

Communications policy for Stockholm University

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Responsible administrative department	External Relations and Communications Office
Responsible administrator	Eva Albrektson From 2021-05-04 Helena Bruzelius

Description:

This communications policy establishes the goals for all communication at Stockholm University, how the University communicates, and the responsibilities and roles relating to communication activities.

The policy is aimed at all staff at the University and applies to both internal and external communication.

Furthermore, the policy contains guideline formulations for how Stockholm University as a whole can be described in communication in different contexts (profile texts).

The communication policy has been revised based on “Strategies for Stockholm University 2019–2022”.



Introduction

The Higher Education Act requires universities to cooperate with the surrounding society and to provide information about the University's activities.

“The mandate of higher education institutions shall include third stream activities and the provision of information about their activities, as well as ensuring that benefit is derived from their research findings.”

Higher Education Act (1992:1434, Section 2, second paragraph)

The communications policy outlines Stockholm University's approach to communications work at the University. The communications policy also includes general descriptions of Stockholm University, of varying lengths, as a starting point to guide communication in different contexts (profile texts).

The communications policy is aimed at all staff at the University, with an emphasis on managers at different levels and communications officers.

The communications policy is a common denominator and a departure point for all communications work at the University, both internally and externally. Effective communication helps the University achieve its operational goals. The information and communication aspect must be considered during processing and decision making.

The communications policy is complemented by:

- Guidelines for visual identity (with a manual and instructions for the graphic and digital design of information and communication), ref. no. SU FV-1.1.2-3654-18
- Guidelines for communications work at Stockholm University

The communications policy is revised every four years in conjunction with the presentation of new overall strategies and action plan for the University.

Strategies and core values

“Strategies for Stockholm University 2019–2022” is a comprehensive policy document for the University's operations. The communications policy complements the strategies as a tool in the work with information and communication throughout the organisation. The overall four-year strategies outline how the University views the role of communication.

“Research and education contribute to and consolidate knowledge and critical thinking. Stockholm University's communication is thus an important part of outreach and interaction with the community, and contributes to the University's profile. The communication should draw attention to and disseminate research results in order to highlight new knowledge and how it may be used today or in the future. It is also important to further communicate the crucial importance of the scientific method and how research and education contribute to well-informed decision-making and positive social development. Furthermore, active communication should provide continuous insight into all of the University's operations.”

(Strategies for Stockholm University 2019–2022)



Stockholm University's core values – knowledge, enlightenment and the pursuit of truth – constitute a foundation for the strategies and thus also for the communications work.

“Stockholm University is committed to the fundamental academic values of autonomy and academic freedom. Integrity and equity should characterise the University's operations in both research and education, as well as in the exercise of authority and administration. Knowledge, enlightenment and the pursuit of truth are ideals that have characterised Stockholm University ever since its inception in 1878. It was founded as a modern institution for the capital city in the spirit of the Enlightenment, with the aim of producing new knowledge, fostering critical thinking and serving society.”

(Strategies for Stockholm University 2019–2022)

Goals for communication activities

The overall goal of communications activities is to help the University achieve its operational goals.

Communications activities at Stockholm University shall contribute to increasing the awareness of the University's activities and assist in fostering sustainable and long-term relationships – within the University and with the surrounding society, nationally and internationally.

Internally, communication shall contribute to an open and permissive working climate that encourages new solutions and an active dialogue between the various parts of the organisation. This strengthens the University's ability to conduct high-quality research and education.

External communication shall contribute to increasing and broadening awareness of, and support for, Stockholm University. The principle of public access to official documents is a fundamental principle which must of course also be adhered to in the communications work of the University.

Communication and trust

Communication from Stockholm University shall be reliable regardless of the recipient. This is fundamental for the University as a government agency and a societal actor with the core assignments of research and education.

Stockholm University's internal and external communication shall focus on the recipient's needs and conditions, and be:

- true and correct
- accessible and open
- credible
- cultivated, simple and comprehensible



Legal framework

Several regulations in addition to the Higher Education Act have a bearing on the University's communications work, in particular the Instrument of Government, the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression, which contain provisions concerning all people's right to freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of the press, among other rights. The Freedom of the Press Act also contains a provision on the right to access public documents, and more detailed provisions are provided in the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (2009:400).

The Higher Education Ordinance states that higher education institutions shall ensure that those who intend to commence an education programme have access to the requisite information about that programme.

According to the Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900), a government agency shall ensure that contact with individuals is efficient and simple. There are also provisions on communication and the justification of decisions. However, these provisions do not need to be applied in matters concerning admission to or grading within a course or programme (Chapter 1, Section 4 a, the Higher Education Ordinance).

Other regulations that apply to communications work include the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2016/679), with supplementary provisions at the national level that regulate matters concerning the processing of personal data, and the Discrimination Act (2008:567).

Furthermore, there are provisions on, among other things, the Swedish language and on the general responsibility for providing individuals with access to languages as outlined in the Language Act (2009:600). The Language Act also imposes requirements on cultivated, simple and comprehensible text.

Freedom of disseminating information

All staff at the University are covered by the constitutionally protected provisions on freedom of expression and the right to communicate and publish information in the media (freedom of disseminating information). These freedoms and rights are regulated in the Instrument of Government, the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression. However, there are provisions on confidentiality contained in the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression that restrict the right to disclose and publish certain information.

Furthermore, it is prohibited, for example, for superiors and colleagues to investigate who has communicated information to the media (investigation ban).

The constitutionally protected freedoms and rights are naturally not impacted by this communications policy.



Speaking on behalf of the University

With regard to speaking for the University, on behalf of the University or representing the University in the media, the following applies:

The right to speak on behalf of the University is dictated by the staff member's functional responsibility in the organisation. In matters relating to the research conducted at the university, the matter is to be referred to the researcher or researchers who have expertise in the subject. For other matters, unless otherwise agreed, the following hierarchy applies to communication with the media:

- The President and Vice President are spokespersons on university-wide issues
- The Deputy Vice Presidents are spokespersons for each subject area
- The University Director and the Deputy University Director are spokespersons on general issues relating to the operational support, and the heads of divisions are spokespersons on issues relating to their respective areas of responsibility.
- Deans and Heads of Departments or equivalent are spokespersons on issues relating to the faculty or department
- The Head of Communications acts as spokesperson on issues determined by the University

Responsibility and roles in communication activities

Responsibility for communication is dictated by other divisions of responsibility at the University.

Managers

The President assumes overall responsibility and the respective manager is responsible within their area of operations for ensuring effective external and internal communication in line with the University's governing documents – strategies, policies, plans and rules.

Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff members to communicate professionally and in a solution-oriented way, thus contributing to both a good working climate and good relations between the university and the surrounding society. Staff members also have an obligation to acquire the information needed to understand the operations and carry out their work. In addition, staff members are obliged to promptly respond to questions concerning the operations and to handle questions concerning the disclosure of public documents.

Communications officers

Communications officers at all levels of the organisation provide operational and strategic support to managers and other staff on communications issues. The communications officer's role is to help ensure that communication, both the internal and external, is effective and coordinated, and to ensure that the university's governing documents and overall priorities are followed.



Communications office

The Communications Office is a specialist function within operational support with the task of communicating Stockholm University as a whole and creating the conditions for the communication of the core operations. The section's mission also includes crisis communication according to the University's overall crisis plan. The section is run by the Head of Communications.

Stockholm University – descriptive profile texts

Below are three guiding summary descriptions of Stockholm University. They are based on the University's strategies and are intended as a starting point for various communication needs and channels.

Short profile text

Stockholm University contributes to the development of a sustainable democratic society through knowledge, enlightenment and the pursuit of truth.

Medium length profile text

In a changing and globalised world, Stockholm University contributes to the development of a sustainable democratic society through knowledge, enlightenment and the pursuit of truth, based on critical thinking. With a large number of students, a wide range of education in close interaction with research, and a combination of independent basic research and strong applied research, Stockholm University contributes actively to society – a role that has characterized the University since its inception in 1878. Stockholm University is an international academic environment, which is an integral part of excellence in research and education.

Long profile text

In a changing and globalised world, Stockholm University contributes to the development of a sustainable democratic society through knowledge, enlightenment and the pursuit of truth, based on critical thinking. With a large number of students, a wide range of education in close interaction with research, and a combination of independent basic research and strong applied research, Stockholm University contributes actively to society – a role that has characterized the University since its inception in 1878. Stockholm University is an international academic environment, which is an integral part of excellence in research and education. As a university in the capital city of Sweden, Stockholm University places special emphasis on offering courses and programmes that meet the needs of the region and society. Collaboration helps make Stockholm University's expertise and results accessible and promotes quality in education and life-long learning.