



**MÄLARDALENS**  
— **STUDENTKÅR** —

## **Operational plan**

**2023 - 2024**

*Adopted by the Union's Council 2023-06-27*

## Preface

Mälardalen's Student Union (MDSU) is the official student union of Mälardalen's University (MDU). As an organization with immense potential, we are dedicated to ensuring students at MDU can influence their education and living situation. Our influence, both locally and regionally, is a force to be reckoned with as MDSU firmly believes that the inclusion of students is an essential ingredient for world-class education. Through our multifaceted approach, we are committed to promoting the welfare, interests, and aspirations of the student population.

Over the past year, MDSU has undergone an exceptional learning experience by facing numerous challenges while simultaneously re-organising and dividing areas of responsibility among area managers. A decision to restructure the organisation was made with the objective of attaining long-term stability, as well as to establish a clearer and more defined strategy for the delegation of responsibilities within the union's operations. We have persevered through many challenges and have achieved considerable progress during this 22/23 financial year. It should be recognised though, despite all accomplishments, that there is still much work to be done, and the process of improving the organisation must be prioritised.

Furthermore, decisive steps have been taken to enhance relations and communication with various stakeholders including students, program associations, MDU, and external bodies such as the municipalities of Västerås and Eskilstuna, and other corporate bodies. Such initiatives were deemed necessary to improve our organisational operations and to cultivate stronger relationships with our valued partners. As we embark on the 2023/2024 operating year, we are filled with great optimism and a sense of purpose. Our overarching goal is to improve student influence, and to achieve various milestones while continuing to strengthen the gains we made the preceding year. We are gratified by the progress made thus far, and we are well-positioned to move into the second year of the "wind of change" under more favourable and improved circumstances.

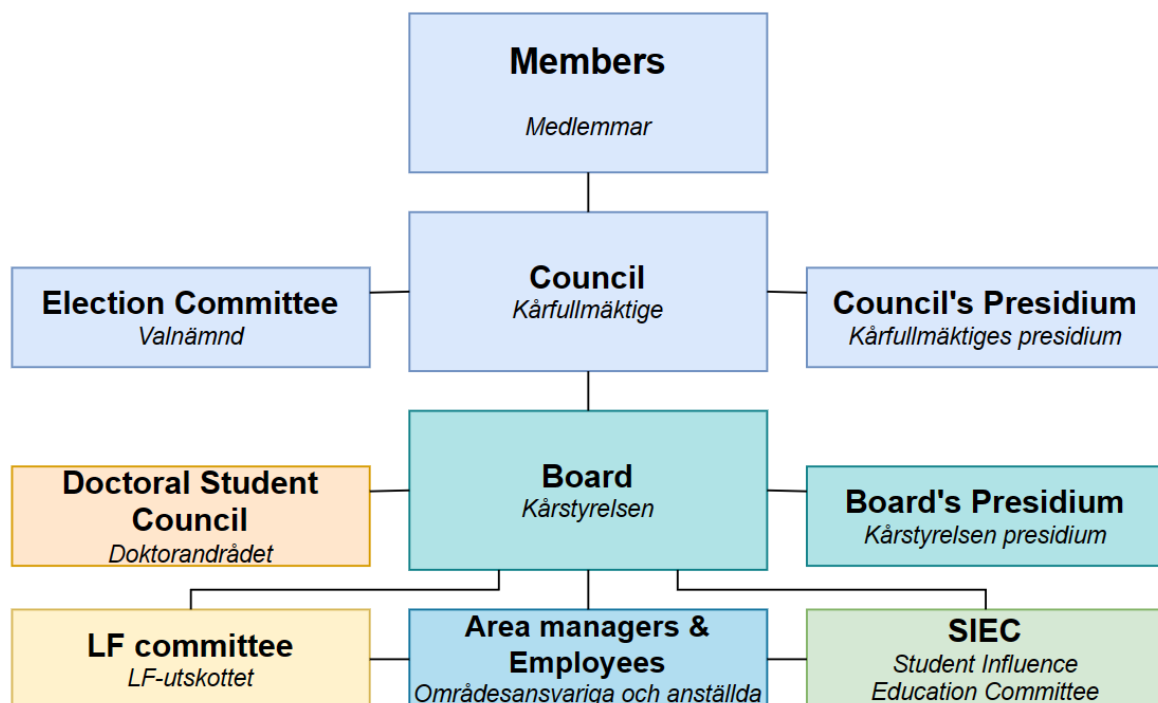
In this regard, we are fortunate to have a dedicated team of elected officials and employees who will offer us their expertise and support in the next operating year. We are confident that, with the assistance of our students and union associations, we can further elevate MDSU to greater heights. We are determined to build on our successes and unlock the boundless potential of MDSU.

# 1 Purpose and background

The purpose of this operational plan is to:

- Show MDSU's direction and overall goals for the 2023/2024 financial year.
- Facilitate conditions to improve Student Influence and receive approval from UKÄ.
- Facilitate optimal working conditions for Board, Presidium, and Area Managers to take charge of their responsibilities and produce reports on outcomes and goal attainments that align with the directives and resolutions of the Student Union's Council.
- Provide students at MDU with the best possible conditions that will enable them to actively participate and co-create in all parts of their education and living situation.

# 2 External organisation structure



Our members make up our Council which means they are in control of MDSU. To help the Council administrate their meetings there is a Presidium that consists of a President, Vice president and a Secretary. The election committee, elected by the Council, helps MDSU recruit people to various positions.

The Board, elected by the Council, consists of a Presidium (Chairman and Vice chairman), the Council's President, the Chairman of the Doctoral Student Council, and five ordinary members. The board leads MDSU according to the Council's decisions. When the board is not in session it is the Board Presidium's mission to ensure that MDSU follows the goals and aspirations set by the Council and Board.

To help the Board lead MDSU there is the Doctoral Student Council, the LF committee, Area managers and Employees, and SIEC.

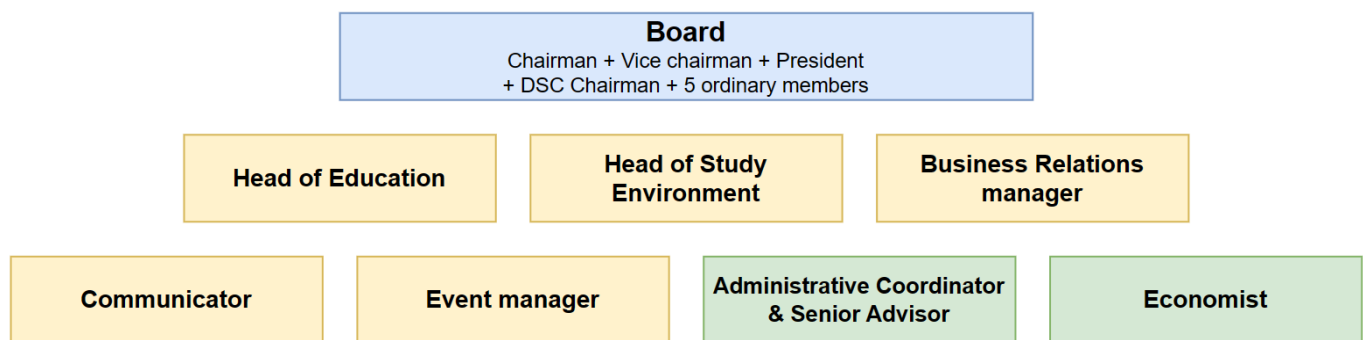
The **Doctoral Student Council (DSC)** represents the University's research students and ensures their rights, obligations, and well-being. It acts as a voice for doctoral students, providing advice, assistance, and guidance. The DSC also works to maintain educational quality and a positive environment for all research and doctoral students.

The **LF committee** is made up by all union, program and student associations related to Mälardalen's University. Through this committee the Board gets continuous input from students on what they need and want from MDSU.

**Area managers and Employees** are the people who help the Board carry out the council's decisions and to ensure that MDSU runs smoothly and that all assigned tasks are carried out.

**Student influence education committee (SIEC):** The main goal for this committee, led by MDSU, is to let all student representatives and representatives from each program associations meet once a month to inform, ask for input and share experiences related to formal student influence. The main purpose of SIEC is to improve the overall experience of support for the student representatives.

### 3 Internal organisation structure



The **Board** is the body that ensures that area managers and employees are well cared for, keep MDSU running and that they work toward goals set by the Council and Board. **Area managers** (*yellow*) work directly for students, **employees** (*green*) work to support the organisation internally.

### 4 Vision

MDSU serves as the representative body for students enrolled at MDU. With a focus on sustainability and quality assurance of education, advocating for students' rights, and fostering an engaged student life our organisation strives to build a strong community and enhance the overall educational experience for our members and for students overall. This serves as the foundation of all our activities and will continue to guide our future endeavours and aspirations. MDSU must ensure all students enrolled at MDU has the chance to influence their education as well as their study environment.

Our organisation endeavours to facilitate an academic experience that is both valuable and enhancing, thereby enabling our students to secure a noteworthy education of which they can be proud of and encourage students to lifelong learning. **Student Influence must and will always be at the heart of Mälardalen's Student Union.**

**“Our vision is to create a sustainable and valuable student life through collaboration”.**

We are a collaborative Student Union. We believe students are the future of society which is why it is important to collaborate with our stakeholders to prepare us students for our futures. We believe that through collaboration we can create a better, stronger, and more sustainable society for all.

## 5 Goals

For the financial year of 2023/2024 there will be five main areas of focus: Internal organisation, student influence, student work relations, student life, and external communication.

### 5.1 Internal Organisation

#### 5.1.1 Handover and team building

For MDSU to survive and grow, it is crucial that it learns from and within itself. This means that the **handover** between old and upcoming elected officials must ensure that all relevant information and connections are passed on. The handover process, introduction, and training should be accessible and effective, and a standardised process must be implemented. With the full-time employed Student Union Administrative Coordinator and Senior Advisor, *funded by MDU*, this will be possible from 2023/2024. The Administrative Coordinator and Senior Advisor will work on guidelines, standardisation of the handover process and team building activities for the Board, Council's Presidium, Area managers and Employees.

Once a month there shall be an activity for the Board, Council's Presidium, Area managers and Employees to ensure that there is cohesion in between the groups and that all groups feel they can seek support from one another.

After every weekly meeting the Board' Presidium and Area managers will have lunch together somewhere they all agree on to promote inclusivity and cohesion.

#### 5.1.2 Work environment

##### Union house G6:

The G6 house has not been taken care of for many years. This year, we are planning to work closely with the G6 house foundation to collaborate on renovations inside and outside of the building.

##### Union house J3:

When Eskilstuna municipality begins the construction work on the second floor of J3, we will need to set up our office and reception areas. As of the date writing this document, we do not have a set date for when we can start using our areas, but renovation plans and funds are needed for the renovation of our office space at J3. The presidium and the business manager must work closely together on finding funding for this matter.

##### Psychosocial work environment:

Working in an organisation such as MDSU can be stressful and is at times high pressure. We need to establish strategies that enables everyone working in MDSU to handle all situations they will get exposed to.

##### Implement a better schedule culture:

The working hours of the board's presidium and the area managers should be flexible and adjustable. Due to working hours being abnormal and having to work over two campuses, the presidium and area

managers must be able to schedule their time according to their needs. The option to work from home should be available.

### 5.1.3 Communication

#### Internal communication:

Our internal communication needs to improve so we can be more unified and let us feel closer to each other. Processes for daily and weekly updates need to be established or updated to fit our needs. We also need strategies to handle the pressure of working in an organisation such as ours.

#### Management communication and support

The presidium should divide the area managers amongst themselves so they can support the area managers better within their assigned tasks as well as answer any questions, concerns, and challenges they may face. This will improve the communication and the relationship between the presidium and the area managers.

## 5.2 Student influence

**Student influence is our main mission.** A strong and independent student influence is important for quality of education, students' legal security and for critically reviewing MDU's activities. MDSU's goal is to fill all student representatives' (SR) seats at MDU. MDSU has created SIEC to have a close dialogue with the student representatives and to support them, and for the 23/24 term MDSU will work to improve and take SIEC to the next level.

Our goals for student influence are:

- Obtain approval from UKÄ.
- Educate all students at MDU about student influence and their rights.
- Fill 100 % of the student representative positions at MDU's councils.
- Develop SIEC based on the feedback given by SIEC members.
- Give all students the opportunity to give input on bigger general topics discussed by SIEC and that any student can easily submit their own topics too.
- Improve documentation of general councils at MDU.
- Improve collaboration with the Doctoral Student Council.
- Create structure for the doctoral student representatives.
- Make the education regarding student influence for the student representatives more accessible as they can be appointed at any time, and it is not possible to always have a physical lecture.
- Create a contract for student representatives clarifying expectations, based on students' feedback.
- Update the handbook for student representatives about student influence together with MDU.
- Make clear what we expect from student representatives' documentations.
- Make student representative education digital with a digital quiz.
- Develop SIEC to be digital and mandatory. Have the agendas as google forms.
- SIEC meetings shall be monthly, longer, and more structured.
- Send monthly invites to MDU to give them the opportunity to inform about different topics during SIEC meetings.
- Have MDU start using the "Keep MDSU updated" Teams for important documents.

- Improve work with studentinlagor.
- Make time report system for student representatives.
- Make a clear yearly plan for student influence.
- Provide profile products for student representatives.
- Have more student representatives hand in their time reports.
- More relaxed student representative events every now and then, such as BBQs, to motivate and attract them.
- Explore options for fancy sittings to serve as student representative celebrations.

## 5.3 Student work relations

### Högvarv Västerås and Högvarv Eskilstuna.

23/24 term we are collaborating with MDU and are combining Högvarv and master thesis day (*exjobbsdag*) making it bigger and more valuable for students. It will be held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October at Västerås campus and 26<sup>th</sup> of October at Eskilstuna campus. The spring 2024 Högvarv will be held in February 2024 and MDSU and MDU are planning on collaborating for that.

### Intro fairs

This year MDU decided to have one big welcoming ceremony in Västerås, for students from both Västerås and Eskilstuna, for the Autumn 2023 term. Therefore, we will hold one intro fair as we believe this gives more opportunity to get more companies to attend the intro fair. As for Spring 2024, MDU has not yet made any decision if they will have welcoming ceremony on both campuses, therefore we will proceed to plan as if it will be on both campuses.

### Improve students' work skills

This year we would like have events such as improving as a public speaker, job interview lectures, how to improve CVs, what looks good on a CV etc. to ensure our members and all students are prepared when they get started on their careers.

Additionally, more students should be involved as volunteers in planning events with MDU and other external partners, to enable our students the opportunity to improve their skills and get experience needed for their future careers.

### Collaboration companies

We need to maintain our agreements with our collaborative partners from the business sector. Furthermore, we want to acquire at least three or more big package collaboration partners to support MDSU's finances.

## 5.4 Student life

### Events

This year we want to collaborate with union, program and student associations for parties and events. We want to keep improving our relationship and work closely with them, especially with student associations so all our members can attend their activities and events for free or at discounted prices, we also want to collaborate on events meant for all students.

We want to include student associations more, such as MSS, ELSA, MDF IC, and Sexmästeriet, and have them partake more during rookie periods. These associations should also be kept updated on planned events.

Furthermore, collaboration with MDU and IC to create events that can include international students more is important. Rather than having events that only target international students, more events should target both groups, meaning the events should be held and marketed primarily in English.

We would like to collaborate with and give support to MSS and ELSA so students can have active and healthy lifestyles.

We want to attend and participate in Eskilstuna Pride together with union, program, and student associations.

### **Mental health.**

We see more students becoming stressed and anxious with their performance, both in their student lives as well as in their private lives. Therefore, we want to collaborate with Student Health Care on campaigns, guest speakers and promote mental health. We believe students need to be more informed about sustainable student lifestyles.

### **Study Environment**

We see students drop out of MDU because of struggles with academic abilities. MDU's library is planning to expand their work toward improving students' academic abilities, and we want to collaborate and support their endeavour.

We conducted a survey regarding study environment at MDU during the 22/23 academic year, the result from this survey needs to be spread amongst students and MDU, and there needs to be a follow up with MDU to see if they have done any improvements. Furthermore, we would like to improve the survey questions and conduct the survey annually.

Two to three students should be recruited as student representatives for study environment.

Promote and market the "Aj, Oj, Halloj" system to students so they can report injuries, accidents or give suggestions directly to MDU.

### **Student apartments.**

Last year's academic year, we conducted a survey regarding student apartments in Västerås and Eskilstuna, the results of the surveys need to be spread to students as well as Bostad Västerås and Bostad Eskilstuna. We will attend regular meetings with Bostad Västerås and Bostad Eskilstuna to voice students' opinions and to improve the quality of student apartments. Furthermore, we would like to improve the survey questions and conduct the survey annually.

### **Rookie Period (RP)**

Routine and structure over which days MDSU holds events and which days program and student associations hold events need to be created and upheld. This will make planning and organizing RP easier and more convenient for program and student associations and MDSU.

The rookie policy and mascot rules must be kept updated by having dialogues with students during meetings with Generals for RP and LF meetings.



## 5.5 External communication

Our external communication needs to be clearer and more streamlined – to do this we need to have less channels of communication and to use them better. Communication must always be in both Swedish and English to promote inclusivity. Our website should be the main channel for the bulk of our organisation’s information.

### LF Meetings

We need to improve communication with program and student associations. Because of having too many communication channels, proper communication has been made extremely hard. Therefore, we would like to use only Teams for direct communication with all union, program, and student associations.

We need to create a structure for the LF meetings by asking how the union, program and students associations would like to have the meetings. The chairman and/or the vice chairman must start to attend every LF meeting to give and receive updates from students.

### Toilet Paper

We need to create fun and attractive templates for Toilet Paper.

Toilet Paper must be updated every month with information related to students.

### Social Media

The social media average reach needs to increase: For Instagram we want to reach 3 000 per month, and for Facebook we want to reach 2 500 per month.

### Membership

During the 22/23 academic year we managed to increase our number of members by 875, giving a total of 1’152 members. Our goal for the 23/24 academic year is to have 20 % of all students registered on Ladok as members of MDSU, while writing this document 20 % is around 2102 students.

**Students are the future of society.**