



# Malmö University 2018

## Background document and roadmap Summary

### **Towards full university accreditation**

In its 2016 research policy bill, *Collaborating for Knowledge – for society's challenges and strengthened competitiveness*, the Swedish government declared that Malmö University will be awarded full accreditation with effect from 1 January 2018. The reasoning behind this is explained in a press release that calls attention to the fact that Malmö is currently Sweden's largest higher education institution (HEI) without general accreditation for master's and PhD levels. Still, the university has accreditation to award doctoral degrees in a number of disciplines, maintains a high level of research quality, and delivers education, conducts research and engages in collaboration which is highly relevant to today's society. In preparation for the change in status, the government has requested a background document and roadmap from Malmö University. The present document outlines the history of the institution, analyses its current activities and operations, and describes its ambitions and plans for the future.

### **A university is founded**

Malmö University was founded on 1 July 1998, when parts of Lund University located in Malmö – among them, the Faculties of Odontology and Education, to-

gether with undergraduate programmes in Engineering – were incorporated into the new institution. At the time the government called particular attention to the ambition to facilitate the recruitment of students from non-academic backgrounds and to develop new problem-based learning methods. Also, the new university was not to be organised along traditional lines with a structure based on subject-oriented institutions.

### **Education at first-cycle and advanced levels**

Since its establishment in 1998, Malmö University has expanded rapidly, primarily in terms of bachelor's and master's level programmes, but also with regard to doctoral programmes and research. A number of new programmes have been initiated at both first-cycle and advanced levels. Ten percent of first-cycle programmes and half of second-cycle programmes are taught in English.

Professional education and training dominates the curriculum. The teacher training programme is one of Sweden's biggest and there are also large cohorts of students in nursing science and social work. Malmö University has built a strong reputation for training dentists, dental

hygienists and dental technicians, and it offers B.Sc. programmes in engineering for students seeking to specialise in computer science and mobile IT, mechanical engineering and materials technology, product development and design, or building technology.

Programmes that lead to a general qualification include media and design, interaction design, media technology, leadership and organisation, international migration and ethnic relations, urban studies, international relations, languages, computer science, computer game development, building technology, mechanical engineering and materials science, sports science, criminology, sexology, and handicap and rehabilitation science. In its *Strategic Plan for Development in Education, Research and Collaboration 2014–2017*, Malmö University affirms its commitment to a challenge-based approach to learning that develops students by arousing their curiosity, stimulating their creativity and giving them competence to lead and act in various processes of change.

The number of full-year students is expected to remain stable at around 12,000 over the coming years. In the autumn semester of 2015, 47 percent of first-year students at Malmö University were recruited from outside the County of Skåne. Students with a foreign background account for 30 percent of the total number of students, which is a higher proportion than for the country as a whole; the same is true for first-generation academics (67 percent). Performance indicators and post-degree levels of establishment are at or above the national average.

### MALMÖ UNIVERSITY'S OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Malmö University is to provide high-quality education and conduct high-quality research in collaboration with other stakeholders in society in order to create, share and make use of knowledge that contributes to sustainable societal development both locally and globally. Malmö University is also to play a key role in identifying and defining the major challenges that society faces in the future.

### Research and doctoral programmes

Malmö has accreditation for third-cycle study programmes in seven areas of research and offers doctoral programmes in fifteen subjects: Odontology, Biomedical Science, Health and Society, Social Work, Care Science, International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Urban Studies, Computer Science, Interaction Design, Media and Communication Science, Sports Science with the

focus on social science and humanities, History and History Didactics, Science and Mathematics Education, Swedish and Didactics, and Education. Approximately one fifth of the current 223 doctoral candidates are conducting their studies within the framework of employment outside the college, which is a significantly higher proportion than the national average.

Malmö University researchers are engaged in successful studies in a number of fields. In the Swedish Research Council's analysis of mean normalised citation rates for 2012–15 Malmö was ranked in fifth place in Sweden for field normalised citations. In recent years, external financing has accounted for more than 50 percent of research funding. Five multidisciplinary research centres conduct research of high international quality:

- Biofilms – Research Center for Biointerfaces (BRCB)
- Centre for Work Life and Evaluation Studies (CTA)
- Centre for Sexology and Sexuality Studies (CSS)
- Internet of Things and People Research Centre (IoTaP)
- Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM)

### Malmö University's profile

Over the years the institution has developed a profile that is characterised by global engagement, community involvement and a multidisciplinary and challenge-based approach in education, research and collaboration. Widening participation and expanding inclusion in higher education are important aspects of the institution's involvement in the community that enrich the diversity of the academic culture and learning. The expansion of knowledge in teaching and research is often the result of processes undertaken in collaboration with stakeholders in various sectors of society, such as the public sector, the community sector and trade and industry. Different forms and methods of participation, co-creation, co-production and shared learning are used in both research and education when dealing with questions posed by important and complex social issues.

From the very start in 1998, activities have been characterised by a number of priorities and methods of approach: *Widening participation, Community involvement, Collaboration, co-production and innovation, Multidisciplinary teams, Quality-mindedness and Global engagement*. These are referred to as “threads” in this background document and constitute a distinguishing feature, not only of the history of Malmö University

**Table S1** Summary of proposals to achieve the aims for research and doctoral schools.

<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES FOR RESEARCH AND DOCTORAL SCHOOLS</b>	
<b>Increased external funding</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More support for applications for research grants and innovation</li> <li>• Co-financing for researchers – support from the university as a whole and from the faculties</li> <li>• Fund-raising (structure and support from the university as a whole)</li> <li>• Alumni engagement (structure and support from the university as a whole)</li> </ul>	
<b>Strategic recruitment of research/lecturing staff</b>	
<p>Most of this work is done at faculty level, but some issues (for example, strategic recruitments for certain professorial positions) may be decided at university level. Career paths for researchers and lecturing staff must also be made clear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctoral candidates</li> <li>• Post-doctoral staff</li> <li>• Associate senior lecturers/post-doctoral research fellows</li> <li>• Professors</li> <li>• Visiting professors</li> </ul>	
<b>Increase in research time for professors (research team leaders)</b>	
<b>Leadership training for future heads of research</b>	
<b>Development of a quality framework for third-cycle programmes and research</b>	
<b>Research platforms for research teams</b>	
<b>Support for major multidisciplinary research programmes within the university's focus areas</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcement of support for a small number of research programmes within thematic focus areas</li> <li>• Announcement of support for two research projects in teaching and learning in higher education/challenge-based learning and widened recruitment</li> </ul>	
<b>Support for multidisciplinary doctoral schools within the university's focus areas</b>	
<b>Global engagement/internationalisation in research and third-cycle programmes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange programmes for doctoral candidates</li> <li>• Exchange programmes for post-doctoral work</li> <li>• Facilities for senior researchers/lecturers to write up the results of their research</li> </ul>	

College from first beginnings until the present day, but also of the text of this background document. This unique combination of threads corresponds well to the priorities laid down in the 2016 research policy bill and, as a higher education institution closely integrated into society, Malmö University will be well placed to continue to play an important role among Sweden's universities and other academic institutions.

**Table S2** Direct government funding for research as a proportion of total government funding 2018

	<b>Total MSEK</b>	<b>Research MSEK</b>	<b>% research</b>
Malmö University according to plan in Budget proposal for 2017	922	141	13 %
Malmö University according to Budget proposal for 2018 (+ MSEK 90)	922	231	20 %
Malmö University at average level for new universities (26%) (+ MSEK 90 + MSEK 100)	922	331	26 %

## **OBJECTIVE AND TARGET AREAS FOR MALMÖ UNIVERSITY**

### **Four common target areas**

Based on Malmö University's vision, mission statement, core values and the overall objective above, four common target areas have been identified that are to guide developments over the next few years:

#### *Balance between research and education*

It is our ambition that, by 2020, research projects account for approximately one third of our activities and education accounts for two thirds. This requires a continued focus on external funding to cover the costs of research projects and doctoral training, and presupposes that future developments in terms of direct government funding will continue to be positive.

#### *Research-based, high-quality education*

University status and increases in government funding for research open up new opportunities to offer high-quality education and research that is closely integrated into society while also supporting ambitions for widening participation in academic studies.

#### *Coherent and enriching academic environments*

One of the keys to developing high-quality research that is widely recognised and acknowledged at an international level is the existence of close-knit, coherent, enriching academic environments with a critical mass of internationally active researchers, teachers and doctoral candidates, but also undergraduates and graduates studying first- and second-cycle programmes. Environments such as these create the right conditions for long-term relationships with a variety of local and global partners.

### *Multidisciplinary doctoral programmes and doctoral schools in areas relevant to society*

Malmö University has the opportunity to develop more long-term research projects and doctoral programmes in response to various social challenges that need to be urgently addressed. The process of defining multidisciplinary focus areas constitutes part of this development process.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO ACHIEVE THE UNIVERSITY'S OBJECTIVES**

### **Priorities for research and doctoral schools**

The upcoming transformation of the institution will be most clearly seen in the increased focus on research and doctoral schools; this development will have a positive effect on all the other activities of the university. Table S1 summarises the proposals that have been outlined in order to achieve the aims for research and doctoral schools.

Good economic prospects are essential to implement these priorities and create a better balance between education and research within the next five years. Over time the levels of funding for research activities and doctoral schools in relation to funding for undergraduate programmes should be raised to a level that corresponds to the average for Sweden's other new universities, which is approximately 26 percent of total funding. This means that research funding needs to rise by at least another SEK 100 million, in addition to the SEK 90 million increase already announced for 2018. See Table S2. If funding is not increased to a level equivalent to that of other new universities, the diffi-



culties of linking certain aspects of Malmö University's large and important professional education and training activities to research projects will persist. Under these circumstances there is a risk that the potential for important, ground-breaking research that should be conferred by university status will be squandered, thus exasperating Malmö University's endeavours to live up to the expectations made upon it as a higher education institution.

### **Priorities for first- and second-cycle programmes**

A quality framework will be implemented for first- and second-cycle educational programmes and, in keeping with the theme of coherent and collaborative knowledge environments, an action plan will be developed to link professional education and training activities to research projects. A research-based pedagogic platform for challenge-based learning will be developed that takes into account the perspectives of an inclusive approach, a challenge-based way of working and students as agents of change, along with notions of equality, human rights, democracy, global engagement and sustainable development.

### **Other priorities**

A systematic process will be developed to support the utilisation of research results. Work is under way to create an innovation environment for all the university's faculties, schools and departments, and the infrastructure and support for research activities is being expanded. For these initiatives to succeed, it is important that Malmö University establishes its own Innovation Office and is able to set up a holding company.

To integrate the gender perspective into its operations, Malmö University will give special priority to three areas: equality in academic career paths, gender mainstreaming in research environments, and gender mainstreaming in professional education and training activities. Malmö University will have unique opportunities to create, share and commercialise knowledge that can contribute to sustainable social development. We want to attract students, lecturers, researchers and stakeholders in society from all over the world who are eager to contribute to the diversity of critical perspectives that is essential in order to anticipate the complex challenges that will face tomorrow's society and to be able to propose sustainable solutions to these challenges. By creating a culture in which diversity, creativity, quality and social engagement are distinguishing traits, we can play our part in supporting positive development as defined in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.