



The Center for Gender Studies (CGF)

SELF-EVALUATION

Periodic Research Review

1. Summary

The Center for Gender Studies (CGF) is an internationally well-established research unit.

Research at CGF is organized within four profile areas: Masculinity Studies; Transgender Studies; Gender, Health, and Technology; Action for Organizational Change. CGF operates within several national and international networks, including collaboration within GEXcel (International Collegium for Advanced Transdisciplinary Gender Studies), RINGS (The International Research Association of Institutions of Advanced Gender Studies), and the research school InterGender, which is part of CGF's institutional platform. The strategic investment by the rector and the faculty through GEXcel International Collegium has been significant for the development of an international research environment. The internationalization work was further strengthened the last years. This was particularly evident during the national and international G 22 conference, which was a highlight for the center. During 2021 until the present, CGF have had a large number of researchers from all over the world visiting us at various times.

CGF's profile areas in transgender studies and studies on men and masculinities are both internationally leading. This generates great external interest, which is evident, among other things, by leading researchers working with CGF researchers on research applications and publications. The journal *Norma: International journal for Masculinity Studies* is the hub of the activity here. Research on transgender issues has further profiled CGF's research in international contexts in recent years. CGF is one of two environments in the world focused on transgender issues. The research area of organizational change has profiled CGF both locally and internationally. Through the project the Gender Academy and the projects DEBUTING, DHINO and ARENA, which are part of the Digital Well Arena funding, CGF has in the period of 2021-2023 become a part of the region's gender equality work. CGF is also largely responsible for Kau's internal gender equality work. A doctoral project started in 2020 following the university's and the region's gender equality initiatives. This will strengthen the connection between research and gender mainstreaming in practice in the coming years.

Regarding weaknesses, CGF has had a volatile staffing situation, but this was addressed in 2022 and 2023, although the workload for the center's staff is still high. The small size of the center, together with the subject of gender studies, still creates a vulnerable situation where staff changes and resignations are noticeable. Gender studies, together with the center, improved interdisciplinary work across subject boundaries. For example, the subject and the center strengthened their collaboration with the subject of sociology, social work, and Intercultural studies and this provides greater breadth and competence regarding staff and opportunities for collaboration, such as in teaching resources.

A growing external threat, is the increasing societal political polarization where gender studies have become a political straw man for right-wing conservatives. In this process gender studies are targeted as unscientific and politically biased. We try in various ways to counter these misconceptions but rarely receive attention for it. When Sweden changed government in 2022, these ideological currents have become a clearer threat to CGF and gender studies due to tendencies towards increased political control of universities.

CGF has great opportunities to develop in the coming years. A new professor has been recruited with the aim that gender studies will become its own subject for PhD-education. A new assistant lecturer started in June 2023. The center's anchoring at Kau and in the region is becoming increasingly clear. The assignments and projects are many and will likely increase. CGF's international profile and reputation mean that more researchers seek out CGF, which increases opportunities for collaboration on publications and research funding. A challenge for CGF, as in previous years, is to maintain the volume of grants and assignments with the current staff.

2. Organization and leadership

Centre for Gender Studies (CGF) is an interdisciplinary and cross-faculty center within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Karlstad University. CGF has existed as a research group since 2006. Before that, the environment was known as the Centre for Gender Equality (since 1991). Being a cross-faculty environment at Karlstad University includes, to varying degrees, research and education within the entire field of gender studies. CGF was led between 2019-2024 (until October 31 2024) by Professor Ulf Mellström and currently by Professor Annika Rudman in collaboration with the CGF board, chaired by Gunilla Svantorp, member of the Swedish Parliament (Social Democrat).

Other members of the board are individuals from various disciplines at Karlstad University, public organizations, and the business sector. The purpose of the board is to create local and regional contact points, collaboration platforms, and a continuous exchange of experiences where board members from different disciplines at Karlstad University, the municipality, the county administrative board, and the region, as well as the local business community, share current issues related to gender and gender equality in Värmland. The following individuals are part of the board:

- Marianne Nilsson – Gender Equality Strategist, Region Värmland
- Tara Mehrabi – Lecturer in Gender Studies
- Brian Unis – Lecturer in Public Health Science
- Marie Nordfeldt – Professor in Social Work
- Manuel Missner Almfelt – Adjunct Lecturer in Gender Studies
- Katarina Jacobsson – Gender Equality Officer, County Administrative Board of Värmland

- Nina Kask – Business Consultant
- Sandra Andersson – Doctoral Student in Social Work
- Gunilla Evers – Gender Equality Coordinator, Region Värmland

CGF has also significant collaboration with the region through partnerships with Region Värmland, Public Health Agency of Sweden, The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, and the municipality of Karlstad. The latter has mainly occurred through collaboration, joint applications and various projects on gender and digital technologies, ageing, physical and mental health.

The center is led by a director in collaboration with a professor. As previously mentioned, the center was previously led by Professor Ulf Mellström and currently by Professor Annika Rudman who is also responsible for the subject of gender studies. Being a professor, subject representative, and center director means wearing three organizational hats. There is room to discuss whether this is an optimal solution. The center is directly under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the subject of gender studies is under the Department of Social and Psychological Studies. People working within the center are often also employed in the subject of gender studies but also in subjects such as sociology, social work and psychology.

Since CGF is an interdisciplinary center working across Karlstad University, staff can be divided into two main categories. Those employed at the center with a percentage of their positions working in gender studies and those working in other subjects at the university but who are affiliated researchers at CGF. The affiliated researchers are not part of the daily operations but are central to networks, joint applications, and publications in various combinations.

A new professor was recruited in the spring of 2024. It has been an important future recruitment that guarantees institutional succession as Professor Ulf Mellström will retire in the coming year(s). The center has actively worked to ensure our lecturers qualify as associate professors. Support for associate professor qualifications has been given to three people. One of the lecturers became an associate professor in the spring of 2024 (Liu Xin). Three other lecturers are expected to become associate professors during 2024-2025. Additionally, Assistant Lecturer Klara Goedecke became an associate professor in the fall of 2024. Gender studies was able to recruit an assistant lecturer (Klara Goedecke) in 2023, which has been an important addition to developing research activities, especially in critical masculinity studies. An assistant lecturer is a tenure track position which grants the candidate to focus on their research up to 75% for five years. CGF and the subject of gender studies were the subject area within the Department of Social and Psychological Studies that managed to secure such a position in competition with other subjects at the department. The recruitment of Goedecke also ensures the succession of the editorship for the journal *Norma*. The recruitment of Goedecke is one of

the two career development positions at CGF. The other is Magdalena Nordsäter, who works in nursing studies and works with gender studies perspectives.

Regarding adjunct lecturers, Maja Herstad is an adjunct lecturer in gender studies and a doctoral student in sociology with a focus on gender studies. Herstad's work includes empirical experiences from the Gender Academy project, which ran from 2017-2021. Her dissertation concerns both the private business sector and universities and colleges. Since the inauguration over 30 years ago, the center has had a large number of projects working at the intersection of gender studies theory and practical organizational change through gender mainstreaming from an intersectional perspective. This is a strategically important area for CGF and, not least, an important source of external funding. CGF has further developed this research profile through joint projects and project ideas and ambitions. During the last years, CGF has been involved in the Vinnova-funded cluster Digital Well Arena (DWA), the EU-funded project Debuting, and the Interreg-funded Gender Academy, as well as the EU-funded Gender Plus project "Overcoming the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Gender Divide: A Cross-Cultural Perspective," which was an EU-funded project comparing the entrepreneurial ecosystems in Sweden, Norway, Ireland, and Israel. All projects are examples of collaboration with the surrounding community on both a local and a regional level but with different funding bodies including the European Union.

Regarding other lecturers, Luca Tainio, who is a doctoral student at the University of Helsinki, will strengthen the research profile in Transgender Studies when he defends his dissertation in 2026. Adjunct lecturers are encouraged to advance in their careers and to pursue a doctoral dissertation if possible. The goal is not to have any adjunct lecturers at the center but to stimulate them to advance their positions through a doctorate degree within the framework of their position and, if possible, with the help of external funds. This applies, for example, to Herstad, who has funding via Karlstad University and external funds via the Gender Academy. It also applies to Manuel Missner, who is an adjunct lecturer and mainly works with gender mainstreaming and commissioned education.

The goal for the centre is to be at least 50 percent externally funded. During 2021-2023 this goal was achieved in 2022. There are significant fluctuations regarding external grants, and CGF has worked with applications regionally, nationally, and internationally. It is a major challenge for a relatively small university like Karlstad to compete in the national competition for research funding. The average 'success rate' at the national research councils is around 10%, and in many cases less. The strategy during the operational period has been to finance research in a three-level model where we seek funds through regional projects such as via Region Värmland and European Interreg funds, as well as national research councils and EU projects. During the period, CGF had funding from all three levels. Another important aspect of securing research funds over time is to be involved as evaluators of research applications for research councils. This applies both regionally, nationally, and internationally. Over

the last couple of years senior researchers at CGF have been members of evaluation committees at various national research councils. This is a central part of becoming part of the national and international research community, and here, colleagues help each other to become involved in preparation groups through our collegial networks.

The national and international collaborations that CGF is part of have largely taken place through the GEXcel International Collegium, which includes the various gender studies research environments at Karlstad (CGF), Örebro (CFS, Center for Feminist Social Studies), and Linköping (Tema Genus, Gender Studies) universities. The collaboration has been ongoing for CGF since 2013 when we joined the collegium as the third department/center. GEXcel was established as a center of excellence in 2006 between CFS and Tema Genus and was funded with 20 million SEK from the Swedish Research Council over a six-year period. From 2013, GEXcel was funded by rector's funds (750,000 SEK per year) until 2019. After 2019, the rector at Karlstad University continued to fund GEXcel during the period 2019-2023. It is difficult to overestimate the significance that GEXcel has had for the internationalization of the center since 2013. This includes joint applications, joint seminars, and not least regarding researcher exchanges and visiting researchers. During the period 2021-up till late 2024, the seminar series Gender Talks Series, organized by GEXcel, has held over 30 hybrid seminars with local, national, and international guests. During the same period, CGF has had 25 visiting researchers who have spent shorter or longer periods at CGF and who have been funded by the GEXcel collaboration. In addition to these international guests who have been associated with one of CGF's four research platforms, CGF has also had recurring guests within the Trans research residency program established by researchers within the Trans Gender Studies research profile. This has been of great importance, not least for junior researchers within Trans Gender Studies.

CGF has via GEXcel awarded two application and writing stipends each year and for the period between 2021-2023, six in total. These stipends are directed toward early career researchers so that they can finalise a research application or an article as well as being involved in the activities at CGF. This has also been a productive way to get local and international early career researchers to present their research to the research environment at CGF, and thus opening up for further collaborations.

Another important source of funding has been the faculty's annual application support to stimulate external funding. As a center, CGF has been fortunate to receive application support during the years 2021-2023. CGF has received a total of six application supports together with other research units at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The division of responsibilities between the director and the research collegium is crucial for the scientific and social dynamics of the center. The director has the overall scientific responsibility for the

research platform and research profiles. The intention of the research platform is to include broad participation from all research-active individuals within the center while simultaneously focusing on certain profile areas that have a tradition at CGF, combined with new theoretical developments. The combination of specialization and breadth is not entirely easy to achieve, i.e., being able to create impactful research areas that can compete for research funding while including as many researchers as possible. In other words, the research platform is adaptable in relation to the faculty at the center, while certain profile areas themselves generate attractiveness, leading researchers to seek out CGF as employees, guest researchers, and visitors. Continuity combined with dynamic change is the goal for the research platform that the center has developed over a long period and consolidated during the last years. The scientific dynamics are further largely governed by which research profiles are successful in obtaining external funding and which collaborations have also been successful. All four research profiles have had external funding to varying extents during the last five years, which in itself has created stability for the research platform during the current period.

3. Scientific results and academic impact

The local as well as international activity has been and is extensive and has taken place via online seminars, hybrid seminars, and on-site seminars. As previously stated, the strategic investment by the rector and the faculty through GEXcel international collegium has been significant for the development of an international research environment. A significant number of projects have been granted funding over the last five years. The limited number of pages given does not allow for a detailed account of each project. The list of projects can be found in the attachment background data.

Our profile areas and research in transgender studies, studies on men and masculinities, and Queer Death Studies are leading research milieus in their respective field. This generates significant international interest, which is evident through key researchers collaborating with CGF researchers on research applications, seminars and publications. The journal *Norma* serves as the hub for this activity in studies on men and masculinities. Research on transgender issues has further come to proliferate CGF's research in international contexts in recent years and so has also the Queer Death Studies research profile and the Queer Death Studies international network founded within the GEXcel international collegium.

CGF is now internationally known for the focus on Trans Gender Studies and the only Gender Studies department in the Nordic and European context in which Transgender Studies is an established research focus. This focus is not only reflected in the research at CGF, its regular higher seminars, and visiting scholars, but also in the courses in Gender Studies.

Since 2015, CGF has built a strong research profile around Transgender Studies. Today, CGF, together with the University of Arizona's Transgender Studies Research Cluster, is considered as prominent nodes in Transgender Studies research. Through GEXcel, CGF has hosted a large number of junior and senior researchers as visiting researchers within this research profile. The research grants and research residencies funded by GEXcel have been of great importance for establishing and developing the Transgender Studies research profile. The GEXcel work has been organized by lecturer Wibke Straube, who has been the coordinator of the collegium and the driving intellectual force behind the establishment of Transgender Studies at CGF. Together with Luca Tainio, they have also been the driving forces behind the establishment of the Nordic Transgender Studies Network, where CGF is a central institutional actor in maintaining and developing Transgender Studies in a Nordic context.

During the period from 2021 up till the present CGF has further established itself as a central node in the international research landscape regarding studies on men and masculinities. This has been achieved through international researcher exchanges during the period and, not least, through the journal *Norma: International Journal for Masculinity Studies* (Taylor & Francis). The journal is one of the leading journals in the field and has, during the current period, been indexed in Web of Science and is already indexed in Scopus. The journal, for example, is Q1 (25% of journals with the highest CiteScores) in the Scopus subject category and ranking. The visibility that the journal provides cannot be overstated. This visibility means, for example, that requests to compile international collections within the field are directed to CGF via the journal. An example of this is the "*Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies*," published in 2020, which is the latest comprehensive overview volume in the field. The previous overview volume was published in 2006. The editorial work was managed by CGF and the editorial team with funds intended for the development of the journal and the field at large. Here, the support from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Karlstad University since 2011 has been crucial for the journal's development and stability. The support for the journal has also enabled various forms of 'advanced seminars' within the field. For example, the symposium "What is the state of and what is state of the art in contemporary Masculinity Studies?" was organized on December 5th-7th, 2023, at CGF.

The focus was on recent developments and tendencies in Studies on Men and Masculinities. The participants, which included invited key thinkers in the field, discussed contemporary theoretical currents in the field, as well as in the larger research ecology of gender studies, in connection to empirical work and current political developments. The editorial team of *Norma* together with CGF hosted the event. Three themes were outlined:

1. **Caring masculinities** - This strand encouraged the invited scholars to critically examine the concept and its applications and reflect upon its usability and the potential misuse of the caring masculinity framework.
2. **Posthumanism/Feminist New Materialism/Affect** - This strand discussed how masculinity can be and has been theorized and studied in relation to different entanglements of human-non-human; machinic-somatic; culture-nature; material-organic; and not least ecological and climate crisis concerns.
3. **Typologies** – This strand discussed the proliferation of concepts such as hybrid masculinities, inclusive masculinities, orthodox masculinities, caring masculinities, petromasculinities, toxic masculinities, to name but a few, and urged the participants to think critically and reflect upon the uses and possible abuses of typologies within the field.

The symposium itself has generated various special issues and seminars that have followed up on these current themes. This example aims to illustrate how CGF and the research platform focusing on studies of men and masculinities have generated academic impact and strengthened CGF's international reputation and status in recent times.

The research field of Queer Death Studies is an area that has generated much interest during the period 2021-2023 and is the field that lecturer Tara Mehrabi has primarily developed during her time at CGF. She has also founded the Queer Death Studies Network together with, among others, lecturer Annika Jonsson in sociology at Kau and affiliated researcher at CGF, and our honorary doctor at the center and at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Kau, professor emerita Nina Lykke. Queer Death Studies is part of several research profiles within CGF, such as Gender, Health and Technology, and masculinity studies.

The network constitutes a space for researchers, students, artists, activists, and other practitioners who critically and (self) reflexively investigate and challenge conventional normativities, assumptions, expectations, and regimes of truths that are brought to life and made evident by death, dying, and mourning. Key questions are questions of death, dying, and mourning in the sense that they are insufficient and reductive: they are often governed by the normative notions of the subject; interhuman and human/nonhuman bonds; family relations and communities; rituals; and finally, experiences of grief, mourning, and bereavement. Moreover, these engagements are often embedded in constraining beliefs in life/death divides, constructed along the lines of conventional religious and/or scientific mind/body dualisms.

The first International Queer Death Studies conference was held at Karlstad University in 2019 and was organized by CGF. Again, it is important to emphasize GEXcel's significance for the development and

support of the network and especially the collaboration with the Gender Studies theme at Linköping University. The collaboration within the network has generated a large number of publications, and in 2025, researchers within the network will publish the *Routledge Handbook of Queer Death Studies*.

Regarding the research profile on organizational change, there is, as previously mentioned, a long tradition at CGF. Over the years, this research profile has generated two major research programs, of which the Gender Academy concluded in 2021. This area is essential backbone of CGF and its ability to work with local and regional stakeholders on gender quality issues, as well as within Karlstad University. During the period 2021-2023, the research profile has been particularly visible in the projects Gender Academy, Debuting, and Digital Well Arena (more about these projects under heading five). All three projects have worked interdisciplinarily and across faculty boundaries. CGF has had a long-term ambition to establish this research profile on a national and international level. This has been achieved, among other things, through the project "Overcoming the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Gender Divide: A Cross-Cultural Perspective," an EU Gender Plus-funded project comparing entrepreneurial ecosystems in Sweden, Norway, Ireland, and Israel. The research group of 12 people worked on issues of gender equality and organizational change, primarily within various start-ups in the tech industry in these countries. Within GEXcel it included researchers from Karlstad and Örebro university.

Maja Herstad is currently working on a dissertation on emotions in gender equality work from a perspective based in the sociology of emotions, further developing theoretical perspectives in relation to practical organizational change. Herstad's work will strengthen the research profile Action for Organizational Change. It is of utmost importance that research on equality and gender mainstreaming is scientifically validated to a greater extent. This is an ambition with Herstad's work and a development where this research profile has both a scientific ambition to build a broader research field and also serve as a basis for practical change work in various forms of organizations.

Another related research field that applies gender research and has developed over the last five years is Gender, Health, and Technology. Here, researchers at CGF, sociology, psychology, business economics, and computer science work interdisciplinarily within the Vinnova-funded project Digital Well Arena. DWA is an innovation hub that brings together researchers from Kau and people from the business sector to develop digital solutions for healthcare in Värmland. Several researchers from CGF are engaged in DWA. Another project and network that has been further developed during the same period is MIRAI. MIRAI is a collaboration between 17 Swedish and Japanese universities, aiming to contribute to long-term research collaboration. Here, Tara Mehrabi, Satu Heikkinen, and Anna Pechurina have been active in organizing seminars, conducting exchanges, and writing joint

applications. This cross-interdisciplinary work has resulted in two programme applications concerning digitality and ageing, but however not successful yet.

The overarching ambition with the research profile on organizational change has also been carried out in the work within the long-term project Gennovation: Innovating Businesses, Product Development, and Public Service through Gender Equality and Diversity. The main idea and objective behind Gennovation are 1) innovative business models, product development, and public services can best be achieved when the potential of a diverse group of employees, customers, and citizens is realized, 2) innovation requires close collaboration between private entrepreneurs, research expertise, and public institutions, and 3) gender equality and diversity are in themselves driving innovation. Gennovation's objective is thus to create a space in which innovation can flourish by joining the strengths of entrepreneurial ideas, academic insights, and social responsibility around the possibilities of gender equality and diversity to make for better businesses, products, and public services. This is a project idea that CGF has worked on for several years together with colleagues from Örebro University.

Last but not least it is worth mentioning the major event of the period for the center was the national conference on gender research, G 22, which was conducted and organized by CGF from October 26-28, 2022. Keynote speakers included Jack Halberstam, Andrea Petö, Jens Rydström, and Ulla Manns. The conference had over 400 participants from Sweden, the Nordic countries, and the rest of the world. The response from the conference participants was overwhelming, and the results from the conference evaluation allow us to proudly say that G 22 was a very successful conference that put CGF, Kau, and Karlstad on the map.

4. Collaboration with the surrounding community

As previously mentioned, CGF has extensive collaboration with various local and regional actors in Värmland, in addition to the national and international collaborations reported above. The board is an important platform for exchanging experiences at the regional and national levels. Several previously mentioned collaborations are based on the contacts within the board. Of particular interest in this context is the recurring gender dialogue held in the Swedish parliament within the framework of the GEXcel collaboration. Since the late 2000s, the two/three involved universities within the collaboration have had the opportunity to present current gender research at recurring seminars in the Swedish parliament. It has been and remains an important opportunity to disseminate the results of gender research to political decision-makers. The board's chairperson, Gunilla Svantorp, has also been the convener of the group in parliament that has driven the dialogue. The starting point has been that researchers, within the GEXcel collaboration, at the request of political representatives and current gender political issues, have organized a seminar where the most competent researchers in a given

area present their research. This has been followed by a dialogue where politicians and researchers discuss how the research results can be translated into practical policy. However, due to the prevailing political polarization, it has become increasingly difficult to arrange the dialogue seminars in the Swedish parliament.

Regarding local and regional collaborations within and outside Karlstad University, the DWA project is worth highlighting in relation to stimulating the dissemination of knowledge and innovation. DigitalWell Arena contributes to a long-term infrastructure for developing and organizing interdisciplinary research on health innovation. The aim is to stimulate new knowledge that enables the development of methods, services, and practices so that more people can live healthier lives. CGF and generally Karlstad University is an important partner in coordinating ongoing collaborations and new initiatives, as well as creating a clear structure for digital health innovation. This creates conditions for the long-term establishment of new research and innovation projects. The consortium is seeking external research funding that contributes to increased resources for research in digital health innovation and stimulates research that validates and strengthens identified needs and societal challenges. The aim of DWA is also to contribute to ensuring that research results can be utilized so that companies and the public sector can develop new methods and services to contribute to better health. A central part is also to be an arena that facilitates interaction between the public sector and the business community.

A related project that started in 2023 is DEBUTING. In the project, ten regions across Europe will collaborate on issues related to gender, diversity, and inclusion in the design of policy tools. This is to support SMEs to increase their business capacity and sustainability by implementing an inclusive culture based on gender equality. DEBUTING is an Interreg Europe-funded project that started on 1 March 2023 and runs for four years until 28 February 2027. Ten European regions are included in the DEBUTING project to work on issues related to gender, diversity, and inclusion with a link to the design of policy tools, such as cluster strategies and smart specialization strategies. The partnership includes representatives of regional organizations as well as representatives of various cluster organizations. The DEBUTING and DWA projects are fully in line with the research profile Action for Organisational Change and the ambition with Gennovation as described above.

The collaboration with Region Värmland during the period 2021-2023 has also included two projects concerning healthcare in Värmland in relation to the health of transgender people and the overrepresentation of suicides among men in Värmland. The project "Trans-specific healthcare in Värmland" has mapped the physical and mental health of transgender people in the county through surveys and interviews. The project "Masculinity and Suicide" has collected data on the high suicide rates among men in the county. Both projects are funded by Region Värmland and have generated two

reports plus several presentations for, among others, suicide prevention coordinators in Värmland as well as other regions in Sweden. Ulf Mellström and Andreas Henriksson (sociology) have also participated in TV, radio, and social media and talked about suicide and masculinity on ten occasions.

Overall, the collaborations reported above have undoubtedly contributed to making CGF visible in the region but also at the national level. However, evaluation and follow-up of the collaboration can be improved. Here, a more systematic follow-up of which projects lead to further collaborations and external funding is needed.

5. Academic culture

The academic culture at CGF can be described as intensive. There are few people conducting a comparatively extensive range of activities. It is a research-intensive operation with many projects in relatively few hands. In addition to the versatile seminar activities with higher seminars and GEXcel seminars, CGF also has internal seminars. The seminars are usually on Wednesday afternoons and always take place in a collegial and open atmosphere. The seminars are an important part of the academic environment and contribute to the development of both individual projects and the overall research profile of CGF.

The seminars are usually in the form of hybrid seminars with 15-20 participants, including CGF staff, affiliated researchers at CGF, people from other disciplines, and usually 5-10 online participants.

The internal seminar activities during the current period have been primarily needs-based, meaning that CGF staff read and comment on each other's work when required and called upon for. This includes applications, article and manuscript drafts, or other texts that require feedback. The internal activities have lately been under-prioritized in relation to external activities and seminars at CGF, GEXcel, and other subjects at Kau. The environment CGF works most closely with is sociology at the Department of Social and Psychological Studies, where CGF regularly arranges joint seminars with sociology. There are many staff members in the sociology subject who work with gender studies perspectives, and the two environments complement each other in a fruitful way, which adds greater volume to the entire gender studies environment at the Department of Social and Psychological Studies and, of course, also for the sociology subject.

One aspect discussed is that the total number of seminars is sometimes overwhelming for a small staff. Especially in 2022, there has been a certain seminar fatigue, meaning the number of offered seminars has sometimes been too large in relation to the few people working at CGF. Here, the internal seminars and the sharing of common starting points have suffered during periods. This is also related to CGF organizing the national gender research conference G 22 in October of the same year. Much effort and energy were devoted to this event. The conference itself created great visibility for gender research at

Karlstad University, but it was also a strain where other aspects of the activities, such as internal seminars, have suffered. There is room for improvement here.

As previously described, CGF has actively worked for all lecturers to become associate professors and for all adjuncts to obtain their doctorates. CGF, together with sociology, has had an associate professor qualification group where the subject-responsible professors in each subject have participated along with the group of lecturers approaching the application for associate professor competence. Regarding supervision for doctoral students, it is complicated because gender studies do not have their own doctoral education subject. Employees in gender studies and at CGF have during the period 2021-up till now been supervisors and assistant supervisors for three doctoral students in sociology and also in other subjects at other universities.

As already mentioned, CGF has been part of several international networks (GEXcel, InterGender, among others) that have promoted contacts and networks within each researcher's area. CGF has also been part of the Swedish Research Council's grant for visiting professors. During the current period, Professor Jack Halberstam was a visiting professor at the gender studies department at Lund University as the base. The purpose of the grant is to give higher education institutions the opportunity to develop a subject area by recruiting an internationally prominent professor for a limited period. As part of the visiting professor program, it includes spending time at two sister institutions in Sweden. Here, CGF hosted Professor Halberstam in October 2022 and later in 2022 at Uppsala University.

Questions about good research practice and preventive work against research misconduct are an integral part of the research environment's seminars at CGF, where ethical issues are continuously addressed in relation to ongoing projects. The predominantly qualitative perspectives that characterize the research at CGF have always placed high demands on ethical awareness in fieldwork, interviews, analysis, and reporting of research results, and there are given routines of handling these. The Faculty and the Department of Social and Psychological Studies have held seminars where researchers, teachers, and doctoral students have had the opportunity to discuss ethical issues and ethical approaches in relation to applications for ethical review and ongoing projects in various research and educational activities. The seminars have also aimed to increase the group's knowledge of current rules and principles in ethical review within gender studies and social science, in light of the debate on research ethics in recent years. This means that research ethical issues and approaches are not treated as an individual concern but as part of a collegial activity with a shared responsibility where researchers continuously share and discuss experiences and dilemmas of an ethical nature. All approved projects undergo ethical review counseling through the research ethics committee at Kau before being forwarded to the ethical review authority if applicable. Furthermore, researchers within CGF have been encouraged to participate in seminars such as those organized by the Swedish Research

Council. However, CGF sees a need for further strengthening of work at the departmental and/or faculty level in the form of courses and seminars for doctoral students and teachers/researchers on what applies at an overarching level regarding knowledge of good research practice, research misconduct, ethical approaches, and ethical review, as well as the collection of sensitive data within gender studies and social science research

In summary, it can be said that CGF has a strongly research-driven internal culture that includes a variety of seminar forms within CGF and in collaboration with other subjects and universities. The number of seminars and activities has at times become overwhelming, and the staff have experienced a form of seminar fatigue. There is room here for a more thoughtful balance between internal and external activities. CGF also has an ongoing and active discussion of good research practice and ethical procedures.

6. Interaction between research and education

The connection between education and research is very strong at CGF, but it is important to remember that research is conducted within the framework of CGF and teaching is conducted within the subject of gender studies. These are two different organizational units. The reason for this is that research at Karlstad University is partly organized in various interdisciplinary centers. It is an explicit strategy from the university to be able to topicalize and concentrate research around various central scientific fields where interdisciplinarity is encouraged. CGF is such a center that has a direct connection to gender studies but also close connections to other subjects where gender research is conducted.

As previously stated, the current faculty within gender studies and CGF has significant expertise in a range of gender research areas, particularly masculinity studies, trans studies, posthumanist science studies, feminist cultural studies, and gender equality work within organizations. This is also mirrored in the range of courses given within gender studies.

The connection between education and research is reflected in the course offerings provided by the subject of gender studies. In addition to the general gender studies basic courses that can be taken up to the master's level, the subject of gender studies has several subject-specific courses designed based on CGF's research platform with the four research profiles.

Regarding masculinity research, two English-language distance courses are offered. The course "Men and Masculinities" is given during the spring term, and the course "Men, Masculinities, and Social Change" is given during the autumn term. Both courses are designed based on current research where, for example, many current articles are published in *Norma* provide the basis for seminars and readings. The courses mostly have international students from all over the world. Similarly, the English-language

course "Trans Studies and Activism" mostly consists of international distance students. The course is based on contemporary current research in Transgender Studies. This course is unique from an international perspective as CGF, together with the Transgender Studies Research Cluster at the University of Arizona, are, to our knowledge, the only universities in the world offering courses in the field of Transgender Studies. The research and knowledge in the area of Action for Organizational Change are also reflected in courses such as Leadership, Organization and Gender, and Gender Equality in Theory and Practice. These are courses in Swedish that include themes such as working life, practical gender equality work, and gender studies theories relevant to many students, and it is our ambition to further develop this in our course offerings, also for non-Swedish speaking students. In the area of Gender, Health, and Technology, the research is reflected in courses such as Gender, Sexuality, and Psychology, which are offered in English, and a course with the same name as the research profile.

As an additional strategy for the subject's internationalization and research integration, there is collaboration within Eunice, which is an EU collaboration with eight different universities in Europe. Discussions that started in 2023 about designing special courses in gender studies for Eunice have borne fruit. Two specially designed courses on the theme of Gender and Digital Technology are planned to be offered within Eunice in the master's program TESS – TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE SOCIETY, which is planned to start in 2025/26.

The exchange between students and teachers in gender studies courses is generally very rewarding in terms of intergenerational experiences as well as local and international perspectives. The students are often our primary source of knowledge about what is happening regarding gender and sexuality in contemporary times. Our courses almost always include very engaged students. Our online courses usually recruit a broad base of international students. In other words, we could not be a relevant research center and subject without an enriching exchange with our students.

In summary, there is a clear connection between research and teaching within CGF and the subject of gender studies regarding undergraduate studies. A significant disadvantage regarding the connection between teaching and research is that the subject of gender studies does not have its own doctoral program. This means that the progression that would be desirable for both research and teaching today lacks a crucial component. Being able to develop the subject and CGF by being a doctoral program subject is high on the wish list. This is especially true for the possibility of linking research and teaching.



The Centre for Gender Studies (CGF)

BACKGROUND DATA

Periodic Research Review

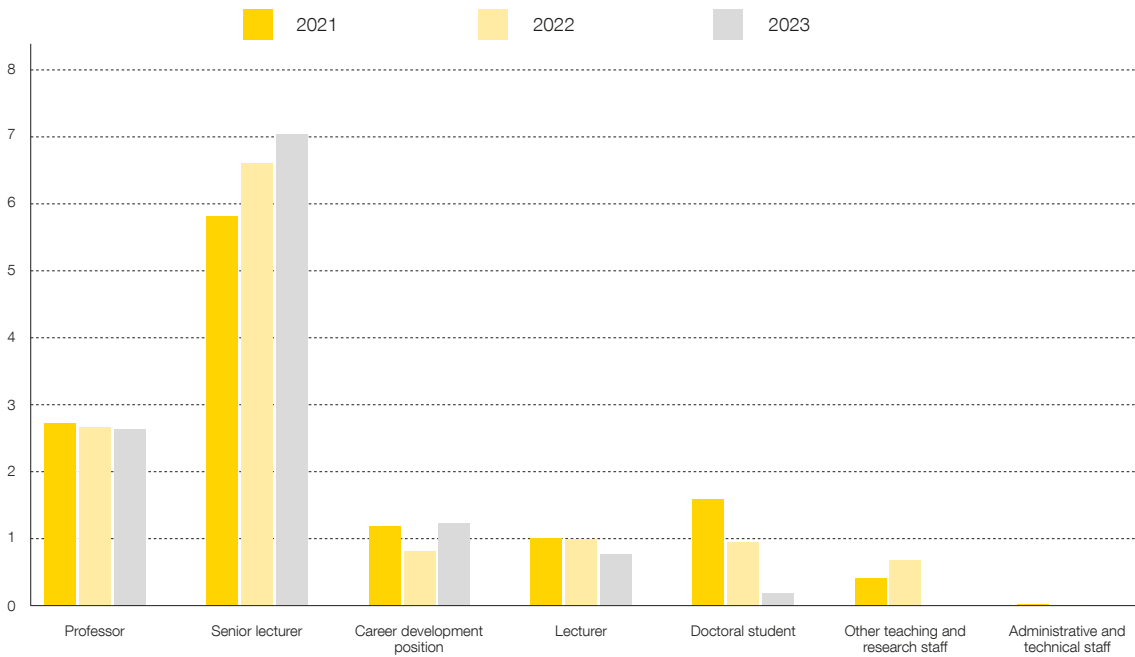
INTRODUCTION

Background data covers a three-year period (2021-2023) and contains information about staff, third-cycle education, financial resources and research outputs. Data is collected from the university administrative systems to provide an overview and illustrate preconditions for research at the evaluation unit.

STAFF

Figure 1.1 Workforce by staff category

The graph shows the workforce, full-time equivalents*, registered for research activity and connected to the evaluation unit over a three-year period. Staff categories are professor, senior lecturer, career-development position, lecturer, doctoral student, other teaching and research staff, and administrative and technical staff. See table 1.2 for individuals in each category.



Source: Primula

* Full-time equivalent (FTE) is a unit of measurement to illustrate the number of full-time hours spent on research for all employees at the evaluation unit. Research includes recorded time covered by internal funding, external research funding and commissioned research funding.

Table 1.2 Staff at the evaluation unit

Staff, based on position, engaged in research at the evaluation unit during 2023.

Position	Subject
Professor	
Holmgren Troy, Maria	English
Mellström, Ulf	Gender Studies
Olin-Scheller, Christina	Education
Sandlund, Erica	English
Senior lecturer	
Enefalk, Hanna	History
Fyrberg Yngfalk, Anna	Business Administration
Grip, Lena	Human Geography
Gyberg, Fanny	Psychology
Heikkinen, Satu	Sociology
Henriksson, Andreas	Sociology
Hübinette, Tobias	Intercultural Studies
Jonsson, Annika	Sociology
Landstedt, Evelina	Social Work
Liu, Xin	Gender Studies
Mehrabi, Tara	Gender Studies
Moberg Stephenson, Maria	Social Work
Ohlsson, Hélène	Gender Studies
Pechurina, Anna	Sociology
Straube, Wibke	Gender Studies
Wallin Wictorin, Margareta	Cultural Studies
Wikström, Peter	English
Zhukova, Ekatherina	Intercultural Studies
Lecturer	
Almberg Missner, Manuel	Gender Studies
Herstad, Maja	Gender Studies
Tainio, Luca	Gender Studies
Career development position	
Bodin, Maja	Nursing
Goedecke, Klara	Gender Studies
Doctoral student	
Nordsäter, Magdalena	Risk and Environmental Studies
Administrative staff	
Särnmark, Jennie	

Source: Primula

Table 1.3 Recruitment (Department only)**Table 1.4 Promotion** Number of promoted staff, total/women, during 2021-2023. Year of employment certificate.

	2021	2022	2023
Docent promotions	2/2	2/2	0
Professor promotions	0	0	1/1
Total	2	2	1

Source: Varbi/evaluation unit

THIRD CYCLE STUDIES

Table 2.1 Doctoral students

Doctoral students by discipline, year of admission and degree of activity during 2023.

Name	Admission subject	Year of admission	Degree of activity
Magdalena Nordsäter	Risk and Environmental Studies	2018	28
Maja Herstad	Sociology	2020	25

Source: Ladok

Table 2.2 Completed a Degree of Licentiate or Doctor

Number of students that have completed a Degree of Licentiate and Doctor over the past three years.

Name	Admission subject	Degree	2021	2022	2023
Fei Liu	English	Doctor		1	
Josefin Velander	Sociology	Doctor			1
Total sum			0	1	1

Source: Ladok

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Table 3.1 Research Funding

Research funds spent at the evaluation unit for the period of 2021-2023. Amounts in SEK 1 000

	2021	2022	2023
Faculty funding (governmental funding)	2 453	2 411	2 716
External funding ¹	1 785	3 230	868
Total	4 238	5 641	3 584
Percentage external funding	42 %	57 %	24 %

Source: Raindance, Kuli

¹ External funding: Includes revenue from fees, other reimbursements and funding. Funding which can include grants from councils, other public research funding agencies, municipalities, regions and research foundations.

Table 3.2 External research funding

Distribution of external research funds spent during the period of 2021-2023. Amounts in SEK 1000.

Funding source	2021	2022	2023
EU and Foreign organisations	-	50	16
Swedish Research Councils ¹	557	1 189	180
Other Swedish government foundations ²	190	938	85
Country councils and municipalities	826	697	350
Private foundations, industry, company etc.	211	356	237
Total	1 785	3 230	868

Source: Raindance/Kuli

¹ Research Councils include the Swedish Research Council, the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (Forte), the Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development (Formas).

² Other Swedish government foundations include The Knowledge Foundation, Vinnova, The Swedish Energy Agency etc.

Table 3.2.1 External research funding – ongoing projects

The table shows research projects during 2021-2023 that CGF are involved in. Amount in SEK 1000.

1. **Gender Academy for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises** (Tillväxtverket, ID 2020 1335). Project Leader: Ulf Mellström. Other participating researchers and process leaders: Maja Herstad, Kau; Henrietta Huzell, Kau; Anne-Charlott Callerstig, Örebro University; Dag Balkmar, Örebro University; Nina Kask, Up is Down; Manuel Missner, Kau; Sebastian Mohr, Kau. SEK 10 000 (2017-2021).
2. **Transnational Single Men** (The Swedish Research Council), Project Leader: Ulf Mellström, Andreas Henriksson, Kau; Katarzyna Wojnicka, University of Gothenburg; Andrea Priori, Fulda University College, Germany. SEK 4 500 (2019-2023).
3. **Transnational Perspectives on Bridging the Gender Equality Gap in Entrepreneurial Ecosystems** (EU-Gender Plus funding channeled by Vetenskapsrådet), Project Leader: Ulf Mellström, Kau; Anne-Charlott Callerstig, Örebro University; Dag Balkmar, Örebro University. SEK 2 500 (2020-2023).
4. **Masculinity and Suicide in Värmland** (Region Värmland), Ulf Mellström, Andreas Henriksson. SEK 2 000 (2019-2022) divided into two different periods.
5. **Trans*Creative: Health, Violence, and Environment in Transgender Cultural Production**, Kone Foundation (Lotta Kähkönen, PI, jointly with Luca Tainio, James MacDonald, and Kuutti Kiperä). SEK 5 000 (2022-2024).
6. **RJ Sabbatical**, Ulf Mellström. Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, SEK 1 900 (2024-2025).
7. **Digital Well Arena** (Vinnova, ID 2018-03025). Project Coordination: Compare; CTF, Computer Science, Nursing, CGF. Participating researchers from CGF: Tara Mehrab, Satu Heikkinen. SEK 1 800.
8. **Trans-specific Healthcare in Värmland**. An evaluation of Region Värmland's pilot project for trans-specific care and its implications for care seekers' wellbeing and mental health. (Wibke Straube PI, Wibke Straube, Ida Linander, and Andreas Henriksson), Region Värmland. SEK 600 (2022-2023).
9. **Gender Equality in Dalarna's Business Sector** (Malin Karlsson HDa, PI, Sandra Modh KAU, Mats Rönnelid HDa, Tobias Mårtensson HDa, Madelene Håll HDa), Tillväxtverket & Region Dalarna. SEK 740 (2023).
10. **How Did I End Up Here? Stories from Migrant Men**, The Swedish Research Council Humanities and Social Sciences Council, Dnr 2022-06401. SEK 500 (2023-2024).
11. **MIRAI Travel Grant for MIRAI 2.0 Research and Innovation Conference in Japan**. SEK 90 (2022).
12. **G22 – Shaping Hopeful Futures in Times of Uncertainties: The Challenges and Possibilities of Gender Studies** (national conference coordinated by Johanna Sjöstedt). Forte. SEK 100 (2022).
13. **G22 – Shaping Hopeful Futures in Times of Uncertainties: The Challenges and Possibilities of Gender Studies** (national conference coordinated by Johanna Sjöstedt). Region Värmland. SEK 75 (2022).
14. **Whole Värmland** application together with Sebastian Mohr – Region Värmland, VINNOVA SEK 360 (2019-2021).

Table 3.3 External research funding statistics

Number of grant applications submitted to external funding bodies, number of granted applications, amount applied for and granted refers to Karlstad University's share. Amounts in SEK 1000.

	2021	2022	2023
Number of grant applications	13	6	7
Number of granted applications	4	3	1
Amount applied	41 354	5 600	35 531
Amount granted	755	2 241	1 480
Success rate ¹	30,8 %	50,0 %	14,3 %

Source: Raindance

¹ Success rate is calculated on the number of granted applications in relation to those submitted.

5. EXTERNAL COLLABORATION AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Table 5.1 Engagement in the scientific community. The table shows the number of individual peer-review assignments within the evaluation unit during 2023.

Assignment	Total numbers
Plenary or keynote talk at international conferences	7
Assignment as expert evaluator in research councils and foundations	3
Assignment as expert evaluator for position of professor, associate professor (docent) and/or senior lecturer	4
Assignment as opponent for PhD thesis	2
Assignment as member of examination board for PhD thesis	5
Assignment as editor or member of editorial board for journal	4
Assignment as reviewer for international journal	25
Member of national scientific councils	2
Member of international scientific councils	1

Source: Evaluation unit

Table 5.2 Collaborative partners

Collaborative partners, reported by the name of organization, for the period 2021-2023. Research collaborations given here are limited to those with joint research grants and/or joint publications with the evaluation unit.

	Regional	National	International
Academic	As a centre we work towards a large number of scientific units at Karlstad University in projects such as the transdisciplinary work within the Digital Well Research group at KAU with two funded projects: 1- ARENA project aiming at transdisciplinary collaboration 2- DHINO project - transdisciplinary research on digital health at Kau with the purpose of co-producing knowledge with industry and public sectors.	GEXcel International collegium, Örebro University, Linköping University, Stockholm University, Uppsala University, Umeå university, Luleå University of Technology, Gothenburg University, Lund University,	RINGS (The International Research Association of Institutions of Advanced Gender Studies), InterGender – International consortium for Interdisciplinary Feminist Research Training. Dublin City University, Nord University Bodø, Kinneret college the lake of Genesaret, University of Western Cape, Turku University, University of Helsinki, Oslo University, St. Joost School of Art & Design, Breda Den Bosch, Netherlands, Manchester Metropolitan University, Roskilde University, Tel Aviv University, University of Stavanger, Benares Hindu University, Adelaide University, University of Tasmania,
Industry	ICC steel and manufacturing Värmland, LBC-The regional truck center association of Värmland, Industrial support limited liability company Arvika, Löfbergs Coffee production Karlstad, Sticky Beat digital innovation Karlstad, Aspervall fine mechanical workshop Säfte, Ångsbacka course and festival center Molkom, Ventisol fire ventilators Kristinehamn,	RISE Uppsala	Debuting ERUF Interreg EU project (Developing Business through inclusiveness and gender awareness, new cluster competences
Public sector	Region Värmland, Public Health Agency of Sweden, The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, The municipality of Karlstad,		
Other		RFSU Uppsala	Network for Nordic Transgender Studies

Source: Evaluation unit

6. SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

The research activity at Karlstad University is expressed, among other things, in scientific publications. This report aims to map the publishing activity and its development over time for the evaluation unit. The report also shows the proportion of internationally co-authored publications where at least one of the authors is affiliated with a university outside Sweden as well as the proportion of publications that are open access, i.e. freely available online.

METHOD

To get a complete coverage of what is published within the unit, the following tables are based on registered publications in DiVA (Digital Scientific Archive), the local publication repository where researchers, teachers and students register their research publications and essays. It covers all subject areas and publication types

Publication extraction for the years 2021-2023 has been based on the researchers individual Kau:ID, which links them with their respective publications. The list of researchers that are included in the analyses was provided by the HR department and includes also researchers that are no longer part of the unit but were employed during 2021-2023.

The analysis includes all publications where at least one of the authors is affiliated with Karlstad University. The publication types included in the report consist of article in journal, article review, book review, book, chapter in book, conference paper, collection (editor), proceedings (editor), and report. The publication subcategories presentation, poster, abstracts and "other" have been omitted from the analysis because these entries are registered to a very varying extent by the researchers. Doctoral dissertations and licentiate theses are reported in detail in other parts of the evaluation and have therefore also been omitted here.

PUBLISHING OUTPUT

Counting the total number of publications is the simplest bibliometric measure for reporting publications over a period of time for a research-producing unit. During 2021-2023, 34 individuals from the evaluation unit published 150 publications.

Figure 6.1 The annual total number of publications during 2021-2023.

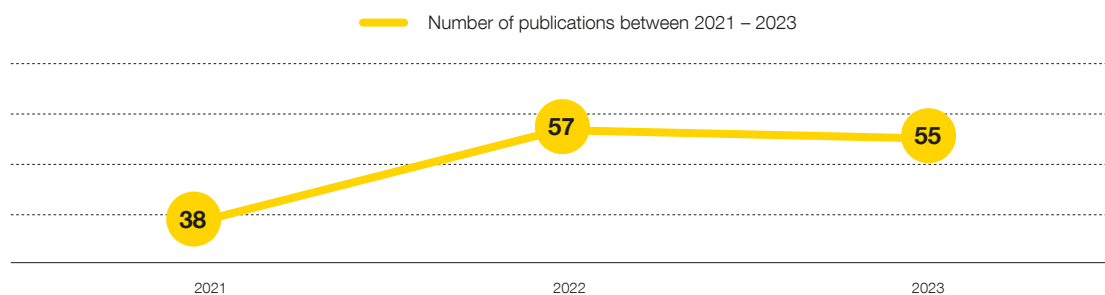


Figure 6.2 Number of peer-reviewed publications per year for the unit (bars). Percentage of peer-reviewed publications of the total annual number of publications (line).

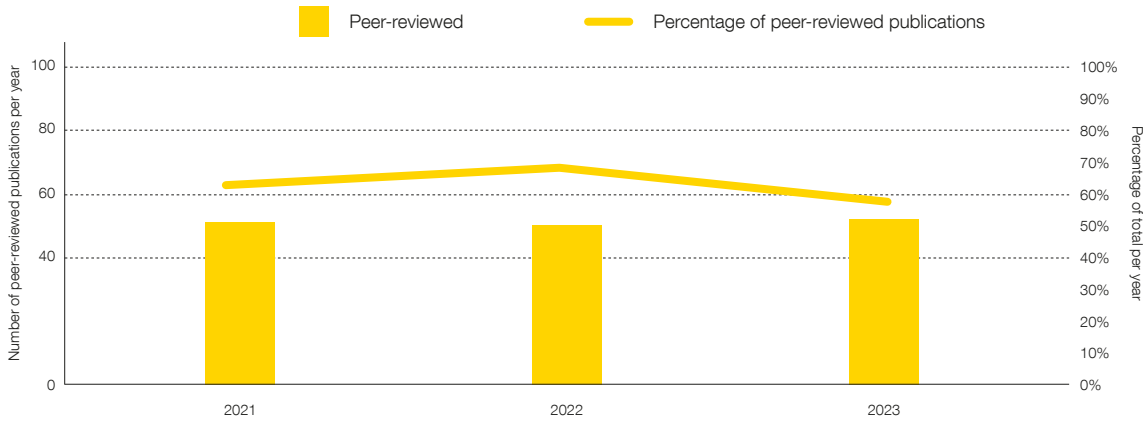


Table 6.3 The unit’s publications sorted by publication and content type for the years 2021-2023.

	Peer-reviewed	Scientific but not peer- reviewed	Other (popular scientific, debate)
Article in journal	59	11	4
Article, book review		4	
Book	1	4	
Chapter in book	29	23	2
Report		3	1
Collection (Editor)	6	3	

Figure 6.4 Comparison of the percentage of peer-reviewed articles that are open access and the percentage that are not.

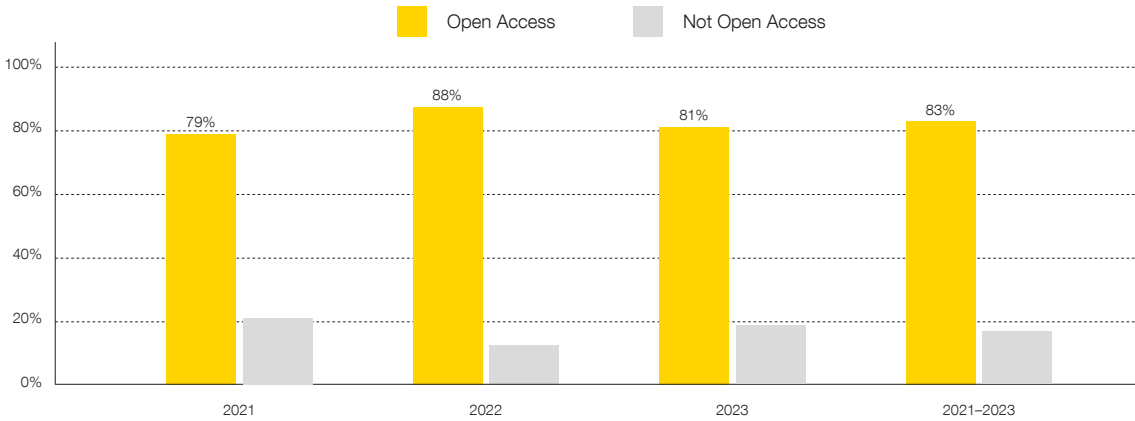
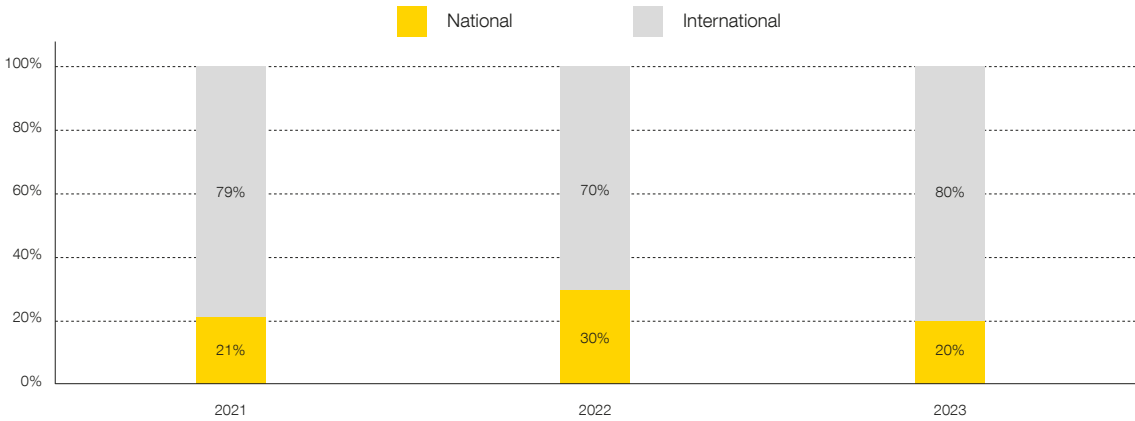


Figure 6.5 Proportion of the unit's publications with an international profile and publications where all authors were affiliated to Swedish organizations.



7. RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

If applicable, specify the most significant research infrastructure available.



Evaluation report

March 24, 2025

Karlstad University, The Center for Gender Studies (CGF)

Evaluation panel:

Professor Liisa Husu, Professor Bob Pease and Professor Tamara Shefer

1. Summary

The panel was impressed by the quality and social relevance of the academic profile and dynamic work of the Center. Key research fields of the Center: masculinity studies; organizational change; transgender studies; and gender, health and technology are highly relevant from a scholarly as well as a societal perspective. It is valuable that the center has particularly foregrounded and taken forward areas that are more marginal internationally in gender research. Work of the Center on research on men and masculinities and transgender studies has especially bolstered its international visibility, through the hosting of the International Journal of Masculinities Studies (NORMA), international visitors, and networking. The new director is extending the Center's international standing through her networks in global Southern contexts and her scholarship on human rights. One of the notable strengths of the Centre is its extensive and long-term research collaboration with and outreach towards the surrounding community within the region, including SMEs and local government.

The panel supports strategic plans to further strengthen the Center's research framework, including restructuring and rethinking of the platform, based on current strong research areas, keeping a strong core in the discipline of gender studies and reaching out more effectively in-house to engage researchers across the university, increasing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. Further panel recommendations concern: extending the teaching programmes with stronger links to the Center's key research areas; increased quality assurance for funding applications and publications; mapping and targeting systematically international funding sources; and increased publishing in international journals.

2. Scientific results

The research profile of the Center is internationally anchored and dynamic, with high social relevance. The four main areas of study largely reflect the research interests of previous and current staff, and these areas are relatively well developed. Two of these areas of study, masculinity studies and transgender studies, are relatively marginal in many other university gender studies programmes internationally. This is significant, as these areas have drawn high-profile visiting scholars and hosted large international events that contribute to the university's international standing. The hosting of the *International Journal of Masculinities (NORMA)* is significant in this respect as well. Although the retirement of the previous director will impact on the masculinity studies area, we were reassured that other staff, including an early career scholar, have the ability to take this long-term research area forward in the future. The journal *NORMA*, which has recently been transferred to Karlstad University, will continue to be an important internationally recognized hub for masculinity studies.

Organizational change was originally a research field that was the main driver for the Center. The field has strong regional interest and impact and has remained a nationally and regionally noteworthy research field with high societal relevance, with significant major collaborative projects, such as the Gender Academy, lately also expanding to international collaborations through EU funding. Gender, health and technology is another evolving research area with high societal impact. It is promising in terms of uniting research interests across the University and planned international collaborations.

The new leadership brings in some novel and important areas of expertise to extend these current areas of study, including a global Southern, decolonial perspective with emphasis on a global framework on legal and human rights aspects of gender justice.

The Center aims to cover approximately half of its funding from external funds. Considerable efforts have been and are dedicated to secure external funding mainly from national sources, and these efforts have also been relatively successful, even though annual fluctuations are large. Faculty grants for supporting funding applications and the University Grants Office support have been highly appreciated. However, given the currently very low success rates in Sweden in competitive external funding in general in

social sciences and humanities, systematic mapping of relevant international funding sources as mentioned in the site visit appears also highly reasonable.

The panel noted that much of the publication output in the core discipline of gender studies is published in chapters and books, and less in international gender studies journals which would bring more visibility to the scholarship. Furthermore, the publications list of staff associated with the Center did not initially give an accurate representation of the gender studies related publications. One of the things the panel noticed was that the self-reflective report did not document staff outputs and achievements well enough. Many more work-in-progress publications, such as some impressive, edited volumes and international handbooks, emerged in the interviews. The recording and monitoring of gender studies publications was acknowledged as something that needs to be addressed in future reports to strengthen their focus.

3. Organization and leadership

The Center is strongly linked to the discipline of gender studies which is a relatively small discipline at Karlstad University, and it is currently directed by the new Professor of Gender Studies. The core staff of the Center is employed in gender studies, which was in the site visit meeting characterized by the staff both as a strength and as a challenge. The Center hosts affiliated researchers from several disciplines, including sociology, social work, intercultural studies, and pedagogy. Several actions have taken place to reach out and invite scholars with gender research profiles and interests across the University to affiliate themselves to the Center. There is ambition as well as potential to strengthen the Center by reaching out more actively in-house, and through that facilitate cross-fertilization and development of collaborations transcending disciplinary boundaries. For this to be successful, it would be important to create and strengthen a sense of belonging among the broader group including affiliated researchers and secure and maintain and create attractive collaboratory fora. However, the panel did not have an opportunity to meet any affiliated researchers during the virtual site visit, thus it is somewhat difficult to assess how the affiliated researchers perceive their relation to the Center and their preferences.

The panel understood that there was awareness among the Director and staff that some kind of reorganizing or rethinking of the research framework would be necessary, for strengthening and consolidating collaborations across the University. One motivator for such broader research collaboration around gender dimensions is the current European Union research policy focus, stressing the importance of including a gender dimension in research more broadly. Integrating and including the research areas of the new Professor, such as legal aspects, would naturally also be feeding into and strengthening the rethinking of the framework.

Much of the work of the Center is directed outwards, nationally, regionally, and internationally. Regular meetings with regional representatives including SMEs have facilitated a multitude of successful regional collaborations. Membership of GEXcel and of the Swedish-international doctoral programme Intergender have been important as they have facilitated many successful national and international collaborations with gender studies centers in Sweden and abroad. Support from the University for the continuation of the GEXcel collaboration would be important.

When it comes to outreach beyond established projects and networks, the Center also receives a lot of ad hoc outreach requests related to gender topics, e.g. from the police or care homes. This type of outreach activities in gender studies often remain “under the radar” in terms of recognition and resources but is an important societal contribution.

At the time of the evaluation, the Center has very recently received a new Director, after a long-term leadership of the soon-to-retire Professor of Gender Studies. It is always challenging to replace a long-term leader. The new director appeared to the panel as very dynamic and strategic and seems to be collaborating well with the staff, in an affirmative and supportive way. She has a clear vision, is aware of challenges ahead and seems to have staff support, promising to address areas of challenge. Also, importantly, she brings along some new international networks and has worked in a global Southern context, African, which bodes well for a more global approach that challenges geopolitical inequalities in gender studies and further afield.

The panel agrees that there is a tension between locating the responsibilities of the academic head of gender studies with the tasks of the Director of the Center in one person.

4. Academic culture

We noted a highly motivated, dedicated and competent staff group with an impressive new leader who is clearly strategic and energetic in efforts to strengthen and extend the Center's work and impact. We were impressed by the current work and work in progress in the key research areas, the hosting of national and international conferences and other academic forums, and a framework of visiting professors and scholars, including globally leading scholars in the four research areas. The Center is well engaged and active in relevant academic networks nationally and internationally, especially in relation to masculinity studies, transgender studies, and queer death studies.

Also, it is evident that there is a large amount of energy and effort put into research funding applications to extend and sustain the scholarship. Planned transdisciplinary collaborations and forums where staff across the university share their research are important, and will support early career scholars in particular, but are of value for all staff in developing and strengthening their research profiles. Such forums are also being deployed towards mentoring and early career and other staff, specifically toward supporting staff grant applications.

Finally, there is an emphasis on supporting existing staff to develop their research profiles towards promotion through increased publications and research grant funding, which will bode well for the possibilities of creating a Doctoral programme in due course.

5. Collaboration and societal impact of research

The review panel was impressed with the community outreach and engagement of the Center. The Center has been collaborating extensively with the surrounding community, within the region, such as SMEs and local government. We felt that this work and emphasis of the Center is indeed impressive and appears sustainable and valuable, which should be noted as a strength.

The panel did, however, feel that the Center could perhaps do more to link its research and teaching with this community-based work so that it may inform their scholarship and be better and more widely profiled through documentation and reflection on this work, both academically and in public and advocacy contexts.

The panel also noted that the Center is a valuable resource for the larger university community since it is regularly drawn on to provide services related to gender equality and diversity in the university. We felt that this valuable resource should be carefully considered, and that the university needs to ensure that the Center is adequately resourced as well as institutionally appreciated and rewarded for this contribution to the university. Care that the Center is not overly drawn on or exploited should be taken and ways of ring-fencing this as a clear role for the Center in relation to the institutional framework of the university should be sought.

6. Relationship between education and research

The Center showed a strong commitment and engagement in strengthening their education and its links to key areas of research. In particular, the Director and other members of the staff shared their plan to develop an undergraduate programme in English on global perspectives on gender, human rights, and social justice. This programme that is already underway promises to extend the teaching of the Center as well as contribute to the university's internationalization goals by drawing a cohort of international students. It is also evident that the planned programme will draw on current research in the Center, most notably the research and collaborative transnational research projects of the director, which will both bolster the research of the Center while also expanding their teaching and linking it more strongly to their research. We also noted that it is significant that this undergraduate programme will be one of the few programmes in the university offered in English. This may serve to bolster the Center and the University's internationalization goals while also building a larger transnational network of researchers in the area of the programme and mobilise and strengthen the research outputs, both quantitatively and qualitatively, given the advantages of transnational, transdisciplinary research.

The panel further noted with respect to the relationship between teaching and research that the Center is placing much emphasis on supporting and mentoring early career academic staff to develop their research profiles towards promotion through increased publications and research grant funding. We appreciate that this will have a positive impact on future possibilities of creating a Doctoral programme, as mentioned

earlier, which of course will be important for the Center's teaching growth and have positive spin-offs for strengthening the dialogue between research and education.

7. Recommendations for further development

The panel supports the plans of further restructuring and rethinking the research platform drawing from existing strong research areas, while keeping a strong core in the discipline of gender studies, including the expertise of the new Director, and to reach out more effectively in-house to researchers with relevant research profiles, increasing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches.

The role of the current board could be reconsidered, for example, by establishing a steering committee with a more active and strategic supporting role. This may also assist in extending the group of associated scholars engaging with related areas of gender work, both teaching and research, across the university.

The relations between gender studies and the Center are strong but the panel agrees that separation of the tasks of the Center director and head of gender studies would be sensible concerning workloads and effectivity.

Both concerning gender studies as a discipline and the Center, the panel stresses that it is important that the University recognizes the value of in-house gender expertise the center and the discipline provides; first, for supporting and quality assuring the gender equality and diversity activities across university; and second, for supporting integration of gender dimensions and aspects in research more broadly across the University. This is also an issue concerning quality assurance of research activities. Recognizing the valuable expertise of the Center here should not only be limited to a symbolic acknowledgement but also be reflected in resource allocation.

The panel recommends that the Center could do more to link their research and teaching with their impressive community-based work, so that it may inform their scholarship as well as be better profiled through documentation and reflection on this work more widely, both academically and in public and advocacy contexts.

The panel recommends that the Center increases its publishing efforts in international gender studies and gender-related journals.

The Center should continue the systematic work to quality assure funding applications and publications, by joint workshops and seminars. The panel recommends strategic mapping and targeting international funding sources, including Nordforsk and European sources. The Center would also benefit from creating more strategic international collaborations for funding and publishing.