

## Transversal themes: issues for panels

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Lund University is critically dependent on the success of its constituent parts – faculties, departments, divisions, research environments and research teams. In turn, and without exception, they are also part of international research communities. A key issue for RQ20 is to identify where researchers at Lund University are located within those communities, and how they might sustain and enhance their positions. This will be done by the 32 *subject panels*, which assess and advise the research environments with regard to their standing and future direction.

However, a university is more than the sum of its parts. The research environments themselves are critically dependent on central managerial functions for their long-term development and progress. Similarly, they are dependent on a wide variety of functions and supportive mechanisms such as infrastructure, recruitment models, external engagements and a large number of centres and similar cross-disciplinary entities the University.

The *transversal panels* cover important issues that are critical to the University in its entirety – issues that pertain to the standing and further development of the research environments, and subsequently of the University as a whole. They complement the 32 subject panels by focusing on tasks of general importance and significance for the University, as well as by gathering and analysing collective concerns from the research environments.

The transversal panels are structured in a manner that reflects Lund University's strategic priorities.<sup>1</sup> Their themes align with the main aims of Lund University's strategic plan, which describes the University as an internationally leading university that aims to capitalise on its research infrastructure, contribute to finding solutions to societal challenges, promote talent and to be an exemplary employer. Although the transversal panels do not intend to serve as a specific vehicle for the evaluation of Lund University's current strategic plan, they do shed light on how the University engages with the ambitions outlined in the plan. Some examples include the balance between collegiality and management, the governance of infrastructures and the contribution of research activities to find solutions to and manage critical societal issues.

The transversal themes add to the understanding of how the University as an organisation functions and “performs” in a global landscape of rankings and comparisons. In doing so, they add to the understanding of concerns regarding research-based universities. In addition, and most importantly, the panels will be asked to advise the University on a range of issues that are critical for a university of international standing.

Finally, the panels will provide knowledge and advice on concerns that are particular to the Swedish context, such as the relationship between government and universities following the various autonomy reforms in recent decades, the devolution of quality assessment to universities, as well as the specificities of infrastructural governance and funding in Sweden.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/sites/www.lunduniversity.lu.se/files/strategic\\_plan\\_2017-2026-updated030517.pdf](https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/sites/www.lunduniversity.lu.se/files/strategic_plan_2017-2026-updated030517.pdf)

The panels will vary in their remit as well as in the material they will receive. Generally, the background material will include:

- Self-assessment and their reports on specific issues (i.e. reports on the relationship between research environments, faculties and central management)
- Formal documents and policies within the particular theme of each transversal panel
- Interviews will be an additional source of information/interaction: depending on the panel, they will be held with the University Leadership, faculty representatives, heads of large departments and representatives of University Management (e.g. Human resources, external engagement, and research services)
- For some panels, site visits may be an additional source of information

If needed, and in cases when the subject is clearly identified such as university leadership, additional self-assessments may be requested. In a similar vein to the subject area assessments, these self-assessments will focus on issues such as: how tasks are identified, resources allocated, goals set etc.? How is the organisation of tasks outlined, and how is leadership exercised?

As with the research environment panels, membership on the panel should be guided by proximity (i.e. an understanding of conditions) and ambition, where panellists represent experiences that can support Lund University in its future development.

## **Panel 1: Management and leadership**

This panel is devoted to the overarching organisation and leadership of the University. It is to assess measures for the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, communication between the different organisational levels, the strategy work and strategy implementation, and the alignment between research and other tasks and obligations of the University (such as education and external engagement). It should highlight how the University deals with internal issues – task distribution, priority setting, relationship between management and collegiality, as well as between central, faculty and departmental levels – and external issues, such as the interaction with patrons, funders, societal stakeholders, and how the internal and external relations align.

*Critical issues on which the panel will be asked for advice*

Reflections on management and leadership in the self-evaluations: What do they offer? Were there particular patterns, unexpected findings, or issues that were unexplored?

- Gauge the strength and vitality of the relationship between collegiality and line management
- How and who sets the University's general strategies, and how is progress and goal attainment assessed?
- How are strategies set at the central level compared with those at the faculty and department levels?
- What are the remit, mandate and recruitment processes of academic leaders?
- How well prepared is the University for governance models that require it to set its own goals and identify measures to follow them up in dialogue with the government?
- How well is the University and its faculties funded relative to its research strengths and how well does this reflect societal needs?

*Background material:*

The material should primarily consist of interviews and general information about the governance, but RQ20 may request a self-assessment and critical input from the University Leadership.

*Panellists:*

Panellists will be experienced leaders of universities of similar size and complexity, preferably showcasing a variety of organisational models and leadership styles (decentralised, centralised, faculties, schools, etc.).

## **Panel 2: Infrastructures**

Lund University is the host of a large number of infrastructures and is located close to many others. The 32 subject panels will assess the relationship between research environments and infrastructures, with MAX IV assessed by a subject panel of its own. The transversal panel “Infrastructures” also aims to gather information about and analyse the relationship between units and infrastructures, as well as focussing on the governance of research infrastructures at Lund University more generally, including:

- Mechanisms for internal priority setting within the area of infrastructures
- Relationships with other universities and research funders in governance and the funding of infrastructures
- Definitions of infrastructures

Overall, the panel is tasked with providing input into the relationship between large infrastructural undertakings and other missions of the University, the relationship between infrastructures and research environments, including access, support and funding arrangements, and the overall location of infrastructural governance in the University Management. The latter includes the relationship between Lund University and other Swedish universities, as well as with funders like the Swedish Research Council and Vinnova.

*Critical issues on which the panel will be asked for advice*

Reflections on infrastructures in the self-evaluations: What do they offer? What were the patterns? Were there unexpected findings, or issues that were unexplored?

- How well does the formation of university-wide infrastructure strategies work – and how well does it function in relation to national strategy formation?
- How are priorities set, especially when it comes to co-funding?
- How are definitions and requirements of critical infrastructures made, and do they vary between faculties?
- How are different types of infrastructures balanced in the overall portfolio of infrastructures?
- Does Lund University make sufficient use of national platforms?
- The sharing of common resources – do infrastructures function as springboards for collaboration, and are policies for access sufficient?

*Background material:*

The material for this panel consists of relevant excerpts from the self-evaluation reports and assessments and evaluations of infrastructures. The material will be complemented by site visits and interviews with critical actors in infrastructures (users, managers, faculties, departments and University management representatives)

*Panellists:*

Panellists should consist of experienced managers (or former managers) of research infrastructures, but also representatives of infrastructure funders (EU, domestic and international) and heads of universities and research institutes.

### **Panel 3: The relationship with large and interdisciplinary research areas**

Since at least the early 2000s, Lund University has acted as the host of a large number of designated “strategic research areas” (In Swedish, *Strategiska Forskningsområden* or SFOs), more than any other Swedish university. These are however not the only large and broad areas that have emerged from the current funding regime in Swedish research. Some areas have become particularly adept at obtaining grants and forming large research entities in this environment. The remit of this panel is to gauge the collective impact of these processes on the quality, renewal and future direction of Lund University’s research, as well as how the proliferation of large and interdisciplinary research areas has affected the University as a whole, and how the University might strike a balance between such areas and departments/faculties.

*Critical issues on which the panel will be asked for advice*

Reflections on large and interdisciplinary research areas in the self-evaluations: What do they offer? Were there unexpected findings? Issues that were unexplored?

- The organisational status of the research areas within the University
- The life cycle of an area: monitoring progress, preparing for change, continuity or discontinuation, future plans
- The relationship between specific areas/centres and faculties/departments
- Individual affiliation in centres: procedures and decisions
- How do the large and interdisciplinary research areas communicate with education and external engagement?
- Formal versus informal leadership: area leaders and their remit

*Background material:*

Panel work will be based on input from the research environments and from large and interdisciplinary research areas beyond the SFOs (such as the Linnaeus environments). In addition, material will include evaluations and assessments from the funders of SFOs, Linnaeus environments and similar centres.

SFOs have been asked specifically to provide input on their leadership/organisation, achievements, communication with other units at Lund University, and their future plans.

Interviews will be conducted with SFO representatives, representatives of other **environments** and with selected faculties and departments as well as with the University Management.

*Panellists:*

Panellists should be a combination of experienced centre leaders (or similar) and deans and heads of departments which act as hosts of such centres. Possibly also funders with experience of governing and assessing such entities.

## Panel 4: Recruitment

A key issue for a university of global standing is to ensure that it recruits and promotes staff at different stages of their careers. Lund University, as any other research-intensive, internationally oriented university, is confronted with several challenges within the area of recruitment: managing generational shifts and renewal; ensuring staff diversity; finding a balance between recruitment and retention. This panel will gauge the policies that the University has developed to ensure that it upholds rigorous and demanding standards for recruitment, but it will also investigate how recruitment policies and practices are squared with staff planning, replacement and task allocation more generally. The panel will survey policies and practices and provide advice on three different levels: University Management, including programmes to support career development<sup>2</sup>; alignment with recruitment funding schemes (for instance, the European Research Council and the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation), and practices among the different faculties (and departments).

*Critical issues on which the panel will be asked for advice*

Reflections on recruitment in the self-evaluations: what do they offer? What were the patterns, were there unexpected findings or issues that were unexplored?

- The panel should reflect on whether Lund University offers sustainable and attractive career paths – in general and at the different faculties
- Staff diversity and integration: current patterns and potential improvements for the future
- External funders and internal recruitment processes (e.g. KAW, ERC): can the relationship be improved?
- Gender balance and career paths: outcomes and improvements
- Do the faculties differ in their recruitment policies and how do such policies align with policies at the University level?
- Career guidance and support forms, are they adequate?
- Recruitment of leaders: procedures and room for improvement
- Broad leadership remit?

*Background material:*

The panel will receive data on recruitment profiles, as well as policy reports from the University.<sup>3</sup> It will be provided with information on the career support and leadership programmes offered. Self-assessment reports on recruitment and promotion are also part of the background material. Interviews with heads of recruitment committees is another source of information.

*Panellists:*

The panel should ideally be composed of deans, heads of schools, and centre leaders with proven experience of talent recruitment and retention.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.medarbetarwebben.lu.se/anstallning/kompetens-och-karriarutveckling/karriarutveckling-for-akademisk-personal/karriarutveckling-for-postdoktorer>

<https://www.medarbetarwebben.lu.se/anstallning/kompetens-och-karriarutveckling/karriarutveckling-for-akademisk-personal/karriarutveckling-for-forskargrupsledare>

<sup>3</sup> [https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/64168018/R\\_nnmar\\_Good\\_and\\_Clear\\_Career\\_Paths\\_at\\_Lund\\_University\\_Report\\_English\\_translation\\_final\\_samlad.pdf](https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/64168018/R_nnmar_Good_and_Clear_Career_Paths_at_Lund_University_Report_English_translation_final_samlad.pdf)

## **Panel 5: External engagement**

Collaboration with wider society has long been pinpointed as a key area for universities, in Sweden and abroad. External engagement mobilises resources and enables universities to contribute to solving real world problems. However, external engagements are also fraught with difficult issues concerning conflicts of interest, openness and impartiality. This panel is devoted to what external engagement actually means, how it affects the quality of research and how university environments integrate external engagement and research in their daily activities and in their future plans.

For this panel, we expect work to focus on a survey of different practices – linked to external engagement – as evidenced in the self-evaluation reports, the management of external engagements, including the connection between central ambitions and local practices, and the design and execution of innovation support including alignment with innovation and support for external engagements provided elsewhere.

*Critical issues on which the panel will be asked for advice*

Reflections on external engagements in the self-evaluations: what do they offer? What were the patterns, were there unexpected findings, or issues that were unexplored?

- How can LU's interface with the world be characterised by the tackling of grand challenges such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and other commitments, and by work on issues of welfare, health, sustainability more broadly?
- How well is LU connected with collaborative goals and partners – in the region, nationally, and internationally?
- Goals, aims and strategies for external engagement: are they clear? Are they pursued accordingly?
- Incentives for external engagement: are they adequate (for instance, for promotion, recruitment, co-funding, and internal funding)?
- How does the University and its constituent parts deal with conflicts of interest and ethical issues in relation to external engagements?
- How well does the innovation support structure work?
- Spreading good examples: internal processes of support for external engagements

*Background material:*

The panel will draw largely on the self-evaluation reports, but it will also make site visits and conduct interviews with representatives of University Management, faculties, departments and specific environments, and with relevant stakeholders and collaborative partners such as the healthcare organisation Region Skåne. Site visits are also planned for specific environments.

*Panellists:*

We expect this panel to be composed of experienced academic entrepreneurs, university managers with specific responsibilities for external engagements, but also representatives of wider society from industry, civil society and government.