

POLICY

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Vice-Chancellor

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Policy for student influence

Introduction

This document describes the following: the right students have to representation and influence; the student union's responsibility to appoint student representatives; and the university's responsibility to create the conditions for student influence at Dalarna University. Viewing the university's activities as a shared responsibility between employees and students is important for quality enhancement, as both groups are invited to take responsibility for ensuring that operations and activities function satisfactorily.

Students' right to representation and influence

The regulations on which this document is based can primarily be found in the Higher Education Act (1992:1434, HL), the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100, HF) and the Studentkårsförordningen (student union ordinance) (2009:769).

According to HL, students have the right to exert influence over courses and programmes at the university (Chapter 1, Section 4a) and to be represented when decisions or preparations are made that are important to education or students (Chapter 2, Section 7). HL also states that quality assurance procedures are a matter of common concern for staff and students (Chapter 1, Section 4). In addition, there is great intrinsic value in student involvement, and Dalarna University strives for close and trusting collaboration with students and their representative, the student union.

Student influence at Dalarna University comes directly from individual students and also through representation via the student union. Direct influence takes place, for example, through course evaluations and student surveys. Taking into consideration students' experiences of and views on the courses they are taking is important for course development. According to Chapter 1, Section 14 of HF, the university shall give students who are taking or who have completed a course the opportunity to present their experiences of and views on the course through a course evaluation arranged by the university.

If decisions on issues that are important to the course/programme or the students' situation are made by an individual, that person has the responsibility and obligation to inform and consult with student representatives well in advance of the decision. Consultation with the student representatives should be seen as a natural part of the preparatory work. The decision in document form must state whether, how, when and with which student representative the consultation took place.

When the need arises for temporary decision-making or preparatory bodies or working groups, the

student union must be consulted about the form in which student influence and student representation should take place. It is the responsibility of the convenor of the body to inform the student union of the need for student influence.

The right to be represented does not apply to decisions or the preparation of matters involving an individual. Such matters refer to, for example, the results of tests and grades on courses, admission to courses/programmes, awarding of degrees, credit transfer, approved leave from studies, deferment of studies and study support.

The Student Union's responsibility to appoint student representatives

According to Section 7, first paragraph, of the student union ordinance, the right to appoint student representatives rests with the student association that the University Governing Board has given the status of student union.

As regards decision-making bodies whose management of cases is important to, or particularly affects, doctoral education and research, the university and the student unions have agreed on the importance of the students in such cases being fully or partially represented by doctoral students.

With the right to appoint student representatives also comes the right to dismiss them.

It is the responsibility of the student union to notify the relevant bodies as to which student representatives have been appointed; this includes student representatives at the doctoral level.

Good conditions for student influence

Student influence is both an obligation and an important component in the university's quality assurance procedures. Dalarna University promotes student influence in several ways:

- It organises an annual training course for student representatives to better enable students to exercise their right to influence.
- The chairperson of each body is responsible for ensuring that new student representatives receive an introduction to the body's role, activities, working methods, and the scope of the assignment. In order to better enable student representatives to prepare well for a meeting, the student representative should be given the opportunity to review the agenda and content in advance together with the body's chairperson.
- The student representative must be given the opportunity to complete compulsory course components at another time or, in another acceptable way, replace these to allow for attendance at meetings and completion of the assignment. Agreement on how this is to be done is made with the examiner in connection with the missed course component.
- The university enables distance students or students who are in another location to be student representatives by making it possible for them to participate in meetings by distance.
- The university, where practically possible, assists in enabling non-Swedish-speaking students and doctoral students to be student representatives.
- The doctoral student's immediate manager and supervisor must enable that student to be a student representative.

Student representatives are remunerated in accordance with *Principer för ersättning för studentrepresentation i styrelse, nämnder och råd vid Högskolan Dalarna* (Principles for remuneration for student representation on the board, boards and councils at Dalarna University) (C 2022/282).