



OUR FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
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WHY A DOCUMENT DESCRIBING THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW IS NEEDED

The document *The common basic values for government employees* apply to all government employees in Sweden, and therefore to staff at the School of Business, Economics and Law. However, as certain aspects of academia differ from other government agencies, there is a need for clarification in this respect.

The document Vision 2020 of the University of Gothenburg also expresses values. At the same time, the School of Business, Economics and Law has a special role at the University, in particular through our well-developed, comprehensive contacts with industry and surrounding society, and our high level of internationalisation. Consequently, we believe there is good reason to more explicitly reflect on certain concrete aspects, such as how the School and its employees should act with our Swedish and foreign collaboration partners if they somehow behave in a reprehensible way, and for work with undemocratic countries.

Furthermore the academic disciplines of the School are part of the social sciences, meaning that we teach and conduct research on issues that have a normative character with strong ideological links. Here, there is also a need to explicitly state the School's principle stance.

This document is intended to provide internal guidance, as well as be informative and explanatory – both internally and externally – and it applies to both staff and students. Consequently, the document aims to clarify the values and fundamental principles of the activities at the School and what the steering documents are based – and should be based – upon.

Of course this document is not comprehensive in the sense that it describes all the relevant ethical aspects of activities at the School, the staff and students. However, it is still a separate document that does not replace the common basic values for government employees, Vision 2020 or, naturally, the current legislation. The fundamental values of the School of Business, Economics and Law's will apply until the Faculty Board decides to modify them.

Our fundamental values were approved by the Faculty Board on October 20, 2017

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the School is to contribute to the development of a better society. As part of this objective, the School works towards:

- the equal value and treatment of all people
- democracy, freedom of speech, and other fundamental human rights
- meeting the 17 UN sustainability goals

POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL INDEPENDENCE

In addition to the above fundamental values, the School in itself does not have an opinion on what constitutes a good society, the best way to contribute to a better society, or concrete social issues in general. Instead, individual employees

are encouraged to participate in public debate based on their competences and acquired insights. The School believes it is an asset that individual employees make different judgements and have different opinions.

QUALITY, RELEVANCE AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

All activities at the School shall be characterised by an urge to achieve the highest quality and relevance. Research and education is to be based on a scientific attitude, where critical thinking and an unconditional search for knowledge are fundamental elements.

FREEDOM FROM FAVOURITISM AND CORRUPTION

When collaborating with businesses and other organisations – which is generally encouraged – the individual employee must have a high level of independence and integrity. Collaborations must not lead to individual businesses or organisations being favoured or treated without criticism. Results of research and their publications, as well as teaching content, must never be influenced by the funders of the activities. Individual relationships, including professional ones, must never influence recruitment decisions.

MANAGING UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR FROM EXTERNAL PARTNERS

In the event of unethical and/or illegal behaviour from any collaboration partner (business, university, municipality or other organisations), the way the School is to respond is determined on a case-by-case basis. The collaboration may be discontinued, however it may continue if overall it is believed it will have positive results in the long run. At the same time, all employees are expected to be clear when expressing their opinions. It is especially important that well-justified criticism of external partners or donors is not avoided or downplayed.

COLLABORATIONS WITH UNIVERSITIES IN UNDEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES

The School collaborates with many universities and higher education institutions around the world, including some in undemocratic countries and countries where there is a lack of democracy. This is mainly for two reasons:

1. To give students from different social systems an opportunity to communicate within the framework of a common education, and consequently provide a better basis to reflect over various ways to organise a society.
2. To use research collaborations and dialogue to contribute to a positive and democratic development in the country in question. Such collaborations must under no circumstances imply that criticism of these countries or their institutions are silenced or downplayed.

CONSIDERATION AND RESPECT

The School shall be an inclusive organisation where everybody regardless of gender, age, ethnic background, religious beliefs and life stance, sexual orientation, political opinion or physical disability feels welcome and included. There is a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

All employees and students have a personal responsibility for the activities of the School as a whole to function as well as possible in accordance with the School's fundamental values. This involves striving towards high quality and relevance, actively combating all forms of corruption, contributing to an inclusive environment where everybody feels welcome and respected, and working against all forms of harassment.





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