

Halmstad University  
**Heading towards  
2020**

Vision

Research and  
education strategy



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# Halmstad University heading towards 2020

## Introduction

At the same time as Halmstad University in 2013 celebrated its 30 years as an independent higher institution, the University was already looking to be even better for the years ahead. For a couple of years now, at the University, we have worked with the University's profiling – our way to meet external requirements, as well as our own, to clearly articulate what our distinctive character and our unique contribution is regarding higher education in Sweden. Everything is aimed to contribute to welfare and sustainable growth, as well as solutions to social problems of various kinds. At the same time we share the fundamental task – education and research – with all other universities.

In the autumn of 2013, the University governing board adopted a new vision and a new research and education strategy for Halmstad University. It is these important guidelines that indicate the direction of the University until 2020. Vision is our beacon – something to strive for. The research and education strategy sets our major goals for the future, and also adds a basis for how they will be achieved.

Together, based upon these guidelines which we rely on when formulating operational plans, budget documents, research strategies and other planning documents, we are now aiming for the University's development as an Innovation Driven University.



Mikael Alexandersson  
Vice-Chancellor

# Halmstad University's vision

Established by Halmstad University governing board, October 25th, 2013. Diary no: L 2013/131

Halmstad University prepares people  
for the future by creating values, driving  
innovation and developing society.

**v**alue  
**i**nnovation  
**s**ociety

## What is our vision?

Our vision expresses a long-term goal – a beacon to strive for. It can mean different things to different people in different positions at the University. However, all employees contribute to the efforts to help reaching this vision. Irrespective if working in administration, service, teaching or research, you need to put your working tasks in relation to the vision's three words: "how do I contribute, through my work, to create value, drive innovation and develop society?"

## Value

Through research and education, our University creates a variety of values for individuals as well as for society at large. It is about social, cultural and economic values that benefit both the public and the private sectors. We represent and safeguard the basic democratic values such as justice, openness, respect, responsibility and participation. At the same time, we will help to develop academic values such as freedom, integrity and quality. We will always have the need to ensure and protect independent and curiosity-driven research but also to safeguard the scientific variety. Every employee contributes in creating value – for our University, for students, researchers and society at large.

## Innovation

Innovation is a concept that has characterised Halmstad University from day one. For decades, the University's employees have encouraged innovation by working differently, breaking new grounds and being trans-boundary. We speak today of Halmstad University as the Innovation Driven University. Innovation happens in the meetings of different areas of knowledge, skills and experience. Being innovative implies fostering new ideas, behaviours and approaches. Everybody can encourage innovation in their work by being innovative in their tasks. It is also through innovative and creative thinking that we develop new knowledge – that leaves its mark in society.

## Society

When we develop newly acquired knowledge through research, and spread knowledge through education, we become a significant force in society. The innovations developed at our University, often in collaboration with industry and the public sector, create added values for the whole society. Preferably, we should stay ahead by anticipating future social changes; therefore, developing education and research to meet future needs and requirements. Ultimately, this is the way we can help to create a better world.

# Research and education strategy

Established by Halmstad University governing board, September 13th, 2013. Diary no: L 2013/9



# 1. Universities' challenges and tasks

Universities have an important role in providing education that leads to personal growth, critical thinking and schooling. Schooling, which is a broader concept than theoretical education, is linked to the assumption that man is an active being that transforms, creates and makes himself/herself into something that did not exist before. To cultivate oneself is to transform yourself into something not pre-given – in other words, to undergo a process of learning. An important element of this is to develop assessment skills and judgment. Therefore, a university shall provide students with opportunities for intellectual development and personal reflection, in order to develop both assessment skills and critical judgment.

In a rapidly changing world that is characterised by the very real process of globalisation, cultural diversity and ethnic pluralism, relationships increase between people. Furthermore, new patterns of communication are created through new areas of social media and new technologies. Looking at education from the individual's perspective, it is necessary to possess certain skills to be able to function as a citizen in a globalised world. The focus for our education should always be what these skills exactly are and how they can be developed through research and with our students.

## The university – a social force

Research and higher education is one of the most important social forces, not least in order to find solutions to problems that are seen as major challenges. Examples of such, raised in the EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020 are health, demographic change and well-being; safe, clean and efficient energy; smart, environment-friendly and integrated transport as well as inclusive, innovative and reflective communities. Research, education and innovation are seen as vital, contributing factors to achieve success in future societal challenges. The vision for Sweden in this context is to be an “innovative country of pioneering ideas and new ways of thinking and doing, to help shaping our future in a global world”.

Given these points, the universities' task is to be responsible for higher education and research which is a requirement for the innovations, social changes, that are necessary. The Swedish national innovation strategy has, as a strategic first objective, that “education and research at universities with world-class quality and relevance contributes to innovation” and that “strong Swedish research nodes are highly respected in the global knowledge network”. However, at the same time, stressing that companies and organisations, as well as public sectors and regions, need to strengthen their capacity for innovation – not least through a more developed cooperation with universities.

Thus, research and higher education play a key role in social development. People involved increasingly see the whole world as its arena. To achieve success, in a global perspective, they increase their focus and specialisations, while at the same time international collaborative networks are of increasing importance. Strong regional research and education environments serve as magnets to attract international investment in business growth and research. These environments contribute to increased knowledge development, innovation and social change, which is important in the global competition for researchers, students, funding and external collaboration.

## The university - a global player

The emergence of new economies and research nations is particularly significant in the international development. A survey made by The Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences shows that research links between Sweden and countries such as China, India and South Korea are underdeveloped. Therefore, they state that “it requires active, targeted action from the Swedish government and the management of the Swedish universities to strengthen research links to the new research countries”.

For an individual university wishing to play a prominent role both nationally and internationally, it is necessary to focus on quality regarding research, recruitment of researchers and lecturers with excellence and ambitious students. It is also necessary to focus on positioning itself in strategic international knowledge networks, and to develop cooperation with the surrounding community, nationally and internationally, thus providing good conditions and possibilities for lecturers, students and researchers to utilise their newly acquired knowledge. A university that succeeds in these aspects and becomes internationally acclaimed within its fields of success has a larger, international catchment in terms of students, at the same time as its importance for regional development increases.

The conditions and possibilities for the international recruitment of students and researchers to Sweden are good. Countries with strong development, with the ambition to become major leaders in their field, often have the goal of at least 50 per cent of all young people should undertake post-secondary higher education. A growing middle class in these countries also means an increased demand for higher education, quite often in another country, although Sweden has recently announced that state-funded higher education is to reduce in volume. However, a long-term increase in the number of foreign students coming to Sweden and paying for their education has been experienced. A contributing reason for why foreign students choose to study in Sweden is the opportunity to gain experience from the Swedish society. Therefore, improved international collaboration is important in this context, as this collaboration may also provide Swedish companies and organisations with favourable opportunities for international contacts. Such exchanges deepen relationships and contribute to a greater global understanding.

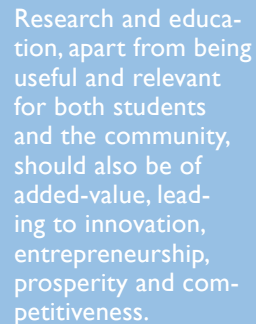


## Universities' increasing autonomy

Government resources for education and research will increasingly be allocated and reallocated based on quality criteria, bibliometrics, external funding and peer-reviewed studies. Collaboration with societal stakeholders to create innovation growth and development will also be encouraged. The latter is an expression of the view that research and education, apart from being useful and relevant for both students and the community, should also be of added-value, leading to innovation, entrepreneurship, prosperity and competitiveness.

The increasing autonomy of Swedish universities has given them a greater self-determination. It also means an increased oversight and control via organised quality evaluations. An ever increasing part of the costs is required and expected to be funded by means other than through direct government funding, such as paying students and external research funding. Younger universities have been able to obtain the right to teach at doctoral level within areas where they have particularly strong activity, however, without additional resources.

The fact that universities are regarded something of a social force, is well in line with the overall ideas and strategies that have shaped Halmstad University during its 30-year history. From day one, the University has taken an active role to pursue social progress, and is systematically working towards linking education and research to innovation, i.e. leading to that “changed ideas, behaviours and approaches gain ground and are distributed”. It is in this context that is now being used in realising the vision of the Innovation Driven University – a vision that also signifies that a university takes an active role in order to develop an innovation driven society, which in turn creates value.



Research and education, apart from being useful and relevant for both students and the community, should also be of added-value, leading to innovation, entrepreneurship, prosperity and competitiveness.

## 2. Halmstad University's conditions and profiling

For Halmstad University, the worldly requirements entail – as it does for all universities – the importance of developing quality concerning our work. This implies being clear in what we do and with whom we collaborate, having a clear and reputable profile, and conducting research and education that is relevant to society – something that has become increasingly important.

### Quality

Regular evaluations, with the assistance of external assessors, are of great importance when it comes to the development of quality in research and education. Therefore, Halmstad University carries out evaluations of its entire research and education. The fact that Halmstad University has obtained graduation rights at doctoral level in three research domains and been nominated to a so called “environment of knowledge and expertise”, supported by the Knowledge Foundation, is a sign of good quality. Halmstad University has been successful in the examining of new graduation rights within education, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This includes graduate economists, graduate engineers and teachers. Halmstad University has also, year after year, reached a top position in the external, national rankings of interaction and collaboration with the surrounding community.

### Positioning

Halmstad University's positioning, concerning which research and education areas we have chosen to work with, as well as what knowledge based networks we are a part of, is in constant development. The current positioning is largely successful in the sense that the educational courses are in demand, the research environments are successful and the national and international networks are extensive. There are several examples of programmes – some of them unique – that have been developed and shown to answer the interests that exist among young people and society today. Similarly, there are research environments that have been very successful in attracting external research funding and collaborating with companies and foreign academic partners. Nevertheless, the University's focus needs to develop even further – not least the joint positioning for education, research and collaboration.

### Profiling

Since the early 1980s, Halmstad University has been associated with innovation and new thinking. In line with this, Halmstad University undertook in 2012 and 2013 an intensive profiling project with the motto the Innovation Driven University. This expresses a commitment in having an active role in the development of

society – through education, research and innovation oriented achievements. Profiling as the Innovation Driven University encourages a continued trend towards challenging, innovative research projects and the development of new, groundbreaking areas of education. It conveys a desire that the results that education and research give, can specifically be seen in society as well as the University's various activities actively working together to meet social challenges. Well-established collaborations with various parties will create opportunities for long-term development of the university, industry and society.

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## Relevance

In addition to positive results in society, Halmstad University shows its relevance and importance by meeting the education and research needs of industry and the public sector, especially regionally. Through priority development of certain areas, the needs required by local authorities, the region and industry (for example in engineering, nursing and teacher education) have been fulfilled, and this interaction has contributed to a positive, upward spiral for the University.

## 3. Halmstad University's research and education

Halmstad University was established some 30 years ago as a higher educational institution without any resources for research. Through external and some additional government funding, research has now gradually grown to over a quarter of the University's turnover. This trend needs to continue so that there is a better volume balance between teaching and research. This requires a purposeful process with effective uses of research resources and strategic partnerships, as well as focusing on and prioritising strong and developable research environments. A good balance creates possibilities that all education is research-related and all research has contacts with undergraduate studies. This means that the choices of research topics and fields of study are not separated from each other. The University has chosen to build strong research environments and endeavours that together, they have good links with the overall education on offer. All education and research at the University will encourage students to innovative and critical thinking.

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By virtue of their education, students should, after completing their education, be able to contribute to the favourable development of both business and society, so that a better quality of life is promoted. Therefore, the University's education and research will, to a high degree, be conducted in close collaboration with external parties.

## Focus

Halmstad University's research and the education programmes shall reflect the University's profile. The University has chosen three areas where we offer education from undergraduate to doctoral level. These areas are innovation science, information technology, and health and lifestyle. Most of the University's research and much of the education fits within these three areas and thereby constitutes a base for the University's activities. The current focus on three areas of doctoral studies is based on an analysis of the University's possibilities and requirements, as well as the needs of society, in both education and research. In a future, when the University has significantly more resources there are possibilities for further in-house doctoral studies.

## Excellent environments for research and education

Since the University was founded, our education programmes have been characterised by close interaction between theory and practice, by innovative programmes and pedagogical methods, as well as by the closeness between lecturers and students. The University has excellent educational environments where the development of successful pedagogical methods is promoted. Such environments are encouraged by the University's management, which also helps contribute to a culture that promotes the level of high quality with a focus on knowledge and schooling. Lecturers work systematically to integrate new research/development and new skills in their teaching, where students are actively involved in various forms of research and development projects. This is done in connection with both the research environments at the University and in significant interaction with the surrounding community.

Project rooms and creative spaces encourage collaboration and give space for mutual learning, between and within the education and training programmes with the community. The ability to create and communicate innovation is the guiding principle. The University's successful annual exhibition, Utexpo, where students present their thesis projects in self-designed display cases, is of great value and covers an increasing number of education programmes.

Halmstad University's research is organised in environments linked to the University's different schools and often in collaboration with each other. Within these environments, researchers focus around joint research themes. In all environments, high quality research is conducted as much as possible in close coop-

eration with external parties. Researchers will work at a high international level in their respective research areas, conducting research studies in the areas where the University offers doctoral studies and offer distinguished and attractive national and international postgraduate studies. Other research environments will interact with and complement environments in the doctoral studies, and contribute to linking research to education at undergraduate and graduate levels. Even within these environments, doctoral studies of high quality are conducted, but usually in collaboration with other universities. Common to all research environments is the clear focus on research in close cooperation with parties outside academia. Researchers in the various environments are also encouraged to extensively interact between each other as much as possible, as that is a particular strength of Halmstad University.

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## 4. Halmstad University - the Innovation Driven University

Halmstad University is to be known as the Innovation Driven University. This means that our research and education, in addition to having good quality and providing academic knowledge, is characterised by stimulating creativity, innovation and a clear involvement and responsibility within the community and society – locally, regionally and globally.

The University is characterised by cross-border collaboration – in research and education, as well as between internal and external activities.

We are an independent university that has alliances with other universities, both nationally and internationally. Our autonomy creates openness and responsibility as well as flexibility to meet the demands of the outside world. Togetherness, collaboration and co-production with external parties are the hallmark of our work and contribute to the University's profile. Results from research and education often lead to innovations.

The University is characterised by cross-border collaboration – in research and education, as well as between internal and external activities. We have an innovation driven dynamic when it comes to the composition of employees in regards to education, research and administration. This implies, among other things,

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to "cross-boundary workers", people with ties to the University as well as the surrounding community. Working operations and activities take advantage of the University's overall competence and are based on complete academic settings where research and education are integrated and interact with society.

Our lecturers have the skills and ability to teach innovative and cross-border educational programmes with clear links to research, with the help of modern technology, and systematically develop new pedagogical ideas, tools and methods in collaboration with our students. Through openness and mutual trust, the academia's knowledge is received and utilised within the community. We participate in public discussions to gather ideas and experiences, as well as being a dynamic venue for dialogue and cooperation between different external parties, lecturers, researchers and students, within a local, regional, national and global perspective.

We create equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender, cultural background or positions at the University. We have an attractive working environment in a cohesive campus with many venues as well as an open and dynamic organisation led by responsible heads.

Halmstad University's research and education programmes should reflect the university's profile as the Innovation Driven University.

## 5. Strategic objectives for Halmstad University during the period 2013 - 2020

The University's objective is to be an Innovation Driven University with nationally and internationally recognised education and research, characterised by close collaboration with external parties, as well as cooperation across subject boundaries. This is a key starting point for the University's work when profiling its research and education. Our research and education programmes should reflect the University's profile as the Innovation Driven University. The University will, through clear quality assurance processes, ensure that high quality is maintained in education, research and doctoral studies. The University's education and research shall be both attractive and

in demand. The University's research and education will be characterised by an innovative approach where collaboration in research and education contribute to creating value and usefulness.

An international perspective will characterise both education and research. This includes, among others, international recruitment of students and employees as well as international collaborations in research and education. The University shall further strengthen its role in the region as a major player when it comes to growth and development.

## Halmstad University's eight strategic goals for 2020:

- At least two-thirds of the teaching faculty should have a PhD degree, and the level of teaching qualifications is to increase.
- Number of educational centres of excellence, established in research and collaboration, is to increase.
- Proportion of first-choice applicants of registered students to the university educational programmes is to increase to at least 75 percent.
- Internal collaboration is to increase, in both education and research.
- National and international exchange and cooperation in education and research is to increase.
- Proportion of research in relation to education is to increase, allowing at least 40 per cent of the total working time of lecturers and doctoral students to be devoted to research.
- Doctoral/research education is to be strengthened at the university, both in magnitude and quality.
- The University is to become a driving force in the development of a common environment with regional parties for innovation and the application of research results.



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