
AN INCLUSIVE ARCADA

ARCADA'S PLAN FOR EQUALITY AND EQUAL TREATMENT 2025 – 2027

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1. Introduction

The purpose of Arcada's plan for gender equality and equal treatment is to outline the guidelines for the targeted promotion of gender equality and equal treatment in the higher education community at Arcada during the plan's three-year period of operation. The aim of the plan is to provide both students and staff with support on the issues it addresses. Arcada's stated core values have been defined as follows:

The organizational culture is respectful and ambitious

The operating environment is inclusive and encouraging

The operational approach is humane and agile

In Arcada's strategy for 2035, the stated objectives are that Arcada "welcomes students and employees from different backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life " and "works actively to create an inclusive and equal environment."

Our core values and strategy guide our daily work and interactions and form the cornerstone of equality and work at Arcada. As an organization, we want to show that in our daily activities, we take responsibility for and strive for the principles of gender equality and equal treatment defined in this plan. If we feel that values such as gender equality and equal treatment are present in our everyday lives, our work, learning and socializing will be more rewarding. Well-being at work will increase and we will work better together. As an education provider, we have a great responsibility when it comes to these issues. We educate for working life and society at large. We work with students of all kinds, so issues of gender equality and equal treatment are important. These values will also have an impact outside the university.

Arcada emphasizes the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in its activities, which also guide us in our work for gender equality and equal treatment¹. In addition to this plan, issues regarding gender equality and equal treatment are addressed in Arcada's Accessibility Plan, in Arcada's annual plan for Competence Development and Work Community, and in Arcada's guidelines for handling harassment and unfair treatment. The Occupational Health and Safety Commission has been responsible for the preparation of this plan. It was drawn up in active co-operation with staff, the ASK Student Union, and student groups from two degree programmes.

¹UN Sustainable Development Goals with special focus on goals 3,4,5 <https://sdgs.un.org/>

The work on the new plan started with a workshop with Ekvälita in May 2024, followed by another workshop in September 2024. Ekvälita is a company that offers expertise on issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion. After that, a workshop was organized within the Arcada Learning Community in August 2024 for staff and ASK. In October 2024, a workshop was organized for selected student groups, and a survey with questions about gender equality and equal treatment at Arcada was opened to both staff and students to give the opportunity for all interested staff and students to provide feedback on the current situation and action proposals for the new plan. In the workshops, an active dialogue has been conducted on the focus and concrete measures for the next operational period that Arcada commits to in order to work together for an inclusive Arcada.

2. Gender equality and equal treatment at Arcada

2.1. General

2.1.1. Promoting gender equality and equal treatment regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation

The activities at Arcada are based on the premise that every individual should have equal opportunities, rights and obligations regardless of gender identity. This means the same opportunities for education, work, career and personal development and a distribution of tasks and influence regardless of gender identity. Gender-specific stereotypes and work images are a thing of the past, and Arcada's ambition is to reduce gender segregation in terms of both students and employees. The university has unisex toilets and a unisex changing room, but also separate male and female toilets and changing rooms. Arcada endeavours to consider gender diversity in all communications and systems where possible but notes that many government reports concerning Arcada still do not consider gender diversity.

2.1.2. Equal treatment regardless of ethnic background, language and nationality

Arcada wants to promote ethnic and social diversity. Arcada's strategy 2035 emphasizes that the university welcomes employees and students from different backgrounds, cultures and walks of life. By meeting different perspectives and challenges, our learning environments and our ability in research, development and innovation are enriched. We base our activities on a people-centred, empathetic approach. The strategy defines three focus areas for 2025-2028, one of which is

growth through strategic internationalization. During this period, we aim to increase the number of students with an international background, strengthen support for integration and the development of intercultural competence of all students, as well as increase the cultural diversity of staff and strengthen their intercultural competence. In order for a sense of belonging to emerge, all stakeholders need to feel included. Arcada promotes the active use of both Swedish and English in accordance with the university's Language Policy, but also strives to promote understanding between fellow human beings on a broader level, which is also stated in the university's Internationalization Policy. For students and potential applicants, Arcada offers guidance and support for integration in Swedish and English for individuals who want to integrate with Swedish as their first language.

2.1.3. Equal treatment regardless of religion or conviction

Everyone at Arcada has the right to their own conviction, to profess a religion and to express their beliefs. Arcada assumes mutual tolerance and respect regardless of opinions and views. On campus, there is a room for prayer and meditation that is intended for all religions and convictions. The room is accessible to all students and staff. Representatives of religious communities are welcome on campus, taking into account the stated principles.

2.1.4. Accessibility at Arcada

Arcada works actively to create, maintain and develop a study and work environment that takes into account people's differences and diversity and that enables all actors to function equally in the physical, digital/virtual, mental and social environment. Arcada is covered by the EU directive on the accessibility of digital services. Thus, the university follows the national legislation in this area. The university endeavours to use plain language in all its communications to facilitate and enable all stakeholders to access information and materials of interest. These measures aim to ensure that everyone, regardless of disability or cognitive impairment, can access the material that the university produces and publishes digitally. The work is continuous in nature and requires that staff are trained and supported in their material production. Arcada has an Accessibility Plan, which outlines the guidelines for the organization's goal-oriented work to adapt and develop accessibility throughout the university's activities, both physical accessibility on campus and digital accessibility in our services. Underpinning the work on accessibility is an effort to promote understanding and attitudes towards

accessibility. Arcada's accessibility working group works continuously with accessibility issues at the university. During the plan period, the work on equality and equal treatment will be consolidated with the work on accessibility to increase impact and efficiency.

2.2. Arcada as a study environment

2.2.1. General

At Arcada, we care for the well-being of students from a broad perspective by offering services and support to promote everyone's opportunities for a sustainable student life. All students at Arcada shall be treated equally and fairly. All information that is central to the implementation of the studies shall be available in both Swedish and English. Arcada's pedagogical policy emphasizes the university's core values and pedagogy, which is learning- and student-focused. The goal is that students at Arcada are aware of the UN's global goals for sustainable development and how different values affect society, work communities and individuals. Arcada endeavours to support students' ability to respect the equal value of all people and to act fairly, equally and inclusively.

2.2.2. Equal treatment in student recruitment

During the 2025-2027 operational period, in line with the objectives of Arcada's strategy until 2035, the university will work to increase the number of students with international backgrounds, strengthen support for integration, and promote the development of intercultural competence of all students.

Arcada's admission criteria and processes follow current legislation and are designed to ensure equal treatment of all applicants. The situation in the labour market is reflected in the gender distribution of the different degree programmes at Arcada, and the division into male- and female-dominated sectors reflects the imbalance that continues to exist in the labour market. The aim is to achieve a more even gender distribution in the degree programmes. In student recruitment and marketing, Arcada tries to counteract stereotypes and strives, among other things, to attract more female students to the engineering programmes and more male students to the nursing programmes.

2.2.3. Equal treatment in teaching, supervision and examination

The aim is to develop teaching and studies at Arcada so that gender equality and equality thinking permeates all teaching, supervision and examination and that all students are aware of Arcada's values. Arcada offers special educational support for students with learning difficulties, mobility, hearing or visual impairments, injuries or illnesses that make learning or studying difficult. All students are offered equal opportunities for guidance and support in their studies regardless of the degree programme they are studying on. A number of degree programmes at Arcada are covered by the SORA legislation, and for these, Arcada has both the right and the obligation to request certificates of students' health status and functional capacity, criminal records and the right to withdraw or restore study rights.

2.3. Arcada as a working environment

2.3.1. General

Arcada is a multi-professional university where employees have varied tasks. We work towards the same strategic goals, for the same results, with the same values and for the same cause. Everyone's contribution is equally valuable, as the result is always the sum of its parts. We can learn from each other – both staff and students. This insight is central in an organization where learning takes place on many levels. We want to emphasize the importance of curiosity and openness in relation to each other and what we work with. Openness includes both listening to each other and discussing matters with each other in a respectful manner. The organizational culture should help us to work together. At Arcada, we care for the well-being of our employees from a broad perspective by offering services and support to promote everyone's opportunities for a sustainable working life with the help of the health-promoting expertise available at the university within the framework of the university's HR and in good co-operation with the occupational health service and Arcada's pension insurance company.

2.3.2. Equal treatment in recruitment and remuneration

Recruitment

The objectives for 2025-2027, as set out in Arcada's strategy, include increasing the cultural diversity of the staff and strengthening the intercultural competence of all employees during that period.

Arcada monitors the diversity of its staff with indicators for gender, nationality, and age. The goal of each recruitment is to find the most suitable person for the job. At the same time, Arcada endeavours to strengthen diversity and recruit sustainably. By sustainable recruitment, we mean that recruitment at Arcada is unbiased, fair, long-term planned and systematized.

Salary setting

In order to achieve a fair and equal salary setting, the positions at Arcada are assessed according to Korn Ferry's model. With the help of the requirement assessments, reliable comparisons can be made both with different positions at Arcada and with positions at the same requirement level in other Finnish companies and organizations. Positions are assessed when new employees are hired and when employees are given new responsibilities or tasks. Arcada conducts an annual salary survey in collaboration with Korn Ferry, which is presented and discussed with the Co-operation Delegation and in the Management Group. The purpose of the salary survey is to identify unfounded salary differences in order to be able to correct and even out any possible anomalies. The results of the salary surveys are available as annexes after the results of the surveys are finalized.

2.3.3. Work-life balance

People of all ages and in different life circumstances face different challenges related to work-life balance, to which Arcada endeavours to respond. Employees should be treated equally in terms of the distribution of work tasks, rewards and career advancement regardless of family obligations and life situation. In addition to caring for young children, family responsibilities may also include caring for elderly parents or other close relatives. At Arcada, most of the staff have flexible working hours, which makes it easier to balance work and family life. Many functions can be handled remotely if necessary, although the need for physical presence in the workplace is important in many contexts. Arcada favours the possibility of remote work in situations where it is appropriate and possible. The exception is tasks that require presence during fixed working hours. However, the guideline is that at least 40% of working hours are spent on campus.

Arcada takes a positive approach to parental leave and supports employees who wish to use these opportunities. Shorter part-time arrangements for family reasons are also

possible if the work tasks allow it. Upon return from family leave and other longer leaves (longer than 6 months), a new induction can be organized and a mentor appointed if necessary. Arcada allows parents with sick children under the age of 10 the possibility of paid leave for three days to organize the care of the child. If necessary, employees can request unpaid leave even for longer periods for this purpose. Arcada takes older employees into account by offering flexible arrangements in terms of working hours, reduced working hours and other individual work arrangements where necessary and possible. The experience of older employees is invaluable to Arcada as an expert organization, and therefore the aim is that all employees, regardless of age, are aware of and supported in managing their occupational health and work capacity to enable a long and rewarding working career at Arcada.

2.4. Zero tolerance of discrimination

Everyone, both employees and students, is responsible for ensuring that the culture at Arcada is such that each individual is treated respectfully, fairly and objectively. The goal is that no one at Arcada should be subjected to harassment and that everyone, both employees and students, knows how to act in cases of inappropriate behaviour, harassment or conflict situations. All forms of harassment, discrimination and inappropriate behaviour are actively discouraged, and all indications of such phenomena should be addressed immediately. Specific instructions for how to act are available on the university's intranet. Arcada takes all reports seriously and undertakes to handle and follow them up. Arcada is also responsible for ensuring that the person who reports misconduct is not subjected to reprisals because of the report

Both staff and students are encouraged to raise concerns to ensure that inappropriate behaviour does not continue or recur. In such cases, staff should in the first instance contact their own manager. If necessary, it is also possible to contact Arcada's Head of Security, equality officer or another member of Arcada's Occupational Health and Safety Commission, Co-operation Committee or HR Team. Students can contact Arcada's student welfare officer, the Student Union ASK's harassment Ombudsmen or report the deviation using the electronic tool Falcony. Arcada can issue a reprimand or written warning to an employee who has been guilty of harassment, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour. In serious or repeated cases, dismissal may also be considered. Arcada can give students, who have been guilty of harassment,

discrimination or inappropriate behaviour, a written warning and, in serious or repeated cases, suspend students from studies for a certain period of time, a maximum of one year.

3. Working for gender equality and equal treatment 2022-2024

Arcada's previous Equality and Equal Treatment Plan was set out for the period 2022-2024 and focused on an inclusive and respectful organizational culture that counteracts all forms of discrimination.

During the period of operation of the plan, the aim was to create greater awareness among all actors at Arcada, not only regarding the existence of the plan and the individual responsibility in relation to it, but also generally increase knowledge of gender equality and equal treatment issues. As part of this, Arcada Day in January 2022 focused on gender equality and equal treatment issues. In connection with Minna Canth Day and the UN Week Against Discrimination in March 2022, Arcada and Folkhälsan organized a joint seminar for the employees of both organizations on diversity in working life. The board of the Student Union ASK was also invited to the seminar. In 2023 and 2024, thanks to external funding, Arcada worked actively on these issues in collaboration with experts at Ekvälita and Ad Astra. Together with them, Arcada organized a well-attended training event in April 2023 within the framework of the Arcada Learning Community on the theme "*Together for a more equal university of applied sciences*" with the aim of giving participants basic knowledge about gender equality, equality, and equal treatment and the tools to actively and concretely create an environment where everyone feels welcome and included.

In autumn 2023, Arcada together with Ad Astra organized a three-part training course on anti-racism and equality with the aim of giving staff the tools to include anti-racist practices in their work at the university.

Arcada's Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Plan has been presented to new employees in connection with the introduction for new employees, which is given twice a year and is available both on Arcada's intranet and on the university's website.

During the operational period, Arcada investigated the possibilities of adopting anonymous recruitment, which would mean that each application is processed without

identifying information until those invited to an interview are selected. This is also to reduce unconscious discrimination of, for example, gender identity, nationality or disability at the recruitment stage. Nevertheless, the investigation showed that an expert organization like Arcada needs such detailed information about the candidates in order to assess whether they are suitable for an interview that anonymous recruitment is difficult to implement in practice.

The plan identified an imbalance at Arcada in terms of the proportion of PhDs and senior lecturers, where there was a clear majority of men, and in terms of administrative managers, where there was a clear female majority. The imbalance between the number of women and men with doctorates has been levelled out. The imbalance between senior teachers and administrative managers has been taken into account as far as possible in appointments and the balance has improved.

The plan was regularly followed up in the Occupational Health and Safety Commission and in the Management Group. To the extent that the objectives were not met, these were discussed and, where appropriate, taken into account in the preparation of this plan.

4. Focus areas for gender equality and equal treatment 2025-2027

Arcada's overall goal for gender equality work is to create an inclusive and equal university where diversity is seen as a strength and inclusion as a priority. We welcome and support students and staff of different backgrounds and walks of life, which represent different cultures and nationalities. Our activities are based on a people-centred and empathetic approach that promotes belonging, fairness and success for all.

Arcada has identified four key focus areas to drive the work on gender equality and inclusion forward during the period 2025-2027.

1. Clarification and development of processes

In 2025-2026, Arcada is carrying out extensive development work to define and establish its main processes and create clear process descriptions. The aim is to promote clarity, transparency, efficiency, and uniform working methods, which contribute to equality. Well-documented and communicated processes contribute to

high-quality and efficient operations. The work is led by a working group appointed by the Vice-Rector, with responsibility for driving development forward.

2. An accessible Arcada

We want to ensure that Arcada is an accessible university for everyone, both physically and digitally. This work is based on the Accessibility Plan and the measures described there and will be followed up during the planning period. The plan covers both physical aspects, such as adaptations to the campus environment, and digital aspects, such as accessibility of services and teaching materials. Currently, this responsibility rests with the Accessibility Team. Our ambition is to integrate accessibility, equality and equal treatment work during the plan's operating period.

3. Increased diversity and pluralism

Arcada strives to be an inclusive university that welcomes employees and students of different backgrounds, cultures and life experiences. During this planning period, we will work actively to create a linguistic balance between Swedish and English in both teaching and communication. We will also strengthen support for the integration of international students through various initiatives, including language support. In order to create an inclusive environment for all, we will also invest in developing the intercultural competence of both staff and students.

4. Strengthening community and inclusion at Arcada

A pleasant and inclusive study and working environment is crucial for the well-being of students and staff and the success of the organization. During the period, we are continuously developing activities and initiatives that promote togetherness and team spirit. Through these efforts, we hope to increase cohesion at Arcada.

Each student and member of staff at the university has an individual responsibility to contribute to the achievement of the objectives. Other actors operating on campus are also made aware of the content of the plan and asked to respect it. The Equality and Equal Treatment Plan is supplemented with an action plan that includes concrete measures, time frame, the person responsible, and the indicators for the respective focus area.

5. Organization of work for gender equality and equal treatment at Arcada

Arcada has an Occupational Safety and Health Commission, which acts as a co-operation body for gender equality issues at Arcada. Arcada's Occupational Safety and Health Commission has the overall responsibility for the preparation and follow-up of Arcada's Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Plan. The Commission includes two occupational safety and health representatives (one regular and one deputy) representing the teaching staff, and one deputy occupational safety and health representative representing the researchers and administrative staff, an equality representative, the Head of Occupational Safety and Health, the Head of Security, and other experts. The Commission manages and drives gender equality issues at Arcada in consultation with Arcada's Management Group.

Arcada's management and persons in managerial positions have a special responsibility for ensuring that gender equality and equal treatment work is carried out in a conscious and goal-oriented manner and for reacting in cases of deviations from this plan. The management is committed to acting in accordance with Arcada's values and to promoting that we as a university fulfil this plan for equality and equal treatment. The Rector and the rest of the Management Group are in active dialogue with the Student Union ASK to achieve the goals related to the study environment at Arcada. In addition to this, Arcada's student representatives also work to promote and safeguard equal treatment among students.

Making gender equality and equal treatment a reality at Arcada requires the participation of every member of the university community. The attitude and behaviour of each individual employee and student is crucial for Arcada to be able to live up to the objectives of this plan in practice

6. Communication of the plan

In order for the plan to function as a living and active instrument in the work for gender equality and equal treatment at Arcada, the plan needs to be easily accessible to employees and students alike, and both actors also need to be actively informed about the existence and follow-up of the plan, trained in gender equality and equal treatment issues, and made aware of methods for reporting deviations. The plan must be communicated in both Swedish and English. It must be publicly available on our external website.

Employee communication

For employees, the plan will be discussed during the induction course for new employees, and equality and non-discrimination issues will be discussed in connection with the annual development and operation dialogues. A short summary of the plan will also be available on Arcada's intranet for employees, as well as information on how the plan is followed up. Training on gender equality and equal treatment issues will be further developed during the operational period of this plan.

Student communication

For students, the Equality and Equal Treatment Plan is addressed in the context of the general studies or in the material provided to students during the induction days. This will be further developed during the lifetime of the current plan. The plan will be available on the student portal Start and on the ASK Student Union website.

7. Monitoring and evaluation of the plan

This plan is drawn up for a period of three years, but is evaluated annually by the Occupational Safety and Health Commission and the Management Group and revised if necessary. The work is followed up as part of the annual employee surveys/pulse measurements. The follow-up is also discussed with the managers at Arcada and with the Student Union ASK's board. Employees are informed of changes on the university's intranet for employees and for students on the student portal Start.

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8. Entry into force of the plan

This plan is prepared by Arcada's Occupational Safety and Health Commission and approved by Arcada's Management Group on 16 December 2024.