

WELCOME WEEKS POLICY

Our way of making an exceptional reception



Foreword

Consensus, LinTek and StuFF, hereafter referred to as the student unions, together form Linköping University Student Unions (LUST). LUST is a cooperative body for the member unions and serves the purpose of pursuing issues concerning all students at Linköping University, regardless of union affiliation.

The student unions are responsible, on behalf of Linköping University, for ensuring that newly admitted students receive a good welcome to the University. In order to ensure good quality and further development of welcome weeks activities, the student unions have chosen to develop a common policy through LUST regarding how welcome weeks activities should be carried out.

The policy document is primarily a governing document for those working on welcome weeks activities linked to the student unions, but is also of interest to those who wish to gain greater insight into welcome weeks activities at Linköping University. The policy will be evaluated after each welcome period in consultation with all organisers and relevant stakeholders and revised as necessary.

Isabelle Arnberg
Welfare and Student Support Officer
Consensus

Christina Hedner
Welfare and Student Support Officer
LinTek

Nicolina Wikström
Welfare and Student Support Officer
StuFF

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1 About the welcome weeks

Linköping University is well known for its social introduction to student life through the well-organised welcome weeks activities for newly admitted students. The welcome weeks¹ take place at the start of semesters and are organised by the students themselves through student associations that are more or less linked to programmes and/or courses at Linköping University.

1.1 Purpose and objective of the welcome week's activities

The purpose of the welcoming activities is to welcome and prepare the newly admitted students for their time at Linköping University. Starting to study should be both fun and exciting, and the welcome weeks should be a period to remember for the rest of your life.

The aim of the welcome weeks activities is to give each newly admitted student the opportunity to build a social network and to lay the foundations for good study techniques.

The student unions' aim in organising the welcome weeks activities is that:

- All newly admitted students should feel welcome to Linköping University and to participating in the welcome weeks activities.
- The activities should be designed to be varied and accessible. In addition, they will, as far as possible, be aimed at all newly admitted students.
- Newly admitted students should be encouraged to take their university studies seriously.
- No one should feel offended, harassed or discriminated against.
- Everyone involved should have a healthy approach to alcohol during the welcome weeks.
- Promote cooperation and integration between students in different programmes and faculties.
- Provide an introduction to the rich and varied student life that Linköping University offers.

1.2 Purpose of the welcome weeks policy

The aim of the policy is for the student unions and others involved in welcoming activities to reach a common understanding of what is characteristic of good welcome weeks for newly admitted students. It is hoped that the welcome weeks policy will promote a positive change in attitudes and norms, as it is in everyone's interest that newly admitted students feel as welcome as possible as a result of the welcome weeks.

¹ The welcome weeks are popularly known as Nolle-P. The name (noll = zero) comes from the fact that the period in question comes before the first period of study for science and engineering students. The time before a period of study is period zero, commonly referred to as Nolle-P. The name has been adopted throughout the University.

1.3 Scope of the welcome period

A welcome period means the period of time during which an organiser holds its welcome weeks activities. The welcome weeks activities must be approved by the Student Union. The welcome period takes place at the start of each semester and runs from when the first organiser starts its welcome weeks activities until the last organiser has completed its welcome period, regardless of student union affiliation.

Everyone involved in the welcome weeks activities must comply with the welcome weeks policy towards each newly admitted student, regardless of their student union affiliation, throughout the welcome period.

2 Players

Several players are involved at different levels in the welcome weeks activities at Linköping University. This policy concerns the players who are in some way linked to the student unions. The players take part in the welcoming activity voluntarily – no one should be forced to take part. However, all players who choose to take part during the welcome weeks activities are bound by their commitments.

During the welcome period, all players must demonstrate the seriousness of university studies.

The players involved are:

- Student unions
- Organisers of welcome weeks activities
- Peer students
- Actors
- Approved external players

A person who does not fall within the above-mentioned set of actors may not participate in the welcome weeks activities.

2.1 Student unions

The student unions are responsible for the welcome weeks in relation to Linköping University. The main task of the unions is to coordinate the welcome weeks activities of the various organisers and to ensure that the contents of the various welcome weeks activities are consistent with this policy.

In addition to the welcome weeks policy, the unions may set further rules for their particular welcoming activities. These are regulated in cooperation agreements and/or peer student contracts for each union.

In the event of a societal crisis or other event that may affect the conditions in which welcome weeks take place, the student unions should endeavour to work with the university to establish a timeline for how and when stakeholders can expect to receive clearer guidance on the conditions for welcome weeks planning. In some specific cases, these conditions may outweigh this document.

2.1.1 Student unions undertake to:

- Each individual student union is responsible for ensuring that there is a contact person within its own organisation who facilitates contact between the student union and other participants.
- Plan and implement training for organisers of welcoming activities and peer students. The peer student training is planned and implemented in cooperation with the Student Health Service.
- Define the dates when the welcoming period starts and ends.
- Ensure that representatives of the various organisers coordinate their activities.
- Be responsible for evaluation of the welcoming policy.

- Draw up cooperation agreements with organisers and peer student contracts.
- Notify all organisers of welcome weeks activities of any change in the colour of sober peer students' tops at least four months before the start of the welcome period.

2.2 Organisers of welcome weeks activities

The organisers of welcome weeks activities may, for example, be peer student committees, party committees, peer student groups and section boards. Usually, organisers plan and implement welcoming activities for newly admitted students in the section they represent. As the organiser of the welcome weeks activities, you also take on the role of a peer student.

In addition to the welcome weeks policy, organisers may set additional rules for their welcome weeks, as long as these do not contradict the welcome weeks policy and are approved by the student union concerned.

Several organisers put on a theatrical performance that lasts the entire welcome period. Further details are given in the section about theatrical performances.

2.2.1 Organisers of welcome weeks activities undertake to:

- Plan and be responsible for the social activities during the welcome weeks.
- Ensure that at least one person bears principal responsibility for the organiser's welcome weeks activities during the planning and execution of the welcome weeks.
- Be responsible for signing an agreement on welcome weeks activities with their student union, on their behalf.
- Participate in the training courses, aimed at organisers, organised by the student unions in cooperation with the Student Health Service.
- Not carry out activities during the welcome period that are perceived as offensive, harassing or discriminatory to either peer students or newly admitted students.
- Be role models for both peer students and newly admitted students.
- All newly admitted students concerned will be informed when all the theatrical performances have been revealed.
- Take action if a newly admitted student is suspected of being part of a theatrical performance, in accordance with 2.4.4.
- Ensure that activities carried out in public places create a positive image of student life among the general public.
- Submit a description of any change of outfit to the person responsible at the student union for approval. This must be done within the time limit set by the student union.
- Report activities, budget, *gyckel*,² etc. to the person responsible at the student union for approval. This must be done within the time limit set by the student union.

² Gyckel is comedy theatre or buffoonery that may include singing, film or dancing.

- Ensure that peer students wear peer student clothing. Any peer student tops must not be the same colour as sober peer students' tops, in order to make a clear distinction between peer students and sober peer students. This also applies to any welcome weeks shirts for the new students.
- Ensure that external participants act in accordance with the welcome weeks policy.
- Submit to the requirements and commitments set for other peer students
- In addition to these commitments, also comply with the commitments set for other peer students. (See 2.3 *Peer students*).

2.3 *Peer students*

Peer students work during the welcome weeks to welcome the newly admitted students. Peer students are there to support the newly admitted student in finding their feet socially and academically, support that applies to all newly admitted students who need help, regardless of faculty or programme.

2.3.1 *Peer students undertake to:*

- Hold valid peer student training. Ordinary peer student training part 1 is valid for 3 semesters. Before each welcome period, peer students must also attend peer student training part 2. If there is any doubt as to whether or not a peer student should attend the peer student training again, the person responsible at the student union should be contacted.
- Sign and comply with the peer student contract of the student union concerned. If the peer student contract is breached, be aware of and accept the consequences.
- Be aware of their role in relation to the newly admitted student and not exploit their position of power.
- Not use their position of power in relation to other players, students and external parties and treat them with respect.
- As far as possible, ensure that all newly admitted students receive equal attention. This means, for example, as a peer student not favouring individual newly admitted students or entering into romantic or sexual relationships with newly admitted students.
- Be alert to people at risk of being excluded or who are behaving inappropriately and act accordingly.
- Prevent and take action if newly admitted students act in a way that violates the welcome weeks policy (for example if newly admitted students write gyckel plays that are offensive, cause harassment, are discriminatory or are inappropriately crude in content).
- Think about how they act as a representative of the university.
- Let the newly admitted students form their own opinion about students on other programmes at Linköping University, programmes linked to other faculties, students at other universities, the student unions, university staff, programmes and courses, and student associations.
- Be a guide in their studies and help newly admitted students to come to terms with the new type of study environment they face when embarking on academic studies.

- Respect the work that the organisers have put into the welcome weeks and be available to help if needed.
- Respect all types of theatrical performance that take place during the welcome period.
- Participate actively throughout the welcome weeks; exceptions may be approved by the responsible organiser and the student union.
- During participation in activities, always be in a state such as to be able to take care of newly admitted students, regardless of programme or faculty, if necessary.
- Make their peer student role clear through their attire and/or accessories according to the instructions of the responsible organiser and student union.

2.4 Actors

The aim of the theatrical performances is to bring the newly admitted students together and give them something to talk about by creating unexpected events. This is to promote cohesion and counteract exclusion.

2.4.1 Guidelines for theatrical performances:

- Players should design and perform the play for those for whom it is intended.
- By the end of the welcome weeks at the latest, players must step out of character.
- The individual participant should try to minimise the risk of misunderstanding by acting in a natural way in contacts with non-students such as university staff, shop assistants and so on.

2.4.2 Organisers

Several organisers put on a theatrical performance that lasts the entire welcome period. The outfits, appearance and activities of the organisers must convey responsibility.

2.4.3 Peer students who take part in farces (spexar)

There are several peer students who play different roles at the start of the welcome weeks. They may, for example, play a newly admitted student or be peer students taking part in various sketches. In order to avoid misunderstandings and the spreading of rumours, the organiser, peer students and other affected parties should be aware of all these sponsors.

2.4.4 Performers undertake to:

- Submit to the requirements and commitments set for other peer students. Exceptions to peer student attire may be made in consultation with the student union.
- Present their character, name, performance and reveal to the person responsible for the welcome weeks at the student union to have it reviewed and, if appropriate, approved. This must be done within the time limit set by the student union.
- In cases where the actor interacts with the newly admitted students; after the reveal, introduce themselves as who they really are so that the play has a clear ending.

- Cancel the play and clearly explain this to the party concerned within 24 hours if anyone is upset by the play.
- Endeavour to ensure that neither the new students nor people in the surroundings are frightened or made uncomfortable by the performance.

The following additionally apply to those who play a newly admitted student:

- Finish the performance at the latest during the third day of activities during the welcome weeks of the organiser concerned, but no later than five days after the start of the organiser's welcome weeks. The first day for these actors should be at the newly admitted students' roll call, exceptions may be made for special reasons.
- Dressing up as such an extreme character that no one can feel singled out. This character must not be based on features that could be perceived as offensive, causing harassment or discriminatory.
- Not make friends with the newly accepted students during the time when the role is being played.
- Immediately get out of character if someone is upset by the character.

2.5 Approved external players

An external player is a person or organisation involved in the welcome weeks but not linked to the welcome weeks activities. These may, for example, be company or association representatives who are not peer students. An external actor must be approved by the student union responsible.

The organisers of the reception weeks activities involving an external player are responsible for ensuring that all participants are aware of and comply with the welcome weeks policy.

3 General rules and norms during the welcome period

To ensure the quality of the welcome period and make it as welcoming and inclusive as possible, there are a number of rules and norms that all players must follow.

3.1 Equal opportunities

Linköping University works actively on equal opportunities. This includes work on gender equality based on the seven grounds of discrimination and against victimisation. The aim during the welcome period is to strive for a diversity of activities so that as many people as possible are able and wish to participate, and that the activities organised do not appear exclusive. All elements of the welcome period should be designed with the seven grounds of discrimination in mind. These are:

- Sex
- Transgender identity or expression
- Ethnicity
- Religion or other belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

The assessment of discrimination, insults or harassment is based on the experience of the victim.

During the welcome period, no form of ragging³ may occur. There must be no encouragement or advocacy of violence.

3.2 Alcohol and drugs

During the welcome period, many norms for the upcoming period of study are established, and those involved should endeavour to prevent the newly admitted student from developing harmful habits in terms of alcohol consumption. An important aspect to bear in mind is the possible presence of students under 18 years of age. There are special rules for under-18s regarding alcohol and access to student pubs and certain events. Questions regarding access to activities during the welcome period should be addressed to the person in charge of the welcome weeks at the student union. Everyone involved during the welcome weeks must comply with the following rules for alcohol⁴.

Non-prescribed narcotics must not be used under any circumstances.

³ this includes all forms of peer oppression and bullying, but also offensive behaviour, discrimination, harassment, etc

⁴ Alcohol Act (2010:1622) Chapter 1, Section 5: 'Alcoholic beverage means a beverage with alcohol by volume exceeding 2.25%...'

3.2.1 The following applies during welcome weeks activities:

For organisers of welcome weeks activities

- Organisers of welcoming activities must comply with the rules set by the municipality on serving of alcoholic beverages and Swedish law.
- The first evening of the welcome period should be alcohol-free to demonstrate that the main purpose of the welcome period is not alcohol consumption.
- At least half of the planned days during the welcome period should be completely alcohol-free. The days should be evenly distributed throughout the period, with a maximum of two consecutive days with alcohol.
- In addition to these commitments, also comply with the commitments set for other peer students.

For peer students

- Alcohol should not be a necessary element of organised activities – it should always be acceptable to be sober at an event.
- Peer students must behave in an exemplary manner. This requires peer students to treat alcohol wisely and avoid higher levels of intoxication.
- Players may not consume alcohol stronger than 5.2% by volume, with the exception of those units for which the organiser has received special permission from the student union.
- There must be no binge drinking or other encouragement to consume alcohol. If anything is unclear, contact the person responsible at the student union.
- Peer students must not buy alcohol for, give alcohol away to or receive alcohol from newly admitted students.

For sober peer students

- A sober peer student must be sober.
- At each individual event where alcohol is present, there must be at least one sober peer student per group of 20 newly admitted students, with at least two sober peer students per event.
- Sober peer students should wear sober peer student tops or sober peer student wrist bands provided by the student unions, so that it is clear which peer students they are.
- At events where alcohol is present, sober peer students must be present from the start to the end of the event.
- A sober peer student should set a good example in how to take part sober in an activity involving alcohol.

Serving of drinks

- Water must always be offered free of charge when alcohol is served.
- It should always be easy to choose non-alcoholic beverages, and these should be presented in a visible and positive way.
- At least one of the non-alcoholic beverages must be cheaper than the alcoholic ones; water does not count in this respect.

- At events where alcohol is served, no beverage stronger than 5.2% alcohol by volume may be served or sold without special permission from the student union. This also applies to events where alcohol is served by an external party.

4 Activities

The aim of the activities carried out during the welcome weeks is for newly admitted students to get to know other students and their surroundings. The aim is for students to feel a sense of belonging, from fellow students to the university as a whole.

The following apply to activities:

- No social activity may interfere with scheduled studies. The schedule of newly admitted students must be taken into account when planning activities.
- Activities that take place on a weekday evening must not continue beyond 1.00 am.
- Activities during the welcome weeks should be organised to appeal as far as possible to all newly admitted students.
- Offer a variety of activities to enable all newly admitted students to participate (see section 3.1 Equal opportunities).
- The organiser(s) is/are responsible for all contents of the activities.

The following is a review of common activities in the welcome weeks.

4.1 Assignments

Assignments are voluntary tasks usually intended to be solved in groups. They should not be too burdensome for the individual student and they should be possible to complete during the welcome weeks. All assignments should be free of charge for the newly admitted students.

Assignments may not be used to get boring work done for the organiser of the welcome weeks activity or for any other person. They must also not be humiliating or offensive. The description of the assignment is submitted to the student union for review and possible approval.

4.2 Competitions

Competitions aim to create a sense of belonging in a larger group where many people are committed to a common goal. It is important that these efforts result in boosting one's own group in such a way that it is not at the expense of any other group or person.

4.3 Parties

The main purpose of parties and other evening activities is to give newly admitted students additional opportunities to get to know each other, but they also aim to help them explore the multi-faceted nature of student life.

It is of utmost importance that the organiser knows what rules apply at the venue of the party. It is particularly important to remember to apply for a permit to hold events in public places and a permit to serve alcohol at private parties.

Read more in section 3.2 *Alcohol and drugs*.

4.4 Gyckel

Gyckel ('buffoonery') is a major part of the entertainment during the welcome weeks and is an important student tradition. For many newly admitted students, the welcome weeks are the first time they encounter the phenomenon of gyckel. For this reason, it is important to choose gyckel with great care and not to put on performances that are interpreted as offensive or insulting. The theme and message of the organiser's gyckel should be varied.

Examples of gyckel to be avoided are satirical songs about other sections, faculties, higher education institutions and the like; performances containing racist or crude sexual innuendo; and all forms of striptease. It is extremely important that gyckel is not at the expense of any other group or person. Nothing that encourages binge drinking may be included in the performance.

Read more in section *3.1 Equal opportunities*.

All gyckel to be performed during the welcome weeks must be submitted to and approved by the student union representing the group for which the gyckel is to be performed. Decisions to approve gyckel are always based on the welcome weeks policy.

4.5 Gifts and inducements

If inducements are involved, they should be free of charge for the newly admitted students. Under no circumstances may alcohol be used as an inducement or gift. Creativity and ingenuity should be encouraged.