

Handbook for student representatives



Table of Contents

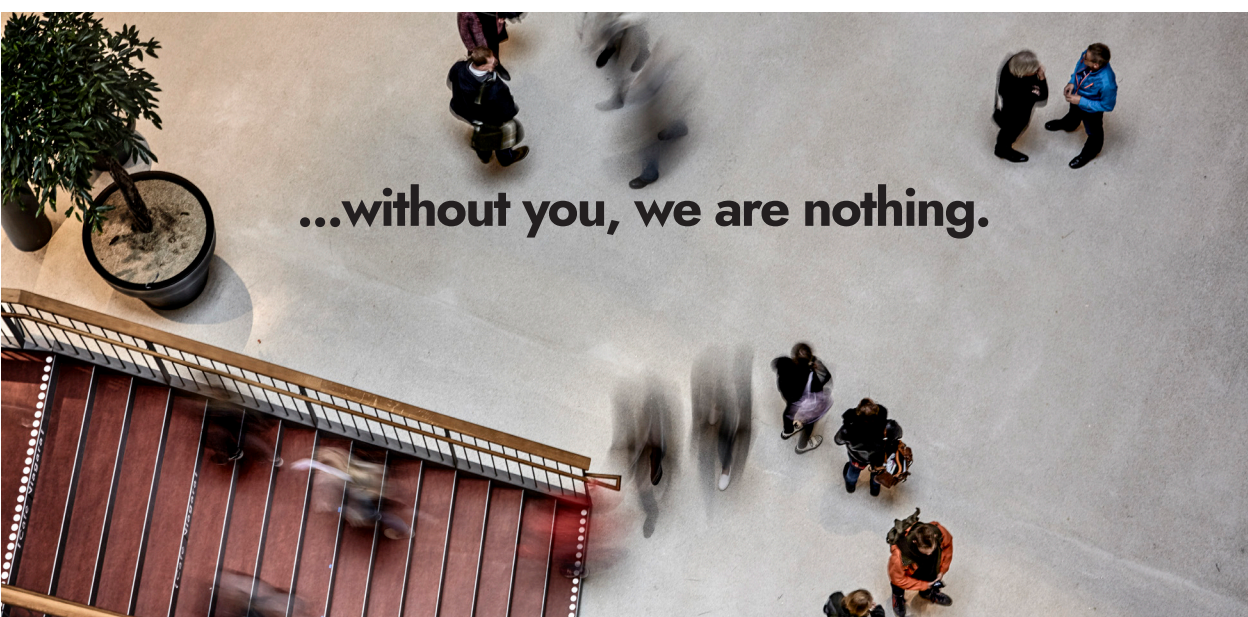
Welcome	s.3
What faculty do I belong to?	s.4
What does the Student Union do?	s.6
What says the law?	s.7
Students' rights and responsibilities	s.10
Good to know	s.14
Bodies and organs at Malmö University	s. 16
Student errands and disciplinary errands	s.18
Master supression techniques	s.20
Difficult conversations	s.24
Glossary	s.25
Contact info	s.26

Welcome

Welcome to Student Union Malmö's handbook for student representatives! First of all, we at the Student Union want to thank you for being a student representative. In this handbook, you will find descriptions, glossary and tips and tricks. We will give you the tools you need to influence and change your education.

As a student representative, you are one of our most important assets. Since you are not only speaking for yourself but also for your fellow students. This can seem like a big and heavy assignment, but we are here to help and support you. The ability to influence your education is, after all, the most important thing we can offer you, and thank you for taking the opportunity.

We are the Student Union. We are big when you feel small, but...



...without you, we are nothing.

What faculty do I belong to?

Technology and Society

The Faculty of technology and Society have education within Computer Science, Building Engineering, Mechanical and Materials Engineering, Physical Sciences, Media Technology, and Applied Mathematics.

Health and Society

The Faculty has programs and courses in, for example, Care Science, Biomedical Science, Criminology, Police, Sexology, Social pedagogical work in the Field of Disability and Social Work.

Education and Society

The faculty offers professional training in the fields of schools, culture, leisure, and sport and has one of Sweden's largest teacher training programmes.

Culture and Society

The Faculty of Culture and Society is a cross-border education and research field that are organized into three departments Global Political Studies (GPS), School of Arts and Communication (K3), and Urban Studies (US).

Beyond Student Union Malmö, there are two other Unions at Malmö University; Odontology Student Union (Käftis) and Doctoral Union. At the Faculty of Odontology, they have education for Dental hygienists, Dentists, and Dental technicians. The Doctoral Union represents all doctoral students that study on research level and are employed by the University.

What does the Student Union Malmö do?

A Union is, in short, an interest organization for students. What separates a Union from an association is that the Union has a statutory right to conduct education monitoring and therefore needs to be a part of the decision and discussion process at the University they are connected to. The University grants the Union status, and accordingly, we get the right to be represented in bodies and organs to conduct education monitoring.

What is education monitoring?

Education monitoring means that we have insight at the University and can act on the students' initiative to, for example, pursue questions that interest students. The Student Union Malmö sits in all bodies, groups and organs at the University and we contribute with knowledge and views that are important for the university and the students. The student perspective is vital for the University and is a tool to increase the quality of education. The Union is not a part of the University; it is an independent party to the University.

What says the law?¹

According to the Higher Education act (see glossary) 4§, you as a student have the right to “conduct influence over education at the Universities. ” The Higher Education act 2 chapter 7§ defines they right like this;

”The students have the right to be represented when a decision is made or process planning is conducted that have significance for the education or the students’ situation.”

In the Higher Education Ordinance (see glossary) 2 chapter. 4§ the student influence is specified further in the following way:

”If a decision is to be made or process planning is to be conducted of one person only, the information shall be provided, and consulting must take place with a student representative in good time before the decision or the completion of the process planning.”

As a student representative, you are incredibly important in our work to increase the quality of education. As a student representative, you can influence everything from your study environment to the education content by sitting in the different bodies and organs at your faculty and you have the same mandate and responsibility as other members.

¹ The quotes in this section are translated, the original quote is in the Swedish version

Good and safe study and work environment ²

At all higher education institutions, there must be studerandeskyddsombud who have the task of monitoring work environment work and represent students in work environment issues. Studenradneskyddsombuden have the right to participate in work environment work and may request that the higher education institution investigate or remedy deficiencies in the work environment.

Working with work and study environment means that you ensure that all students have a good environment for their studies. Your study environment should never be an obstacle and should at best be support and encouragement for your studies to go as well as possible. This can, e.g., mean that;

- All lecture halls must be physically accessible to everyone, have functional ventilation and lighting, and be equipped with microphones.
- There must be a reasonable number of reading places and study rooms with suitable furniture, e.g., computers and a whiteboard.
- It must be possible to heat the food you have brought with you in a break room.

The Student Union Malmö's student ombud is the studerandeskyddsombud at their respective faculties and the president is the huvudstuderandeskyddsombud and you can always turn to them for advice and support regarding the study environment.

Quality in education

The university's quality work aims to continuously develop the educations and to ensure that they are of high quality. Outcome and results from quality work, such as external reviews, alumni surveys and course evaluations, can be found on the employee website. There you also find relevant and useful documents and links for quality work, as well as for related areas such as student influence and legally secure examinations.

Quality work is a common concern for the university's employees at all organizational levels and the students. Each faculty designs their related educational quality work that is needed to suit its own operations. The university has a university-wide framework for quality work that provides support for quality work for education. The framework states the external quality requirements that are set for the education and the internal quality requirements that the university itself sets.

The internal quality requirements are grouped into three overarching and basic areas;

- Education; such as that the education is attractive, that it has a constructive link and that it is research-related.
- Study environment; such as that pedagogy is student-active and challenge-based and that students have access to the learning resources needed.
- Teacher and employee competence; such as that the teachers have the right competence and that they are given the opportunity for competence development.

If you need help

Student ombud

The student ombud is your representative at your faculty. The student ombud is the person you should contact if you need help or support. If your teacher does not listen, or you feel hindered by your work environment, contact your student ombud, and they will help you further!

The prefect - head of your institution

When you study, you belong to an institution. The head of your institution is the prefect. The prefect has the utmost responsibility for you as a student at their institution (employer responsibility) and is, therefore, the person you can turn to if something is wrong with your study environment. Contact your student ombud for help!

Examples from reality

A student noticed during a fire drill that there are no visual alarms installed, which makes it difficult for people with hearing damage as the student has. The student contacts the Union, who in turn talks to the University. Problem fixed.

A student has failed an exam but disagrees with the assessment. The student contacts the student ombud, asks what can be done, and is guided in applying for a so-called reconsideration. Even during reconsideration, the student fails and then contacts the student ombud again and receives help in getting a new examiner for the next opportunity to do the exam.

2 The quotes in this section is translated, the original quote is in the Swedish version

Students' rights and responsibilities

What is your responsibility?

"Students are responsible for staying well-informed about their education. The University shall ensure that information regarding study programmes and courses is readily available."

This means; You, as a student, are responsible for keeping you updated about your education. You need to log in to Canvas, take part in the information, and read the emails from the University.

What are you rights?

What should be ready before the start of the semester?

"Information on compulsory course literature shall be included in the course syllabus. Subsequently published articles and other relevant work may only be added in exceptional circumstances and only in limited scope and must not be crucial to the ability of students to achieve the course's intended learning outcomes."

The course literature list should be established before you start your course due to the fact you should be able to buy or borrow your book beforehand. Hopefully, articles that are added late should not be necessary because late changes can cause problems for students with learning difficulties that require more time to prepare themselves. If there is no course literature list or if it changes, contact your student ombud.

“Course and study programme syllabi are the documents that govern the education offered at the University. These shall be established and made available to students via the University’s website no later than the course or study programme opens for applications. No changes are permitted after this publication.

If revisions are required to courses contained in a study programme, it is possible to establish such revisions no later than eight weeks before the start of the course. Course and study programme syllabises shall state, amongst other things, intended learning outcomes and forms for assessing student performance. Course syllabises shall state all requirements for compulsory attendance.”

A course syllabus must be established as soon as the education is open for application. The course syllabus is the legal document where the University tells you what you can expect from your course. This means that exams and compulsory elements shall be written in the course syllabus. What is stated in the course plan always applies even if you receive contradictory information elsewhere.

“Schedules for courses shall be available to students no later than four weeks before the start of the course in question. Alterations to course schedules are only permitted when special grounds exist. Non-compulsory and unassessed course elements may, however, be added to the schedules. All schedule alterations shall be notified to affected students in an unambiguous manner, preferably on the University’s learning platform.”

The schedules shall be established and finished by the time you start the course. A teacher can’t change times without notifying you first. Compulsory elements, such as exams, may only be changed in absolute emergencies.

Before examination

“Students have the right to see previous examination papers, submitted written answers, and correction templates. The above-named are public documents and cannot be classified as confidential.”

This does not mean that you have the right to see answers to the exams. What is written by the students is owned by the students, making it difficult to hand out students' answers. In that case, it is best to contact the old students and ask for permission. However, you have the right to see old exam questions. Yet, you should consider that sometimes the teacher changes the exam, and that old exam can be misleading. Always talk to the teacher.



Examination

“Assessments of a student’s performance shall be conducted through written, oral and/or practical examinations. Assessments shall be based on the intended learning outcomes stated in the course syllabus. The forms of assessment to be used shall be stated in the course syllabus. Assessments shall be designed in such a way as to evaluate each individual’s performance in relation to the intended learning outcomes, including in group-based activities.”

This means that you have the right to see grade assessment that is linked to the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus. You can always ask for further motivation for your grade from your teacher. You can request a re-examination of your grade, but you only have the right to another examiner if the grade was failed. This means that if you got a G, you can ask for a review of the grade (which means that you submit a motivation for why you should get a higher grade), but you will not get another examiner if the current examiner sticks to his grade. Contact your student ombud for further questions!

Course evaluation

“Students have the right to offer their opinions in course evaluations. Course evaluations are one of the student’s primary tools for influencing and developing their own and other student’s studies. According to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, course evaluations are to be conducted for all courses, and it is the higher education institution’s responsibility to ensure that this is the case. Students are the stakeholders in the University’s operations and therefore have a responsibility to participate in course evaluations. The University shall compile the results of course evaluations in a report in which any decisions on measures to be taken are stated. This report shall be available on the course website and future students shall be made aware of its contents.”

You always have the right to conduct a course evaluation, as well as get the result. A summary of the course evaluations must be available for all your courses.

Good to know

What do I own?

You own everything you create during your education. According to the copyright act, your thesis is yours, and you decide how it should be distributed. The same applies to any presentations, films, or the like you make for examination or other educational purposes.

What is the difference between practice and policy?

A policy is a binding document that the University has agreed to follow in a specific area, e.g., course evaluations or students' rights. This has often been decided by either the University board or the vice-chancellor. Practice is the reality. Much of the academic work is done by practice, for example, grade motivation is often done by email. This is no policy but practice. Different education usually have different practices; for instance, law students count on re-examinations, which gives them a chance to see what the examination is about. This practice does not exist in, for example, teacher training, where re-examinations are seen as much more comprehensive. Some things are done simply through practice and are based on traditions.

Steering documents

A steering document sets the framework for what is decided in an organization concerning a specific activity, and they must have an apparent sender and a clear addressee. All types of steering documents are by definition binding on the addressee, which means that the decision-maker must be the addressee's superior.

What is a legally binding document?

Even if The Rights and Responsibilities of Students at Malmö University, for example, are not law, such as the Higher Education Act, the University must still follow the documents on which the operations are based.

Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) legally secure examination

The Swedish Higher Education Authority is the state supervisory authority that oversees higher education. The legally secure examination is a compilation of various universities' policies and practices, where they provide recommendations on what, according to UKÄ, is lawfully deemed secure. This is often the basis for many of the University's binding documents on examinations.

Sweden's United Student Unions (SFS) – student Influence Sweden's

United Student Union is an assembly of student unions, and the Student Union Malmö is one of the member unions. They make reports and surveys about students' situations and work with education monitoring at the state level.



Student influence policy – What do I have the right to as a student representative?

You're probably sitting as a student representative. This means that you represent the students. Even though we at the Union are holding the elections, you are not a union representative; you are elected as a student representative. Therefore, teachers should not ask you questions about what the "Union" thinks since a student representative does not represent the Union. This means that you don't have to feel insecure, but answer honestly and speak from the heart at the meetings. After all, you are there to represent students who are just like you.

You have the right to be introduced and receive help and support during the first period. Contact the meeting president at the meeting if anything feels unclear. If you do not receive help, contact your student ombud, and they will help you.

Bodies and organs at Malmö University

At your faculty

Board of Education

In the board of education, the administrative and academic sides meet and discuss education-specific issues. Questions such as equal treatment and quality of education are often discussed here.

Faculty board

The faculty board is the highest decision-making body at your faculty. This is the only position that is paid. The faculty board is often the last step for policy documents, employment, and the establishment of programmes.

Academic Appointments Board

The teacher nomination boards decide who will be promoted or employed at the faculty. This is a very important body where the students' opinion is highly valued. Do you want your teachers to be pedagogically savvy? Join this group and express your opinion!

Faculty Board of Educational Programmes and Course Syllabi

The syllabus committee approves syllabi. This is a meeting that is of great importance to students but can be challenging to understand. As a student, you should look at whether the information you need is included, for example, examinations and grading scale. If you were a student and looked at the syllabus, would you understand what is required of you during the course?

Programme and course advice board

The University organizes program and course advice boards to get students' feedback on programme and courses. Ask your teacher if you do not know who is the representative of your programme/course.

At central level

Central level means that it is comprehensive for the entire University. There are more committees and bodies at the central level. You can find them on the University's website.

Advisory Board for Education

Addresses educational questions, and here everything from pedagogical development and quality assurance to the establishment of new programmes is discussed.

University Board

The university board is the University's highest decision-making body. They are accountable for the operations and must ensure that they are conducted efficiently and that the operations are reported reliably and fairly.

Student Disciplinary board

The Student Disciplinary Board makes decisions about cases that have been filed. This can be suspected plagiarism, cheating, or discrimination cases. This committee often includes someone from the Union's board, but it is important to know about since this is the last instance an errand can go to internally.

Student errands and disciplinary errands

Student errands

Student errands can also be called student complaints. A student errand is, in short, something from the student who has reached the Union and needs action. This can be anything from a general complaint to a specific measure such as a meeting with the prefect. The Union documents all student errands, no matter how small it is.

Disciplinary errands

An errand that the disciplinary board decides is often cases where the measure is a so-called disciplinary measure, such as suspension due to plagiarism. The disciplinary board is the only body at the University that can take decisions on disciplinary measures.

More info about guidelines for handling student complaints you can find here under governance documents

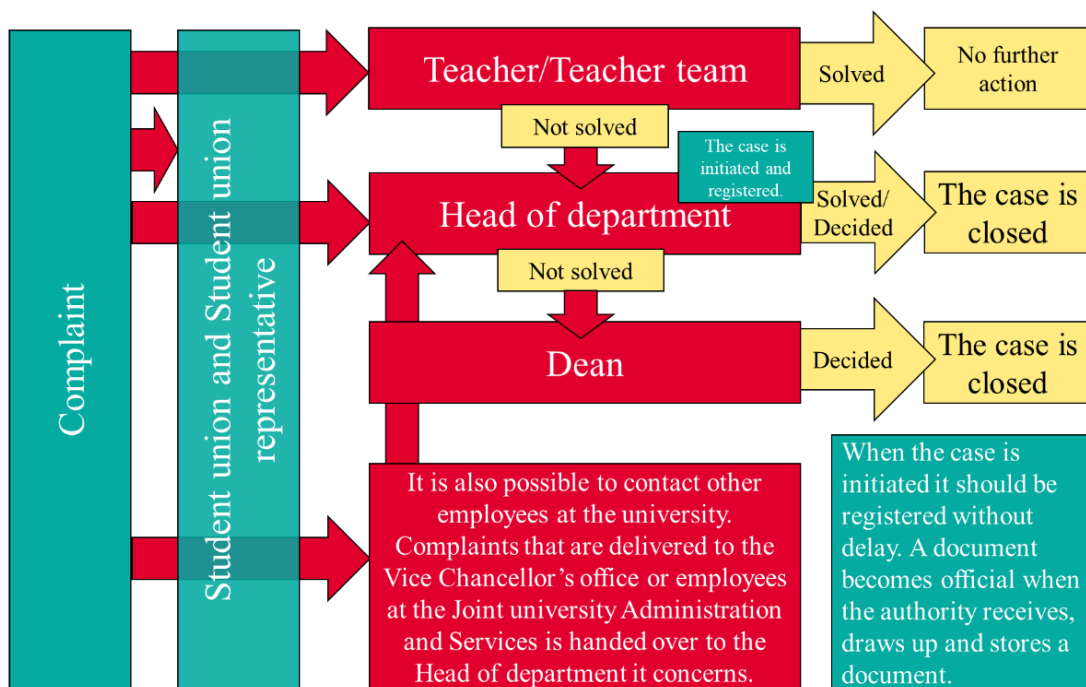
Go to:

<https://student.mau.se/en/my-studies/rights-and-responsibilities/>

What can your student ombud do?

Your student ombud can always represent you in all matters towards the University, and it is you who decides when an errand is completed. On the other hand, your student ombud can say if it is the case that the student ombud feels that an errand can not go any further. The Union documents all incoming errands and makes a report of this, which we present to the University.

Overview illustration of the handling procedure



Master suppression techniques

Sometimes you, unfortunately, sit in meetings and are exposed to master suppression techniques. These are different methods used, consciously or unconsciously, to make you as a student representative feel stupid. You can always be wrong, but if you leave a meeting and feel small and ashamed, then keep in mind that you may have been subjected to sneaky methods to waver in your task. Students often raise things that the University may find difficult, such as that some things are not good or that the University may be outdated in specific questions. The chairman of the meeting you sit in should help you, and you should never be discriminated against or bullied. Always contact your student ombud for help and support, but here are some tips on how to think about it if the worst happens.

Making invisible

What happens?

Instead of listening to you, the person you are talking to is looking at their phone and only responds sporadically when you speak.

What is it?

This is a master suppression technique called making invisible. This means that you make a person feel uninteresting and invisible. You do this by not looking at the person, not responding, giving a lack of response, or talking over a person trying to get something said.

What do I do?

The absolute best way to meet up with this type of master suppression technique is to make visible what the "master" does simply. For example, say, "I see you looking down at your phone, I want you to focus when I talk to you," or "I was in the middle of a sentence, I'm happy to listen to you after I have finished speaking."

Ridiculing

What happens?

You say something about your education, and one of the teachers makes it into a joke. The person speaks in a slightly contrived voice and behaves as if you are a child who needs to have something obviously explained to you.

What is it?

Ridiculing. This means making a joke of something at the speaker's expense. It can also be that, instead of listening to what someone says, you comment on the person's clothes, appearance, or the like. It can also be that you make generalizations; for example, maybe someone says, "Students are stupid."

What do I do?

No matter how difficult it is, the best thing is to stay calm and ask a question back to the joker. For example, you can say, "Now you said this, but I do not understand why this is funny, so can you explain to me?" or "Now I felt that you were making fun of me, what did you mean by what you said?"

Responding to what is said by repeating what made you sad allows you to face what was said. Still, also it allows the joker to think about and understand why the behavior was inappropriate.

Withholding of information

What happens?

You did not get information that the meeting you are going to attend is being moved to a quarter of an hour earlier. You, therefore, show up late, and you then notice that you have not received all the documents needed for you to be updated.

What is it?

This is that someone withholds information, which can be done more or less unknowingly. It can, for example, be that someone forgot to add you to the mailing list, but it's still a master technique. It is a way to ensure that you, who have not received all the information, do not have the opportunity to prepare sufficiently. You will also feel that it is more difficult to influence or raise your opinion. This causes an imbalance in the room, where those who received the information have the upper hand.

What do I do?

Be honest. Say that you have not received the information and request (if you feel comfortable with it) that you get some time to familiarize yourself with what you did not receive. If it happens more than once, you can get help from the student ombud to talk to the group who, for some reason, does not give you the information you need. It is the management's responsibility that everyone receives the information. If something is vital, and you have not received the information, it may be a good idea to request postponing (that you postpone the decision to the next meeting) until everyone has had a chance to familiarize themselves with what is to be decided on.

Infliction of guilt and shame

What happens?

You react to a joke that someone pulls, and it is you who gets the slap. The joker rolls their eyes and says, "Uh, you just overreact, you have no sense of humor."

What is it?

This is called putting guilt and shame on you, the one who reacted to a violation or that something was wrong. This not only needs to be done person to person but can also be organisational. This can, for example, mean that you always get the document to a meeting two days before the meeting, which does not allow you to have the time to familiarize yourself with the documents. When you come to the meeting, the chairman behaves as if it is your fault that you did not have time to read, not that the documents came too late.

What do I do?

It can be difficult to see where guilt and shame come from. Therefore, it is good to distance yourself from the situation and analyse it and see the actual conditions. Imagine it was a friend of yours who was exposed, had you told that person that they deserve to feel guilt and shame? What would your advice be? Talk to the student ombud and ask for help talking to those who make you feel guilty and ashamed.

Difficult conversations

Sometimes, as a student representative, you need to have difficult conversations with other students, teachers, or staff. It could be that you need to explain what something looks like to very angry students or that a proposal did not go through. Here are some tips on how to do it.

Scenario 1. A student has been mistreated and wants you to talk about it with the teacher because you are a student representative.

What do you do? You are a student representative, absolutely, but this type of conversation should be raised with the student ombud. Refer the student to the student ombud.

Scenario 2. A teacher holds you accountable for the report written by the Union. It says a lot of things about the teachers' department, and the teacher feels singled out.

What can you do? You are a student representative, not a Union representative. Refer the teacher to the Union or the union presidium, they can guide the teacher to the right person. If it becomes a threatening situation, say calmly and quietly that you do not want to be in the conversation and walk away. You have no obligation to be yelled at or complained to. If it happens during a meeting, request the chairperson to enter or request a break, so the teacher has a chance to calm down.

Scenario 3. You say something at a meeting, and another member gets very angry. The person wants to meet up and talk about it.

What can you do? Request that the student ombud shall be present. If you feel the least bit insecure, call for us in the Union, and we will help you. You also have the right to refuse meetings, you are only elected to sit in the meetings called for. You do not have to attend other meetings.

Scenario 4. The student ombud blames you all of a sudden or misbehaves.

What can you do? Contact the presidium, and they will take the meeting with the ombud. You do not have to be present, the presidium can talk to the ombud without you.

Glossary

Faculty: a faculty is an organisational unit at the University. The faculty usually has the highest responsibility for research and education within a subject group.

Department: an organisational and administrative base unit at the University. The department is responsible for carrying out education, research, and development work in a specific subject.

Vice-chancellor: The vice-chancellor is the highest administrative and pedagogical leader at the University.

Dean: a dean is the highest administrative head of faculty.

Head of Department: is the head of an institution and has personal and work environment responsibilities.

Professor: an academic title that marks a higher scientific competence than a doctoral degree.

Associate Professor (docent): a teacher at the University who has a doctoral degree or equivalent.

Senior Lecturer: a teacher at the University who does not have a doctoral degree.

Course Syllabus and programme Syllabus: course and programme syllabus are regulations for education that state the conditions for admissions to and completion of the course. The Higher Education Act indicates what a syllabi and course plan must contain.

Student Rights and obligations (SRS): a steering document with questions regarding your rights and obligations as a student.

Student influence policy: a document that expresses what student influence means, why student influence is important and how a strengthened student influence can be realised within the University.

Bodies and organs: can be anything from a meeting of the course plan committee to the University board.

Advisory boards (Beredningar): Preparatory bodies for the vice-chancellor before the vice chancellor's decisions and any decisions in the University board (on university-wide questions)

Advisory boards (Råd): advisory boards to the vice-chancellor who has the task of planning, coordinating, and following up university-wide questions.

Formalities: formalities are the points of order that a meeting must address to move on to substantive questions, decisions, and discussion points.

Agenda: must be sent out to you as a representative at a reasonable time before the meeting. On the agenda are the points to be addressed at the meeting.

Protocol: is a document that reports what happened during the meeting. The protocol is written by a secretary and must either be approved by the next meeting or adjusted.

Meeting notes are an unofficial document that reports what happened during a meeting and does not need to be approved or adjusted.

Higher Education Act: contains frameworks and rules for universities' operations, organisation, and governance.

Higher Education ACT (HF): HF regulates the details of a university, it governs everything from that a student representative shall be present in all bodies and organs and sit in on all decisions that apply to students to how the hiring of a teacher should be conducted.

UKÄ: is the state supervisory authority that oversees higher education.

Contact info

Student Union Malmö

Student ombud:

Student ombud Education and society

ombudls@malmostudenter.se

070-757 75 68

Student ombud Health and society

ombudhs@malmostudenter.se

070-757 75 68

Student ombud Technology and society

ombudts@malmostudenter.se

070-757 75 67

Student ombud Culture and society

ombudks@malmostudenter.se

070-757 75 67

Presidium:

President

ordforande@malmostudenter.se

076-050 95 64

Vice President

vice.ordforande@malmostudenter.se

070-757 75 62