

## **Questionnaire on internationalisation and equal treatment of employees**

Initiated and administered by the Equal opportunities group at the Department of Philosophy  
Spring 2014

### **Summary**

The study was conducted in order to enhance our work on equality of opportunities for everyone and recognize problems which one might be encountering in our work environment. The questionnaire was distributed both electronically and on paper: sent to the mailing list Personal\_fil.lu.se containing 72 employees and put into the employees' mail boxes. In all, 37 persons have filled in the questionnaire and answered our questions (30 electronically, 7 on paper). In sum, 80% experience that the department as international and/or culturally diverse. On the department level, it was suggested that international employees could be more included in the teaching at the department and that a larger number of courses could be held in English. One third of the respondents think that the department could take more advantage of the benefits of our diversity. A number of employees report that they have missed important information because the information has not been available in English. However, this concerns mainly information from the faculty level which is often provided only in Swedish (newsletter, syllabi for doctoral students, mandatory introductory course for doctoral students, information about grant meetings, information about administrative procedures, welcome for new employees etc). Judging by the answers to the questions below, the respondents are engaged in this issue.

### **Answers to 12 particular questions**

**1. Employment status:** 16 PhD students, 1 post doc, 16 researcher/lecturer, 3 administrative staff, 1 without marking

**2. Gender:** 27 male (73%), 9 female (24%), 1 has not marked any gender

**3. Higher education degree from a Swedish university:** 27 in Sweden (bachelor 1, master 12, PhD. 16, 1 IMBA), 7 no answer/outside of Sweden

**4. First language:** 26 Swedish as first language (70%), 11 other (30%) (German, Dutch, Icelandic, Danish, French, Czech)

**5. Second language(s):** English, German, Hungarian, Dutch, French, Spanish, Swedish

**6. "Have you experienced any language related problems at the department?"**

Yes: 12 (7 whose first language is not Swedish)

No: 25 (4 whose first language is not Swedish)

**"If so, what kind of problems?"**

Five persons point out that the mandatory introductory course for PhD students, given at the HT Faculty, is offered in Swedish only. Two persons mention that the information from the faculty level usually is in Swedish; these two

persons also point out that most of the internal staff pages, and the webpage for registering for the “Welcome day in English for new employees”, are in Swedish.

At the level of the department, one person whose first language is not Swedish has encountered problems with “info and meetings and forms that are exclusively in Swedish”. A person whose first language is Swedish also notices that some information is distributed in Swedish only. Another person whose first language is not Swedish points out that there is a “lack of opportunity to teach below master level”. One person whose first language is Swedish says that most meetings and seminars are in English which is fatiguing and has the consequence that one is not able to express oneself clearly and that “a lot of time is spent correcting the information flow”. Another person whose first language is Swedish has encountered problems when interacting with visiting researchers who are not fluent in English or Swedish. Yet another person whose first language is Swedish points out that the general syllabus for doctoral studies in theoretical/practical philosophy is available in Swedish only and that many of the documents on the department’s website for doctoral students are available in Swedish only. Still another person whose first language is Swedish has encountered some problems in trying to explain administrative procedures to non-Swedish speakers.

**7. “Have you ever missed important information because it has not been made available in English/Swedish?”**

Yes: 3 (3 whose first language is not Swedish)

No: 34 (8 whose first language is not Swedish)

**“If so, what kind of information did you miss? And is this a recurring problem?”**

Since only three persons answered that they have missed important information, their answers are quoted in full:

“I read/speak Swedish, but sometimes are important information (bureaucracy/administrative related) only available in Swedish.”

“info communicated in ways (‘jargony’ language) that google translate does not reliably. It has gotten better, though, I think.”

“Especially, most calls for grants are in Swedish and if a translation occurs it is often quite late. Newsletters containing important information about for instance meetings about grants etc. are often in Swedish.”

**8. “Do you experience the department as international and culturally diverse?”**

Answers:

Yes: 22 (8 whose first language is not Swedish)

No: 2 (1 whose first language is not Swedish)

International but not culturally: 7 (0 whose first language is not Swedish)

“Somewhat”: 4 (1 whose first language is not Swedish)

Don’t know/blank: 3 (0 whose first language is not Swedish)

Among those who answered “Yes” one noted that the amount of foreign PhD students has increased.

Among those who answered “No” one wrote as follows: “rather not, some pockets of it are diverse, but not overall”. The other answered: “Even though lots of colleagues are from other countries I’d still say the way things are run is Swedish”.

Seven people answered that they found the department to be international but not culturally diverse. Someone noted that it is a predominantly western culture at the department. Someone else noted that “the culture at the department is perhaps Swedish, but also a culture of its own.”

Four people answered in a way that should not be interpreted as a straightforward yes or no. Their answers are labeled as “somewhat”. The following are quotes from them:

“It appears to be quite diverse, except for the fact that there are relatively few women in practical and theoretical philosophy. The cognitive science seems to do better in this regard.”

“I suppose, yes, pretty much—employees constitute a rather homogenous group”

“Even though the majority, of employees are Swedish, the department do, in most occasions, appear international and culturally diverse.”

“Somewhat but it could be more so”

One person answered: “don’t know” and two persons did not answer at all.

### **9. “Would you say that the department takes optimal advantage of the benefits of our diversity?”**

Answers:

Yes: 12 (3 whose first language is not Swedish)

No: 18 (6 whose first language is not Swedish)

Blank: 3 (1 whose first language is not Swedish)

No opinion: 5 (0 whose first language is not Swedish)

### **“If not, how could the situation be improved?”**

Many answered that they didn’t know. One answered that there was not much cultural diversity to take optimal advantage of. Another said that it is hard to assess what “optimal advantage” would be. Several people mentioned that teaching could be made in English (those quotes that are followed by \* indicate that they are made by someone whose first language is not Swedish):

“International employees could be more included in the teaching at the department.”

“Allowing for some introductory courses to be taught in English, as in other departments in humanities (e.g. linguistics, archaeology, etc.)”

“Perhaps more courses conducted in English at the master/doctoral-levels.”

“By teaching all courses in English.”

Other views to be mentioned are the following:

“Encourage collaboration between universities outside of Sweden.”

“A distinct leadership at the department.”

“More informal discussions and exchange about cultural diversity over a typical meal etc.”

“Make English the standard language, treat people the same irrespective of where they come from, or may go to next.”

“We might get better at introducing the international staff to what are the benefits and disadvantages of making a career in Sweden.”

“Gatherings, both formal and informal, over the discipline boundaries are few and far between. Teachers seldom meet in a more organized fashion.”

**10. “Do you think that international employees have the same opportunities to make an academic career at the department as employees with a background within Swedish higher education?”**

Yes: 13 (3 non-Swedish)

No: 12 (5 non-Swedish)

No opinion: 13 (3 non-Swedish)

**“If not, what are the main difficulties/obstacles?”**

Participants who believe that opportunities are not equal gave the following motivations

- Formally same opportunities but some “soft variables” may make the difference in getting secure positions and favour Swedish speakers (2)
- There are essentially two career tracks: one for lecturerships and secured positions - for which Swedish speakers are favoured - and the other for project financing - for which opportunities are more on a par (8)
- Lack of information on how the granting system and the education system works (3)
- Opportunities are essentially balanced but the lack of information in Swedish gives a bad impression to non-native speakers (2)
- Familism/provincialism plays in favour of Swedish native speakers (2)

**11. “Do you think arranging undergraduate courses in English would be of benefit to the employees/students?”**

Yes: 22 (6 non-Swedish)

No: 4 (1 non-Swedish)

No opinion/it depends: 11 (4 non-Swedish)

Participants gave the following motivations for their answers:

- It depends on the number of Swedish/non-Swedish speakers and the effective possibility of attracting international students (4).
- No-answers are motivated by lack of precision in teaching in a non-native language and the fact that Swedish students may not feel comfortable (5)
- Yes, the lingua franca of the discipline is English (6)
- Examinations must be assured to be in Swedish (1)
- Faculty does not allow (1)
- Bilingual courses are an option to explore (1)

**12. Interested to participate on a panel about internationalization and equal treatment:** 13 (35%) persons indicated that they are interested, one additional person supports this initiative fully but does not have time to get involved.

in Lund, May 14th 2014

Equal opportunities group (Henrik Andersson, Tobias Hansson Wahlberg, Jana Holsanova, Carlo Proietti, Paula Quinon, and student representatives)