



EVERYDAY DILEMMAS

Working with basic values in practice at Umeå University

As a government employee at Umeå University, you are obliged in your daily work to adhere to the legal principles and the common basic values governing our activities. But the different principles can sometimes be conflicting, and how should you deal with those dilemmas?

Should your approach be legally secure or efficient? How is objectivity balanced with free formation of opinion? What can and should you say in public as a government employee? We must all consider and solve these types of conflicts in our daily work.



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In the last two years, employees at the University have been involved in discussions regarding the common basic values for central government employees. All departments and offices have had the opportunity to bring up dilemmas that can arise when different interests, principles and values collide. The result is the book *Everyday dilemmas – Working with basic values in practice at Umeå University* in which you can read about the common basic values for central government employees and how they are put into practice at Umeå University.

The book contains 47 dilemmas to discuss during workplace meetings and planning days. Each department and office has received a copy of the book in Swedish. The book can be ordered in English. More information and recommendations on how to discuss dilemmas can be found on Aurora.



1 Why are the state sector's common basic values important at a university?

A first aspect relates to compliance. We are a government agency subject to the common basic values for central government employees as well as other university-specific laws and regulations. Our activities are funded by tax payers which means that we work for the citizens of Sweden. The actions of the university's employees and students affect tax payers' trust in our undertakings.

A second aspect relates to our role in society. The University can and must be involved in promoting democratic values across society and must be an active force against unscientific trends and knowledge resistance by communicating a critical and analytical approach.

A third aspect relates to academic culture, ethics and morals. The basic values are manifested in the culture that we ourselves create, to ensure that our research complies with good academic practice and to promote a good working environment and equal opportunities. The basic values are at the very foundation of the university's activities.



What are basic values?

Basic values are a collection of norms or values that together form a common ethical platform for the daily work within an organisation. The aim of such basic values is to create a common platform for the employees and to provide guidance in their treatment of each other and of people outside the organisation.

Common basic values in the state sector

The common basic values were formulated in 2013. These values are common for employees at all public organisations and are based on six legal principles:

1. **Democracy**

We work for the citizens and we implement the decisions of the Riksdag and Government.

2. **Legality**

Everything we do must be supported by law, and we are familiar with and comply with the legislations applicable to our activities.

3. **Objectivity**

We are objective and impartial and treat every case equally. We do not accept bribes.

4. **Free formation of opinion**

Transparency and freedom of expression are pillars of democracy and means that everyone is entitled to insight into government activities. Employees have the right to share information about ongoings at the University, beside confidential information.

5. **Respect for all people's equal value, freedom and dignity**

We treat everyone equally and with respect.

6. **Efficiency and service**

We provide citizens with correct and comprehensible information as quickly as possible. We work efficiently and conserve our resources.



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