

Konstfack's education and research strategy

2019–2023

Konstfack's education and research strategy consists of three parts. The first part is the strategy itself, which forms the basis for a plan of action. The second part is a situation report, which has been developed through faculty discussion. This part describes Konstfack's view and interpretation of the basic mission statement – to educate and conduct research. The third part articulates Konstfack's interpretation of the perspectives intended to permeate both the mission and the strategy.

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1. Five strategic goals

To be a prominent institution within education and research based on artistic practice

Konstfack shall maintain a prominent position in education and research by continuing to strengthen learning situations, experimental practices and subject development in a supportive workshop environment.

Within education and research based on artistic practice, the articulation and the sharing of knowledge regarding artistic and creative processes are central components. This is a growing field of knowledge which is also sparking interest within humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.

Konstfack's education and research continually generate and spread knowledge of aesthetics and artistic methods. These are articulated, portrayed, explored and theorised in different kinds of situations. Forms of knowledge and ideas are developed and given shape, and made available for development and critical analysis, through both supervision and collective learning situations, such as workshop teaching, in seminars, and through exhibitions and presentations with critical discussions.

Konstfack's workshops are places where new ideas are tested, new works and methods created and new experiences provided. In the workshop activities, education and research thus share a common departure point. As such, doctoral students, researchers and teachers with research projects at Konstfack have the same level of access to the workshops as the students have. The workshops are included in a natural component of the environment in which Konstfack conducts and expands its research.

Strengthening Konstfack's research environment:

PhDs and externally funded research.

Konstfack shall strengthen its research environment through its own right to confer degrees for third-cycle studies and through an increase in externally funded research.

The right to confer PhDs within the arts is an important element in Konstfack's efforts to create a coherent educational and research environment. Konstfack already harbours and develops the knowledge specific to artistic research. As such it has favourable opportunities to formulate a research subject where methods from design, crafts and art are gathered. The right to confer degrees for third-cycle studies gives Konstfack the opportunity to develop a model for third-cycle studies that reflects the university's view of artistic research, i.e. practice-oriented research with a close relationship to subject

development. In these efforts, there is also the opportunity to contribute to the development of research in the field of visual art and design.

In order to strengthen the research environment, it is also important to increase the share of externally funded research based on both scholarship and artistic practice. Additional externally funded projects will yield a higher total research volume, which creates the prerequisites for the research environment to stabilise and develop. The strategic efforts include the development of projects and programmes based on the research specialisations prioritised by Konstfack, and the recruitment of teachers with a PhD and significant practical experience in their field.

To strengthen the link between education and research.

Konstfack shall strive for a mutual exchange between education and research by promoting faculty efforts with subject development.

Subject development within education is necessary for the research at Konstfack, and vice versa. A deeper knowledge of a subject gives the education stability and identity, and increases the number of opportunities for collaborating with other fields of education and research, both nationally and internationally. For this reason, Konstfack is actively working to involve teachers in the subject development, research and the educational development in higher education, both in relation to their responsibilities and authority. The fact that Konstfack has education and research based on both scholarship and artistic practice provides access to theoretical and methodological resources with unusually versatile perspectives. This collaboration makes the university particularly suited to working with education and research issues, as well as contexts beyond the traditional boundaries.

To strengthen the collaborative efforts between education and research.

Konstfack's collaborations with external actors shall be strengthened by continued interactions and joint projects for both education and research.

Konstfack's education and research are strengthened through collaborating with other educational and research cultures in both Sweden and the rest of the world. Collaborations with actors in the fields of culture, business, the non-profit sector, civil society and the government sphere are also important.

Advanced knowledge in visual art and design is created and shared to a significant extent within informal and self-organised structures. Collaborating with actors in these spheres is also of importance for Konstfack. One of the prerequisites for these collaborations and relationships is that the freedom and integrity of the education and research activities are not compromised by instrumentalisation and shortsighted, reductive utilitarian perspectives.

To develop the dissemination of knowledge and results.

Konstfack shall develop the sharing of knowledge and results through increased transparency and strengthened exchanges of experience.

In both the education and research assignment, Konstfack wishes to emphasise the importance of transparency and of sharing artistic and scholarly results and assertions. Internally, Konstfack wishes to develop the exchange of experience between departments and the educational programmes by both strengthening the existing collaborative forms and developing new ways of conducting a critical internal dialogue and exchanging experience. Konstfack shall clarify its quality criteria, spread the creativity and knowledge developed at Konstfack and invite external knowledge-creating actors. When it comes to publishing and making research available, models compatible with the different forms of research conducted at Konstfack shall be developed.

2. Konstfack's interpretation of the mission statement: education and research

2§ As the principal authority, the Government shall establish higher education institutions for the provision of

1. courses and study programmes based on scholarship or artistic practice and on proven experience, and
2. research and artistic research as well as development work

The Higher Education Act

Konstfack's courses and programmes

Konstfack offers a wide spectrum of programmes in the field of art and visual arts education. The education programmes lead to a qualification in the fine, applied and performing arts within the main fields of fine arts, crafts, visual communication or design, to a general qualification in the main field of visual culture and learning, or a professional qualification for subject teachers within visual arts, sloyd and media/design. With its selection of freestanding courses, Konstfack's offering is also directed at professional artists, designers and teachers.

Konstfack's research and research environment

The main part of the research conducted at Konstfack is, similar to other university colleges specialising in visual art and design, carried out within the scope of the research time allotted to the professors. This research impacts the teaching and results in different publications and other forms of public expression, often exhibitions. In addition, externally funded research is being conducted at Konstfack. Konstfack's doctoral students often contribute to the research environment, and their research is closely connected to the education offered at Konstfack. The research environment is bound together and developed through faculty research forums where research strategies and content are discussed, as well as through different forms of seminars, and not least through the annual research week where the doctoral students, researchers/teachers and students of Konstfack all participate along with invited guests.

Values and quality assurance

Konstfack's activities places particular emphasis on fundamental principles such as democracy, artistic and academic freedom, and respect for the equal value of all people, and the individual person's liberty and dignity. Transparent and well established processes for students and employees contribute to a higher level of quality and legal certainty in all activities.

Konstfack is systematically working to continuously improve the quality of its education and research. Konstfack's quality management system supports the university's strategy and takes into consideration the needs and expectations of the students and the surrounding society without sacrificing artistic and

academic freedom. The system is mainly comprised of regular follow-ups and evaluations that promote faculty dialogue and the exchange of experiences across subjects, and also strengthens Konstfack's quality culture.

Creating knowledge at Konstfack

Konstfack's education and research are based on fundamental issues of knowledge dissemination and knowledge creation. This also applies to the origin, creation and recognition of knowledge – where, when and how, and primarily the methods for spreading this knowledge. Knowledge issues and the development of learning methods are very much in focus at all levels and are included in critical dialogue and in the exchange of experience. The pedagogical perspective includes a reflection of how power and knowledge can be shared and enhanced in a fair and appropriate manner. The complex forms of knowledge that artistic education works with include different aspects and forms of both meaning-creating and practical knowledge, and knowledge related to the senses.

The ultimate goal of Konstfack's education is to have the students develop the skills and understanding necessary to establish themselves within their professions. Students go through introductory and advanced courses and they work in advanced workshops with experts to develop their craftsmanship and where practical experiments are encouraged. The students are trained in their critical abilities to be able to express their opinion, both verbally and in writing, and demonstrate an understanding of their own work and their own development. Supervision, both individual and in groups, is crucial to facilitate the development and progression of these skills in education and research. The supervision and seminar situation develops a critical dialogue, provides context and understanding, and helps the student make informed choices.

In addition to proficiency in design, the ability to think critically, and the development of judgement and approach, the education provides the necessary foundation for developing significant knowledge regarding theory and history within the field of visual arts, fine arts, design, crafts and visual communication.

Education and research based on both scholarship and artistic practice

Within the research and education conducted at Konstfack, methods and theoretical perspectives are fundamental to both artistic and scholarly practices. The fact that theoretical and practical knowledge *do* different things and can be applied in *different* ways to study one and the same issue is a fundamental concept in Konstfack's research and education. Chains of questions are established in both fields, where questions asked constantly open up the landscape for new questions. This is the basis for artistic and scholarly curiosity.

The fact that artistic and scientific methods and perspectives are included and working in harmony in Konstfack's programme offering with teacher training in visual arts and sloyd, crafts, visual communication, fine art and design also makes the university particularly attractive in the recruitment of teachers and researchers. This is one of the reasons why many of the teachers and researchers at Konstfack are so prominent within their fields.

Within education and research based on artistic practice, the teachers' own practice/research is often of utmost importance to the subject development. Research based on artistic practice is mainly provided here not from outside or from above. Instead, the foundations of knowledge development and of the research projects are often found in the teachers' practice. This practice does however have links to a national and international exchange of ideas, reaching beyond the subject boundaries within which Konstfack has the right to confer degrees. A number of theory formations and perspectives from other fields of knowledge are applied, which enriches both the education and the research.

New knowledge – and new experience

Konstfack shall create new knowledge and set the tone, both nationally and internationally, within artistic education and research as well as in artistic subject and profession development.

Konstfack's vision

An important factor when new knowledge is created based on scholarship and artistic practice is difference and diverse perspectives, which contributes to developed perspective awareness and imagination within both scholarly and artistic endeavours. Imagination – being able to see your surroundings and issues from different perspectives - is a component of both creativity and critical thinking. This allows for the creation of new chains of thought, and enables the creation of knowledge to occur in unexpected ways. In subject development and research, imagination is a key factor that enables you to reconsider and create new concepts, methods and norms. It is also through imagination that new expressions, models and visions are created. Art creates a space, real or imaginary, where ideas, objects and images are brought together in new sequences and where new meaning can arise. Here, expressions of comfort, beauty, pain and understanding are also allowed.

As part of their education, the students are given the tools required for understanding and developing their own work in relation to their field of study or society as a whole. These tools include the ability to participate in the international discourse within their own field of study and be open to linguistic expressions and methods that have not been established in the dominant culture and knowledge tradition.

3. Konstfack's interpretation of the general perspectives of the mission statement

Our activities are permeated by humanism, critical and creative ability, and commitment to environmentally and socially sustainable development. Our work methods are inclusive and allow room for difference of opinion. We value playfulness, courage and artistic integrity. We show each other trust and mutual respect.

Konstfack's values *(Vice-Chancellor's decision RÖ50 2012)*

Sustainable development

In order to face contemporary ecological, economic and social challenges – which includes climate change, urbanisation and diminishing access to non-renewable resources – an ability to be critical and re-evaluate is required. The goal of Konstfack's work with sustainable development is to contribute to the re-evaluation of the individual's relationship with society and the environment.

The goal of implementing a sustainability perspective applies to both the teaching and the organisation as a whole. This means emphasising that the choices made at Konstfack, by the university as a whole or by single individuals, have an impact on the greater ecosystem. Konstfack strives to establish internal awareness of not just the significance of ecologically sustainable processes in society as a whole, but also an awareness of the consequences of one's actions.

Equality and efforts to prevent recruitment bias

Learning and development is promoted by reciprocity and equality. That is why Konstfack is actively working to integrate an equality and diversity perspective in the processes at all levels of the education and organisation. The use of democratised strategies is vital to teaching and research. Here, as in projects and collaborations, intersectional issues regarding power, gender roles, gender balance, social class and exclusion are highlighted. Konstfack strives to ensure that employees and students are aware of these issues, as well as issues regarding disability, LGBTQ rights and decolonisation.

Efforts to prevent biased recruitment of students and employees within both education and research are also necessary for a multitude of reasons. This a prerequisite for Konstfack to continue maintaining its position as an internationally prominent university and to not turn inwards and become provincial. Active efforts to prevent biased recruitment are necessary so that future design pieces, products, narratives and artistic statements are relevant and have a link to the diversity of existential issues and social experiences represented in Swedish society.

The students at Konstfack are its ambassadors and have the opportunity to establish the university and its possibilities in wider social and geographical contexts. Konstfack not only strives for internationalisation, but also "nationalisation", as in reaching and recruiting from under-represented regions and social groups.

Internationalisation

The inward and outward flow of ideas, visions and projects are vital to Konstfack in its efforts to develop and maintain its position as a leading university within visual art and design. It is therefore important to establish international networks and continue to maintain and develop international contacts.

Konstfack's departments and divisions collaborate with university colleges, non-profit organisations and self-organised groups outside of Sweden, and actively participate in international educational networks. The education prepares our students for a global labour market and the global perspective is integrated in Konstfack's activities on all education cycles. This shall also permeate the research.

Strategically selected partner schools enable the university's students to study abroad and Konstfack to receive international students, while at the same time broadened collaborations with specifically chosen partner schools entail a more in-depth partnership and exchange of experience. An expanding research environment at Konstfack increases the opportunities for internationalisation.

Collaboration and societal impact

The results of Konstfack's education and research impact people in their daily lives in a variety of situations and in diverse locations: through art and everyday use objects, through textile patterns, furniture and furnishings in public and private spaces. We see the results in exhibitions and movie screenings, in publications, debates, in cultural critique, in models for processes, in research and the teaching at schools.

A reoccurring question in Konstfack's education and research is: "Why is this important for someone other than myself?". This question clarifies visual art and design's relationship to the surrounding world – to society and the social debate and the formation of the public space in all its aspects – physical publicity, virtual publicity, the public discourse and historiography.

Konstfack's education and research strongly contribute to a cultural life that is essential to every democratic society: by establishing real and imaginary places for individual and social self-reflection and self-examination, both the understanding and alienating of the self.