

Linnaeus Union's Handling of Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Inappropriate Behaviour



Content

Part I.

[Linnaeus Union's Handling of Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Inappropriate Behavior.](#)

Specifies how the board of Linnaeus Union should act in cases where a member has subjected a person to behaviour that contradicts our purpose (see Article 1 of the statutes) or has acted in a manner that contradicts our core values.

Part II.

[Linnaeus Union's Recommended Action Plan for Student Associations in Cases of Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Inappropriate Behavior](#) for student associations.

A recommended action plan for the boards of Linnaeus Union's student associations for handling cases where a member has subjected a person to behaviour or acted in a manner that contradicts Linnaeus Union's core values or the association's own statutes.

Part I.

Linnaeus Union's Handling of Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Inappropriate Behavior.

§1.0 Introduction

Specifies how the board of Linnaeus Union should act in cases where a member has subjected a person to behavior that contradicts our purpose (see Article 1 of the statutes) or has acted in a manner that contradicts our core values. The highest decision-making body of Linnaeus Union, the ordinary general meeting, adopted an addition to the organization's values at the third general meeting during the 2022/2023 fiscal year. The addition reads: "Linnaeus Union stands for the equal value of all individuals and therefore condemns discrimination based on the seven grounds of discrimination stated in the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567, SFS 2014:958). We also strongly condemn sexual harassment. Discrimination as defined in the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567, SFS 2014:958) is not permitted in our student life." Furthermore, it is stated in Linnaeus Union's statutes under Article 3: "When a member knowingly acts against Linnaeus Union's purpose or otherwise works against the organization, the board may exclude the member from Linnaeus Union" and under Article 1: "Linnaeus Union shall also promote its members' studies and everything related to their studies in cooperation with the surrounding society."

Given the organization's values and our statutes, it is of utmost importance that the board of Linnaeus Union takes the issue of sexual harassment and violence very seriously. It is crucial to ensure a safe environment for everyone during activities organized by our associations and in contexts where many students are present. Therefore, it is Linnaeus Union's responsibility to work towards creating a safe and secure environment in these situations.

§1.2 Confidentiality

Absolute confidentiality applies during the handling of these cases. Individuals who may be informed about ongoing case management include the board, employees, auditors, and individuals involved in a potential investigation.

Terminology

The Seven Grounds of Discrimination

The seven grounds of discrimination according to Swedish legislation are:

- Gender
- Gender identity or expression
- Ethnic origin
- Religion or other belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

Harassment is behaviour that violates a person's dignity and can be linked to the grounds of discrimination. To be classified as harassment according to the Discrimination Act, it must be established that the harassment is specifically directed at a person because of, for example, gender, sexual orientation, or any of the other grounds of discrimination. The person experiencing harassment should clearly indicate to the perpetrator that the behaviour is unwelcome. In some situations, no explicit clarification is necessary as the harassment is evident.

Sexual harassment is behaviour of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity. In addition to comments and words, it may involve unwanted touching, inappropriate compliments, invitations, or sexual innuendos. Sexual harassment is unwelcome behaviour from the perspective of the victim. Unlike other forms of harassment, sexual harassment does not need to be linked to a ground of discrimination to be considered as such under the law.

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the intentional use or threat of physical force or violence directed towards oneself, another person, a group of people, or an organization, and which results in or is likely to result in death, physical or psychological harm, developmental impairment, or an inability to meet basic needs.

To clarify, it should be noted that temporary disagreements, conflicts, and problems in collaborative relationships are generally considered normal occurrences. These can be resolved through dialogue, listening, acceptance, and respect for others' right to their opinions.

Harassment, violence, and sexual harassment will be collectively referred to as "incidents" below.

§ 1.2 Linnaeus Union's Response to Incidents

In the event of an incident, Linnaeus Union urges its members to file a police report. The board and staff of Linnaeus Union can also assist in filing a police report. If a police report is filed, it facilitates the efforts of Linnaeus Union and the police to create a sense of security among students.

All members are strongly encouraged to report known incidents to the chairman or the head of social matters in Linnaeus Union.

If a member has been subjected to an incident, it is the responsibility of Linnaeus Union's board to:

- Encourage the victim to file a police report and assist with the report,
- Inform the victim about the existence of student welfare office and provide contact information, and
- Assess appropriate actions against the perpetrator.

When assessing appropriate actions against the perpetrator, the following should be considered:

- The victim's account of the incident,
- The perpetrator's account of the incident,
- Testimonies from any witnesses to the incident.

If there are conflicting testimonies, the board should make a credibility assessment.

Factors that may be considered in such an assessment include:

- The emotions experienced by those involved after the incident, with significant weight given to the victim's feelings,
- Testimonials from close acquaintances of the victim about their perception of the situation surrounding the perpetrator, and

- Other circumstances relevant to the specific case.

If the victim has already clearly acted against Linnaeus Union's purpose, the board may take action without consulting the perpetrator.

However, Linnaeus Union emphasizes once again that the investigation is facilitated if the victim files a police report. Linnaeus Union's staff and board can also provide support during the reporting process.

If a member of Linnaeus Union's board commits an incident, the remaining board members will assess appropriate actions. Possible actions in this case may include a strong recommendation to resign or a vote of no confidence. If a person has applied for or been elected to Linnaeus Union's board and is found to have committed an incident, the board will investigate the matter for appropriate actions. Appropriate actions may include urging the individual to resign from their position.

If the individual refuses to resign, this goes against Linnaeus Union's values, statutes, and this document, and therefore renders them unsuitable for their position. Therefore, if there is resistance, consideration should be given to issuing a vote of no confidence against the individual.

Possible actions that the board may take against the perpetrator include:

- Issuing a warning of potential exclusion.
- Conducting a corrective conversation with the perpetrator to address the wrongfulness of these incidents.
- Imposing a prohibition from participating in activities organized by Linnaeus Union.
- Providing a warning of prohibition from participating in Linnaeus Union's activities.
- Implementing temporary exclusion.
- Enforcing permanent exclusion.

Part II

Linnaeus Union's Recommended Action Plan for Student Associations in Cases of Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Inappropriate Behavior for student associations.

The action plan for handling inappropriate behaviour is based on Linnaeus Union's Core Values, specifically point 5: Tolerance: "Linnaeus Union stands for the equal value of all individuals and therefore condemns discrimination based on the seven grounds of discrimination as defined in the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567, SFS 2014:958). We also strongly condemn sexual harassment. Discrimination as defined in the Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567, SFS 2014:958) shall not occur in our student life." Additionally, it is stated in Linnaeus Union's statutes under Article 3: "When a member knowingly acts against Linnaeus Union's purpose or otherwise works against the organization, the board may exclude the member from Linnaeus Union."

Definitions of Key Terms:

Inappropriate Behavior: A member has subjected a person to violence, sexual harassment, discrimination, or acted in a manner that opposes the activities of the association.

The seven grounds of discrimination according to Swedish legislation are:

- Gender
- Gender identity or expression
- Ethnic origin
- Religion or other belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

Harassment is behaviour that violates a person's dignity and can be linked to the grounds of discrimination. To be classified as harassment under the Discrimination Act, it must be established that harassment is specifically directed at a person because of, for example, gender, sexual orientation, or any of the other grounds of discrimination. The person experiencing harassment should clearly indicate to the perpetrator that the behaviour is unwelcome. In some situations, no explicit explanation is required as harassment is obvious.

Sexual harassment is behaviour of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity. In addition to comments and words, it may involve unwanted touching, inappropriate compliments, invitations, or sexual innuendos. Sexual harassment is unwelcome behaviour from the perspective of the victim. Unlike other forms of harassment, sexual harassment does not need to be linked to a ground of discrimination to be considered as such under the law.

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the intentional use or threat of physical force or violence directed towards oneself, another person, a group of people, or an organization, and which results in or is likely to result in death, physical or psychological harm, developmental impairment, or inability to meet basic needs.

To clarify, it should be noted that temporary disagreements, conflicts, and problems in collaborative relationships are generally considered normal occurrences. These can be resolved through dialogue, listening, acceptance, and respect for others' right to their opinions.

- Purpose and Objectives

The following describes a recommended action plan for how boards of student associations can handle cases where a member has engaged in inappropriate behaviour.

The purpose of the recommended action plan is to provide guidelines and support to board members handling cases of inappropriate behaviour.

Associations are encouraged to revise their statutes with Linnaeus Union's recommended action plan for inappropriate behaviour.

In light of Linnaeus Union's values and statutes, it is of utmost importance that student associations entering into collaboration agreements with Linnaeus Union also take the issue of sexual harassment and violence seriously. A good and inclusive student life, a safe and secure environment must be ensured for everyone during activities organized by Linnaeus Union and the associations that have collaboration agreements with Linnaeus Union, as well as in other contexts where a large number of students are present.

- Confidentiality

Absolute confidentiality applies during the handling of these cases. Individuals who may be informed about ongoing case management include the board, Linnaeus Union, Student Welfare Office, auditor/inspector, and individuals involved in a potential investigation.

- Reporting and Notification

Linnaeus Union encourages and supports members in filing a police report in the event of incidents.

In the event of an incident, relevant associations should also encourage their members to file a police report. If a police report is filed, it facilitates the efforts of the police to create a sense of security among students. Additionally, decisions regarding potential consequences for the perpetrator(s) can be made more promptly. If a board member or board of a student association seeks support or guidance in handling the case, they are encouraged to report known incidents to the chairman or the head of social matters in Linnaeus Union.

- Objectivity

Those making decisions regarding incidents of violence must be objective in their assessment. Personal biases and emotional reactions should be avoided when making decisions. Personal relationships with those involved must not influence board members' assessment or decision-making. If this occurs, the board member should declare a conflict of interest and refrain from handling the case.

- If the incident involves a board member

If a board member is accused or involved in the sequence of events of the incident, the case should be referred to Linnaeus Union's chairman or the head of social matters for an objective handling. Linnaeus Union will then make an assessment of appropriate action according to the action plan.

Possible actions in this case may include:

- Warning of exclusion
- Conducting a corrective conversation with the perpetrator to address the wrongfulness of these incidents
- Temporary exclusion as a representative on the board
- Permanent exclusion as a representative on the board
- Temporary exclusion
- Permanent exclusion.

• Assessment and Investigation

Factors to consider when assessing alleged incidents include:

- The victim's account of the incident,
- The perpetrator's account of the incident,
- Testimonials from any witnesses to the incident.

If there are conflicting testimonies, the board should make a credibility assessment.

Other important aspects to include in the investigation are:

- The emotions experienced by those involved after the incident, with significant weight given to the victim's feelings.
- Testimonials from close acquaintances of the victim about their perception of the situation surrounding the perpetrator.
- Other circumstances relevant to the specific case.

If the victim has already clearly acted against the association's purpose or has a previous warning, the board may act without consulting the perpetrator.

• Responsibility and Decision-Making on Actions in Incidents

If a member has been subjected to an incident, it is the board's responsibility to:

- Encourage the victim to file a police report
- Inform the victim about the existence of student welfare office and provide contact information
- Assess appropriate actions against the perpetrator.

For a decision on appropriate action in an incident, a board vote is conducted. A clear majority is required for a decision on appropriate action. A board member can request a closed vote. Each board member is responsible for abstaining from voting if they cannot make an objective assessment.

Possible actions that the board may take against the perpetrator include:

- Warning of exclusion
- Conducting a corrective conversation with the perpetrator to address the wrongfulness of these incidents
- Prohibition from participating in activities organized by the association
- Warning of prohibition from participating in the association's activities
- Temporary exclusion
- Permanent exclusion.