



## **Agreement on enhanced cooperation and an academic network between higher education institutions in Skåne, Blekinge and Halland**

Since 2009, an agreement is in place between the Blekinge Institute of Technology, Halmstad University, Kristianstad University, Lund University, Malmö University, and the Swedish university of Agricultural Sciences (also referred to as “the parties” below) about enhanced cooperation entitled the “University Network of Southern Sweden”, in Swedish known as “Lärosäten Syd”.

### Background

The higher education institutions in southern Sweden have a long-standing collaboration within several areas of education, PhD programmes, research, administrative functions and external engagement. These collaborations provide increased quality, better utilisation of resources and improved contacts with industry and society, benefiting students and universities as well as society at large.

Societal development places new demands on universities. In order to meet these demands, the universities in southern Sweden have joined forces within the University Network of Southern Sweden. Through this collaboration, we are able to meet increased demands and take greater societal responsibility by educating for the future and taking on the challenges we face through research and innovation, among other things. In this capacity, the University Network of Southern Sweden makes a difference and contributes to even better and stronger regions.

The universities that are part of the network have a total of approximately 55 500 full-time students, 10 600 employees and about SEK 14 billion in revenue (figures from 2016). This corresponds to about 20% of the entire education sector within these three areas. The universities’ students and employees are from all over the world. Their research has considerable breadth and many specialisations, and include major research facilities, a university hospital and several innovation clusters in which new and established companies develop. Together, the universities create a dynamic whole and a knowledge environment for higher education and research in southern Sweden.

The universities differ in terms of size, the education and research they conduct, their different types of expertise and the environments in which they operate. This is a strength that increases opportunities for complementarity: what one university lacks, the other provides. The universities also have distinct profiles. This diversity must prevail; thus, the universities shall have the opportunity to supplement the content of their research and education according to their respective profiles.

The universities also have many similarities. For example, several of them offer programmes in teacher training, engineering, nursing and economics. Collaboration has for long been conducted in these and other areas, and may be expanded further through the University Network of Southern Sweden. Collaboration develops the dynamic whole created collectively by the universities in southern Sweden, while also benefiting each individual university.

### Aim, objective and remit

The aim of the University Network of Southern Sweden is to collaborate on common issues within education, research and external engagement. The network is also a partner of regional actors such as county councils, municipalities and industry.

The primary objective of the University Network of Southern Sweden is to pursue common issues in a regional, national and international context, in which the universities can make a difference and contribute to better and stronger regions.

The University Network of Southern Sweden cooperates by:

- creating synergy effects through exchange of experiences, collaboration and increased collective planning within
  - education
  - research studies
  - research
  - innovation and external engagement in wider society and industry
  - administration and service
- offering increased influence and greater impact on, and together with, the Government, public authorities, county councils, municipalities and funding bodies on common issues
- facilitating mobility for students, teaching staff and researchers between the universities
- contributing to widening participation and recruitment to higher education together with civil society, municipalities and regions
- helping to highlight the importance and concept of knowledge cultivation, as well as the concept of lifelong learning
- influencing long-term planning of housing, communication and other infrastructure, in close cooperation with regional and municipal stakeholders
- being an academic participant in regional collaboration bodies such as competence platforms and regional innovation organisations
- pursuing the network's common issues in an international context through representation in Brussels.

### Organisation and financing

The highest coordinating body for the University Network of Southern Sweden is composed of the vice-chancellors of the respective universities who convene at least once a semester at a vice-chancellors' meeting. Apart from them, the management teams of the universities maintain close contact throughout the year. In addition, administrative heads and managers in charge of education are to be appointed for the various groups within the network.

The position of chair, with a one-year term of office, rotates between the parties. An administrative coordinator resource is to be linked to the University Network of Southern Sweden.

Committees, working groups and networks may be established on a permanent basis or ad hoc following a decision taken within any of the above groups.

Student influence is to be ensured through participation in meetings and processes. At the vice-chancellors' meetings, two student representatives, one of whom represents the university where the meeting is held, may participate. At meetings with managers in charge of education, one (1) student representative per university may participate.

The parties have agreed on the following distribution of costs for administrative coordinator resources:

Lund University: 50 %

Malmö University: 20 %

Other parties: 7.5 % respectively

Other agreements on projects and investments are to be determined per project. The parties may also reach bilateral agreements.

All parties have the right to terminate this agreement and withdraw from collaboration with six (6) months' notice. All terminations must be submitted in writing to the chair of the vice-chancellors' group. The withdrawing party is responsible for the cost of administrative coordinator resources incurred by said party up to the time of withdrawal.

The agreement between the parties was initially reached in Malmö on 1 October 2009. The agreement has since been revised in Alnarp on 24 May 2013, and in Karlshamn on 20 May 2015. The current agreement replaces the most recent revised agreement.

Malmö 28 February 2018

Six copies of the present agreement were signed and given to each party.

On behalf of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

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Håkan Schröder, dean of the Faculty of Landscape Architecture, Horticulture and  
Crop Production Science

On behalf of Lund University

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Torbjörn von Schantz, vice-chancellor

On behalf of Halmstad University

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Stephen Hwang, vice-chancellor

On behalf of Malmö University

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Kerstin Tham, vice-chancellor

On behalf of Kristianstad University

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Håkan Pihl, vice-chancellor

On behalf of the Blekinge Institute of Technology

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Anders Hederstierna, vice-chancellor