

# Policy regarding English as a working language at the Stockholm School of Economics, SSE

Adopted xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, 2007

## 1 Introduction

In the document "Approaching the future with SSE: A forward-look status report" the President describes his vision of SSE developing into a leading international business school:

Internationalization is the key to the strategy SSE has chosen. For our educational programs, internationalization means a whole-hearted adoption of the Bologna model and continued development of the MBA program. For the faculty, internationalization means that the School will recruit new professors and aspiring professors on the international market in competition with other business schools. For students, internationalization means a stimulating, multicultural learning environment, but also increased competition. For SSE as a whole, internationalization means that our performance as a teaching and research institution will be compared to the accomplishments of Europe's leading business schools.

One implication of this approach is that a larger proportion of our students, doctoral candidates and faculty will come from abroad.

Expectations are that internationalization will improve the quality of SSE's programs, and it is also a prerequisite for continued success in international rankings that review the performance of business schools, such as those done by *The Financial Times*. For instance in the FT rankings of European Masters degree programs in management, 2006, the following criteria accounted for 12% of the overall ranking: international faculty, international students and international board members. Along with the criteria international mobility, international experience and languages required on graduation, these internationalization criteria account for 37% of the overall ranking, comparable to the single most important criterion, weighted salary, which accounts for 20%.

Implementing the internationally recognized degree structure prescribed in the Bologna accords is expected to increase the number of foreign students and to maintain at least the current level of student-exchange activity. Moreover, according to the Higher Education Law (SFS 2006:1053), a masters degree should develop skills and abilities that enable students to:

. . . demonstrate in both domestic and international settings the ability to describe and discuss with clarity and for diverse audiences their conclusions as well as the knowledge and arguments upon which those conclusions rest.

It is reasonable to interpret this objective to mean that in addition to a high level of general proficiency in their first language and in English, students must also master the professional discourses of business and economics in these languages.

The goal of recruiting an international faculty and international students and the necessity of both faculty and students working effectively require that English assumes a larger role as a working language at SSE. The point of this policy, which comes into effect at the start of the fall term 2008, is to specify the extent to which this change must take place.

With this policy SSE will:

- contribute to the development of students' language proficiency, their command of academic usage and their ability communicate knowledgeably in both their first language and in English
- promote the mobility, employability and competitive advantage of students and staff on both the domestic and international labor markets by encouraging advanced English language skills
- become an attractive university to foreign researchers, teachers and students
- communicate with a larger international audience by producing web pages as well as other relevant documents and publications in English

## **2 Swedish**

SSE will contribute to the maintenance and development of the specialized Swedish required for business and economics. Swedish-speaking students learn the fundamentals of this usage during the first two years of the bachelors degree program, when Swedish is typically the language of instruction. This does not preclude the possibility that English can serve as the language of instruction in certain courses or that certain seminar series can be conducted by an English-speaking teacher (this is decided by the department or by the course coordinator). Course literature is typically in English, but there may be instances of literature in Swedish within those disciplines where specialized Swedish terminology exists (for instance accounting and business law).

For courses within the masters degree and third year of the bachelors degree, lists of relevant Swedish technical terms will be maintained when such lists are deemed to be necessary.

Masters theses and doctoral dissertations written in English must be accompanied by a Swedish summary.

Faculty members who do not speak Swedish are expected to have acquired within three years of their employment a command of Swedish adequate for contributing to SSE's external communications and participating in the Swedish public debate on economic and business-related issues. Moreover, knowledge of Swedish also facilitates integration into Swedish society and increases the likelihood that a faculty member will remain in Sweden and contribute to the country's continued development.

Swedish will for the most part remain the informal language at SSE. Conversations between Swedish-speaking colleagues and correspondence such as e-mail between Swedish-speaking senders and recipients will happen most naturally in Swedish.

## **3 English**

English will be a working language at SSE to a greater extent than has thus far been the case. The following summarizes the roles English will have as a language of instruction, for official communication, for meetings and negotiations, for documentation and for informal communication.

### **3.1 Language of instruction**

For courses in the following programs English will be used for lectures and seminars as well as for teaching materials. (However, if only Swedish-speaking students are enrolled in a particular course or seminar series, teaching can take place in Swedish.)

*Bachelor of Science, third year.* Exchange students who do not speak Swedish will take courses at this level.

*Master of Science.* The masters program will enroll students who do not speak Swedish and host a large number of exchange students, both within and outside of the CEMS program.

*Master of Business Administration (MBA).* The majority of students enrolled in the MBA program do not speak Swedish.

*Doctor of Philosophy programs.* At present Swedish speakers constitute a majority of doctoral candidate in business administration and a minority in economics, finance and statistics. It should nevertheless be possible to pursue a doctoral degree at SSE without linguistic obstacles in every subject, even for candidates who do not speak Swedish.

IFL programs (Executive MBA, etc.) are not required to adopt English as the language of instruction or English course literature. However the current strategy at IFL targets a growing number of clients who do not speak Swedish and therefore a growing number of English programs. This strategy requires a more international faculty and greater familiarity with teaching in English among the Swedish faculty.

### **3.2 Language for official communication**

Internal communication with students and staff will take place in English and in certain cases in Swedish as well. External communication will be adapted to the recipient and delivered either in Swedish, in English or both as decided by the communications and marketing director.

### **3.3 Language for meetings and negotiations**

Written material for use before, during or after meetings will normally be in English. The chair or convener can deviate from this basic principle in the event of special circumstances. It is important to observe that even people who are not present at a meeting may need to refer to preparatory material or minutes; this means that in most cases complete documentation will be in English.

The actual spoken discussion can take place in either Swedish or English depending upon who is in attendance. The chair or convener will decide.

### **3.4 Language of documentation**

Legal documents, for example bylaws and student handbooks, will be in both Swedish and English, with the Swedish version taking precedence in the adjudication of disputes.

Other documents will be in either Swedish or English. The person responsible for any given errand will decide.

### **3.5 Informal language**

The informal language will be Swedish or English depending upon who is involved in the conversation.

## **4 Conclusion**

In order that this policy can be successfully implemented, it is essential that SSE's management allocate resources for language training, editing and translation. It is also important that SSE requires certifiable English proficiency as part of the recruitment process of new faculty and other employees.