

# National study on gender-based violence in academia

## Questions and Answers

### Why are we conducting this study?

Sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence, vulnerability and victimization is a serious threat to the health and work environment of individuals.

Yet, there is a lack of scientific knowledge with respect to the situation within the Swedish higher education sector. Today, the Swedish field of research cannot answer what form sexual harassment takes in academia or the consequences it has for both individual career opportunities and for academia as employer, education provider, and knowledge organisation.

The purpose of the national research study is to establish research-based knowledge on the occurrence and consequences of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in academia among both students and employees.

The study is a research-based, base-line measurement of sexual harassment in the overall academic sector. The goal is to follow the development over time.

The work on creating inclusive work and study environments requires new knowledge and tools to prevent sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Current preventive methods lack scientific evidence.

Higher education is conducted digitally to a great extent as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic and this will likely remain the case for some time. This new situation may also lead to unknown forms of vulnerability and victimization, of which the results of the study will be able to shed further light on.

Students, doctoral students and employees cannot work and study in an environment where there is violence and harassment. Eventually, this will negatively impact the quality of research and education. Therefore, equal opportunities for education and research is fundamental to the quality of our core activities.

### How is the study conducted?

The research study is conducted in cooperation with Statistics Sweden (SCB). The Swedish higher education sector includes 410 000 students and 78 000 employees (2019). It has been decided that a selection of a total of 125 000 individuals will provide good coverage of the sector, with small margins of error. Therefore, this is a comprehensive study.

Between November 2020 and January 2021, a pilot study will be conducted, targeting 8 000 individuals, to test the questionnaire, mailing method, response, and response rate. This is done to learn whether the selection needs to be weighted differently in the main survey.

In April – May 2021, the questionnaire is sent to individuals who are active at 38 Swedish colleges and universities, members of the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions. The selection is made separately for students, doctoral students, and employees – both researching and teaching staff as well as technical and administrative staff.

The questionnaire inquires about personal experience of being subjected to, learning of others being subjected to, and subjecting others to sexual harassment. In addition, there are questions on gender-based violence beyond sexual harassment and how this relates to (un)health and mental and social work environment.

### What information will the sector at large and individual institutions receive?

The ambition is for all higher education institutions included in the survey to receive a result on an individual level. However, data breakdown will depend on, among other things, the size and response rate of the higher education institution.

There will be a possibility to order tables per higher education institution from SCB after analysis of the data, tentatively in September/October 2021.

All basic data (questionnaire responses) will be handed over to KI, the principal research institution and responsible for the study. In order to maintain anonymity, the data will be reported in sufficiently large groups so that no-one will be identifiable.

Only individuals within the research and collaboration programme's research team can access the data. If other research teams wish to access the data, a special review will be conducted.

### How can my higher education institution contribute to this work?

The higher the response rate, the more detailed the results will be. This in turn can generate a solid knowledge base to be used both for organizational development and further research. At this stage, you can contribute by communicating that a research study is to be carried out, why the study is done, how it is done and what deliveries can be expected both at the sector level and for individual higher education institutions.