

Student Union Malmö's operational plan 21/22

§1. Introduction

The operational plan is the council's instruction for the board. The operational plan is the steering document, which sets the work and operations for Student Union Malmö (hereafter, "the Union") for the operational year 2021-2022.

The operational plan's structure begins with the Union's regular operations, followed by student engagement and representation, study political and last but not least - the focus questions for the operational year. These are "the pandemic effects" and "representation and diversity".

The operational plan is written in a way that ensures that the board has the flexibility to achieve the set goals in a manner they best see fit. The board therefore has a mission to create an action plan that will compliment his document to concretize action steps and division of responsibilities.

§2. Regular operations

During the last years the Union has seen a number of changes in terms of re-organizing and dividing the areas of responsibility among the board. This was done to achieve long-term stability as well as a more clear-cut strategy for who is responsible for a specific aspect of the Union's work. Therefore, the new board is tasked with discussing the division of the areas of responsibility at the beginning of their mandate. This should be done with consideration of the structure of the board as well as tasks connected with certain positions, work-load and interests of board members.

To ensure that these changes are followed through and implemented within the organization, the development of the Union's structure should continue under the upcoming operational year. Among other things, this includes the continuous work of having internal committees, further formulating an effective strategy on how to achieve the council's independence and increase the council members' engagement in the Union's operations.

Part of the Union's regular operations concerns the future physical location of the Union house. It is yet uncertain where and in what form the new Union house will be, which influences both the Union and its associations' operations. Thereby, it is of utmost importance that the work of finding a convenient building for the Union's current and future operations continues.

As a result of the collaboration between Student Union Malmö, Odontological Student Union Malmö, Malmö University and Malmö Stad, Malmö has been rewarded with the title Student City of the Year 2021/2022.. As this award is a milestone in the collaboration and not an end it itself, the Union shall actively work with contributing to do this title justice.

Goals:

- 2.1.1. Continue the work of increasing the councils independence and reinforce its role as the Union's highest decision-making body
- 2.1.2. Work with the development of the student errand system and how it can reach out to both the university and the students
- 2.1.3. Actively continue the negotiations for a new Union house, both temporary and permanent, so that the Union and its associations can continue
- 2.1.4. Incorporate intersectional and norm-critical perspectives in every aspect of our work

- 2.1.5. Work with the development regarding Covid-19 pandemic and its influence on the operations of the University and the Student Union as well as its consequences for the students
- 2.1.6. Work for Malmö stad and MaU to live up to the title Student City of the Year, including the planning and organisation of SFSFUM22 in Malmö

§3. Student engagement and representation

Without students, there is no Student Union! Therefore, student engagement and representation play a vital role in the Union's daily work. Both student influence and study social aspects are crucial for the students' personal and educational development. Student engagement and representation have the purpose of securing stronger student influence and enriching the students' social life by creating a feeling of community. Furthermore, the Union holds the belief that a good balance between social and academic life can contribute to students' well-being. Therefore, it is important that students have the opportunity to engage in study-social activities and chances to influence their education throughout their studies, even in digital circumstances. In order to keep its relevance, the Student Union must represent the diversity of the entire student body. The Union should work for a well-functioning recruitment process and implement routines in regards to how student engagement and representation is encouraged and rewarded, so that students would also want to stay engaged. Student engagement and representation has to be inclusive and welcoming by continuously creating and developing strategies for such.

Goals:

- 3.1.1. Further improve our cooperation and routines with formal and semi-formal student representatives
- 3.1.2. Facilitate the accessibility for all to be part of the student social culture and community
- 3.1.3. Expand our close contact with students in order to increase students' direct influence
- 3.1.4. Continue the development of sections for the expansion of local student engagement
- 3.1.5. Continue to develop the collaboration between the Union and semi-formal student representatives in respective faculties

§4. Study political work

Students' life situation is influenced by political decisions they may have little knowledge about or direct power over, whether they are aware of it or not. As a representative body, the Union has the responsibility to ensure the consideration of student perspectives in many aspects that are connected to students' wellbeing, both during and after their studies. These processes in advocacy work have to be grounded in students' best interests and experiences. Furthermore, all activities within these frames shall be accessible, inclusive and allow for genuine participation. Study political questions are multi-dimensional matters, i.e. this strategic work should incorporate aspects from overarching fields of relevance. These include fields such as higher education pedagogy, internationalisation, digitalisation etc., into the work with the different (sub-)goals, as well as consider the possibilities of actions on different scales (internally and externally/ locally, regionally and nationally). The Union shall work proactively on reflecting their own operations self-critically, represent students' concerns and opinions towards Malmö University, as well as advocate these towards the city of Malmö, the region of Skåne and beyond.

Goals:

- 4.1.1. Continue to proactively drive housing-related questions on a local and regional level

- 4.1.2. Proactively getting involved in the on-going campus development
- 4.1.3. Create new and develop existing forms to lift students' concerns with municipal and regional politicians and relevant actors
- 4.1.4. Develop strategies for students' business connections and their transitions into the labour market
- 4.1.5. Continue to emphasize the importance of conducting and evaluating course report and making the results transparent
- 4.1.6. Proactively work for a better understanding of higher education politics among students

§5. Focus areas

The focus areas selected for the operational plan have been made after an assessment by the board and council of 20/21 on the most important issues that came up during the year. These are, outside of the Union's daily work (*Regular operations, Student engagement and representation and Study political*), the following;

§5.1. The pandemic effects

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant a huge change for the university world. It is of utmost importance that the Union actively engages in all questions regarding the effects of these changes.

The Union has identified three pillars within the focus question - quality of education, a revitalized student life and last but not least - students' health.

Assuring the quality of education has always been a primary task for the Union. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic additional challenges in this process have emerged. The effects on education can be short-term and long-term, as well as positive and negative and concern all aspects of the education. Digital teaching has meant the implementation of various new digital tools and platforms, which has put new requirements both for students and teachers. The question of legally secure digital examination has been a particularly relevant and challenging one, due to the lack of local and even national guidelines. Last but not least - a high quality in education cannot be maintained unless a well-functioning learning and work environment for students is at hand.

A big part that shapes the experience of studying are the people you meet along the way. The connections between students are of utmost importance to prevent negative consequences of loneliness. Furthermore, a network among students is needed in order to collect all valuable opinions and represent these in a unified manner towards university. Recently, many of the existing social structures have been put under stress. The student communities at our University have often heavily relied on the ability to interact in person. The Covid-19 pandemic's changes, with all its aspects, have made possibilities to connect socially more difficult. These obstacles have created opportunities for digital gatherings, yet hardships to sustain group networks have shown to increase over time. In order to sustain and further grow student life, increased focus on more specific measures to enable development and create endurance for existing groupings is required.

Students' health is another vital question for the Union, especially with keeping in mind that students' mental health has been overall worsening throughout the years. Here, physical and mental health are two inseparable aspects, as they can often have a negative effect on each other. The Union needs to further engage in student health questions in order to know how students feel and be able to drive advocacy work in the area, as well as promote preventive measures.

Goals:

- 5.1.1. Work towards a strong quality assurance process of education and all its aspects – teaching, examinations, learning and work environment
- 5.1.2. Sustain and strengthen the conditions for student life
- 5.1.3. Engage in questions regarding the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on students' health

§5.2. Representation and diversity

The wide and diverse student body is an undeniable strength at our University. However, it has been largely acknowledged that not all student voices are equally represented at MaU and the Union, which needs to be addressed and improved. Since ensuring representation for students is one of the tasks of the Union, working towards increasing the diversity of said representation was identified as one of the questions the Union should focus more on.

The topic of intersectionality - understood as the ways in which our interconnected identities (such as race, gender, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, religion and more) effect our privileges and experiences of discrimination - was widely discussed both by the Student Union Council as well as the board, as the area in which the Union could improve our operations. The establishment of a Committee for Intersectionality was one of the steps that were taken to ensure that the Union begins to critically examine its work with this topic.

Increased diversity and inclusion of students from different backgrounds in Union's operations can significantly improve the way in which the Union represents students, both Swedish and international. It can also bring positive changes in addressing different questions that arise at the University as well as our planning of study social events. Therefore, the work for increased diversity and inclusion in student representation at MaU and in the Union's operations, as well as addressing the topics of inclusion and safe spaces are crucial for this focus question.

Another aspect that has to be taken into account is driving the question of an inclusive academic culture at the University, including the matters of transparent communication and accessibility. This should be done in connection with addressing the gap between the bilingual nature of the Union's operations and the more Swedish-focused approach of the University.

Goals:

- 5.2.1. Work for an increased diversity and inclusion in student representation and in the Union's operations
- 5.2.2. Incorporate the topic of intersectionality in student representation and daily operations
- 5.2.3. Engage in questions regarding safe spaces and inclusion both at the Union as well as the University
- 5.2.4. Drive the question of an inclusive academic culture at University, including the aspect of transparent communication and accessibility