nature, i.e., they specify actions to be performed. In addition, the plans specify time frames and responsibilities.
Approving authorities at the central level: University Board, President, and Director of Administration.
- **Regulations** constitute the most concrete type of governing document and are valid until further notice. Regulations are normative in nature, i.e., they regulate what decisions and actions are permitted or prohibited within the covered area. Regulation documents are dominated by mandatory “must” requirements, although advisable “should” provisions may occur.
Approving authorities at the central level: University Board, President, and Director of Administration.
- **Procedure** documents differ slightly from the other four types. They regulate, in a clear and specific fashion, the forms of implementing other governing documents or other types of governance and are typically valid until further notice.
Approving authorities at the central level: President and Director of Administration.

The following applies once an approving authority, based on an impact analysis, has determined that a particular area of operations is suitable to be governed by a document of one of the types described above.

Preparation and approval

General considerations

- A document that is intended to govern a certain operation must be written as clearly as possible. It must be possible for the target audience to understand what decisions and actions are permitted or prohibited within the area governed by, for example, a regulation document. In addition, it must be possible for the target audience to follow the governing document.
- In order for a governing document to be effective, the target audience must be clearly specified, and it must reach its intended audience in an effective manner. There should already be a plan and a structure for the implementation of the governing document at the preparatory stage.

- Already at the preparatory stage, it must be considered whether there is a need for complementary information to the governing document itself and, if so, in what form this may be provided, e.g., a more concrete governing document (procedure) or a guiding support document (guidelines, routine description, quick reference guide, tips and advice).
- Different types of governing documents should preferably not be mixed in a single document. Similarly, a governing document should preferably not be both normative (contain rules) and activating (contain actions). If, in spite of this, it is deemed better to gather multiple types of governing documents in a single document, this must be reflected in the title (e.g., “Regulations and procedure for...”)

Formalities

- All governing documents must be written in a specific template that contains a common first page (incl. information about the approving authority, etc.) and some general instructions regarding the content. The purpose of the common template is to gather essential information about procedures and decisions relating to the document.
- The title of the governing document must indicate which of the five types of governing document it is. Exceptions from this are made for governing documents that are referred to by name in, for example, the *Higher Education Act* and the *Higher Education Ordinance* (e.g., admission regulations).
- Overarching governing documents (which apply to the whole University) do not need a suffix at the end of the title (e.g., “...at Stockholm University”), as it should be clear from the approving authority and the content itself that the governing document applies to the whole University. Governing documents at other levels require a suffix to clarify whom the document applies to (e.g., Research strategies at the Department of X).
- If there is a previous governing document that is repealed when the new document is approved, this must be indicated in the approval decision.
- When laws and ordinances are reflected in an internal governing document, it is necessary to clarify what is regulated externally and what is regulated internally, e.g., by using sub-headings (“National regulations” and “Local regulations”).
- The body responsible for conducting a follow-up review must be specified in the approval decision. A plan for how an approved governing document will be followed up should be included in the approval decision.

- As a general rule, governing documents should be sent out for consultation to the intended audience before they are approved. Governing documents that will impact education or the students' situation must always be sent out for consultation to the Stockholm University Student Union (SUS).
- Governing documents that are to be approved by the University Board, the President, or the Director of Administration must always be reviewed by the Office of the President prior to approval. The cover page must indicate that such a review has been conducted.
- Governing documents must be written in Swedish and, unless the approving authority decides otherwise, translated into English once they have been approved. The responsibility for translation lies with the preparatory body.
- Approved governing documents must be published in the designated place on the University's website without delay. In connection with this, any governing documents that were repealed when the new ones were approved must be removed from the web (unpublished). The responsibility for publishing and unpublishing lies with the preparatory body.

Follow-up review and revision

General considerations

- Follow-up reviews are a part of internal governance and provide information to the approving authority on whether the goal of the governance has been achieved, i.e., how it has been implemented. A follow-up review can be more or less extensive, depending, for example, on the type of governing document. It can also be conducted continuously or at the end of the document's period of validity, depending on the type of governing document. The follow-up review may result in a revised governing document.
- A general aim is that there should not be too many different governing documents. Therefore, in the follow-up review, it may be better to compile multiple decisions into a larger collection of regulations. If this is done, the old governing documents must be repealed, and relevant sections of these documents must be incorporated into the new one. This is done in connection with the approval decision; typically, the approved governing document will contain a list of all the decisions that cease to apply when the new document is approved.



Formalities

- The authority that approves the governing document will also approve the follow-up review.
- All governing documents must be checked for relevance on a regular basis. The relevance checks of central governing documents are coordinated by the Office of the President.
- If necessary, the document should be updated in accordance with this procedure by the responsible administrative unit or equivalent.