



Revision of the SFS Charter

Proposition 4

Cover Letter

During the past operating year, needs for clarifications and adaptations to the Charter have been identified. These have come to light through operational experience, discussions at member meetings, and input from parts of the organisation such as the Election Committee, committees, and the Board. In particular, questions relating to the work of the Election Committee, meeting formats, authorised signatories, and conflict of interest provisions have become topical.

In preparing the proposals, the Board has taken into account both practical experience from previous operating years and the need for a long-term sustainable and fit-for-purpose governance of the organisation. The proposals aim to create clearer regulations, increase flexibility in the organisation's work, and ensure continued strong democratic grounding.

Summary

The proposals are based on needs identified during previous operating years, where the current Charter has in certain areas proven to be unclear or restrictive. This applies in particular to the regulation of the Election Committee, the ability to hold meetings in different formats, the handling of authorised signatories, and conflict of interest provisions.

The proposals entail, among other things, that:

- the terminology is changed from 'statute' (stadga) to 'statutes/charter' (stadgar),
- the size of the Election Committee is made more flexible in order to facilitate recruitment and ensure that work can begin on time,
- the General Assembly is given the ability to appoint the convener of the Election Committee,
- the authorised signatories are broadened to also include Board members,
- the ability to hold extraordinary General Assembly meetings in formats other than in-person is expanded,
- special rights for committees are adjusted, and
- a new, consolidated chapter on conflict of interest is introduced to create a uniform definition and a clear process for handling conflict of interest situations.
- At the end of the proposition, concrete proposals for decisions on amendments to the Charter are presented.

Proposed Decision

The Board proposes that the General Assembly resolve

to adopt the proposition in its entirety.

Proposed Changes

Name of the Charter

The term stadga (singular) is changed throughout to stadgar (plural) in order to align with standard terminology. Cf. e.g. Section 3 of the Student Union Ordinance (2009:769), the Swedish Tax Agency's information page, or MUCF.

Election Committee

The number of members of the Election Committee is reduced, from 7 to 5.

Chapter 5, § 2, Item 1

Current wording

The Election Committee shall consist of seven members.

Proposed wording

The Election Committee shall consist of at least three (3) but no more than seven (7) members.

Statement of problem

During the 2024/25 operating year (SFSFUM 2025), it was observed that it had been difficult to recruit members to the Election Committee. This may have been caused by several factors that require further investigation and mapping; however, it nonetheless prompted reflection. It was noted during the meeting that there was a sense of compulsion or obligation in relation to standing for election, in order to avoid the General Assembly being in breach of the Charter.

In order to ensure that an Election Committee is in place at the time of SFSFUM, and to improve the efficiency of the work, there is scope for change in how the Election Committee is regulated in the SFS Charter at the time of writing.

By reformulating Chapter 5, § 2, Item 1 on the number of members to read 'The Election Committee shall consist of at least three (3) but no more than seven (7) members', space is created to recruit candidates based on willingness and commitment rather than duty and obligation. Furthermore, it creates conditions for the Election Committee as a group to begin its work well in advance, without having to wait for any by-elections.

This formulation will not affect the possibilities for representation of member unions, since the possibility of the Election Committee having seven members remains, though it is not a requirement under the proposal.

The Election Committee has questioned the need for this change.

The following is a table showing the number of elected members and any substitutes since SFSFUM 2013:

SFSFUM	Elected
2025	7
2024	7+3
2023	7+3
2022	7
2021	7+1
2020	3
2019	7+2
2018	7
2017	7+2
2016	7+4
2015	7+3
2014	7+6
2013	7

The General Assembly decides on the convener.

Chapter 3, § 1, Item 1

Current wording

The following bodies and elected posts shall be appointed at the ordinary meeting of the General Assembly:

- Board, of which one Chair and one Deputy Chair shall be elected
- separately;
- Election Committee;
- One Public Authorized Auditor and one Deputy Auditor; and
- Two Operational Auditors and two ranked Deputy Operational
- Auditors

Proposed wording

The following bodies and elected posts shall be appointed at the ordinary meeting of the General Assembly:

- Board, of which one Chair and one Deputy Chair shall be elected separately;
- Election Committee, of which one convener shall be elected separately;
- One Public Authorised Auditor and one Deputy Auditor; and
- Two Operational Auditors and two ranked Deputy Operational Auditors.

Statement of problem

In order to improve the efficiency of the work within the Election Committee, and to strengthen the democratic grounding among member unions, it is relevant for the convener of the Election Committee to be appointed by the General Assembly.

If the election of the Election Committee's convener takes place at SFSFUM, the Election Committee as a group can begin the practical work earlier and thereby improve the efficiency of the Election Committee's work process. Furthermore, it can be argued that this strengthens the emphasis on trust in positions of trust, by the General Assembly expressing its confidence in the person they consider best suited to act as convener of the Election Committee.

The Election Committee has questioned the need for this change, and considers that the current system, whereby the Election Committee appoints its convener internally, functions appropriately.

Authorised Signatories

The authorised signatories are broadened, from the Presidium + secretariat to also include Board members.

Chapter 1, § 10, Item 1

Current wording

The authorised signatories of SFS are the Board members or may be delegated by the Board to the Presidium and employees at SFS' office.

Proposed wording

The authorised signatories of SFS are the Board members or may be delegated by the Board to the Presidium, Board members, and employees at SFS's office.

Statement of problem

The Board is accountable to the General Assembly for the management of SFS, including finances. The current limitations on the authorised signatories are not fit for purpose and risk restricting the Board's ability to, for example, appoint a Board member as authorised signatory in the event that the Presidium is absent for an extended period. At present, such authorisation must instead be granted to an employee at the SFS office, and there is value in it generally being elected representatives who sign on behalf of the association.

Extraordinary Meeting of the General Assembly

The possibilities to hold extraordinary General Assembly meetings in formats other than in-person are expanded.

Chapter 2, § 13, Item 4

Current wording

For extraordinary meetings of the General Assembly, the provisions

regarding format of meeting and number of representatives in § 12 Item 4 – Item 5 shall be applied. In the following situations, the body giving notice may, however, decide otherwise:

- When the meeting is called by an ordinary meeting of the General Assembly; and
- When the extraordinary meeting shall only deal with a by-election.

Proposed wording

For extraordinary meetings of the General Assembly, the provisions regarding format of meeting and number of representatives in § 12 Item 4 – Item 5 shall be applied. In the following situations, the body giving notice may, however, decide otherwise:

- When the meeting is called by an ordinary meeting of the General Assembly; and
- When the extraordinary meeting shall only deal with a by-election.

The Board and the Operational Auditors may jointly decide to depart from the meeting format in § 12 Item 4 – Item 5.

Statement of problem

Today's technology enables simpler participation in meetings digitally. The current formulation regarding the Board's ability to depart from in-person extraordinary General Assembly meetings for purposes other than by-elections limits, for example, the ability to coordinate more decisions than by-elections if an extraordinary General Assembly meeting is nevertheless convened. During the autumn's extraordinary General Assembly meeting, it was for example not possible to simultaneously address a budget revision to handle the issue of unincurred expenses due to unpaid honorarium for the vacant Presidium position. Nor was it possible to, for example, grant full membership to applying unions, despite these having been granted interim membership well in advance pending the next General Assembly meeting. However, it would have been possible to handle other matters if a full General Assembly meeting had been convened, i.e. an in-person meeting with all mandates, which was however deemed unnecessary and would have entailed limited opportunities for member unions to participate.

A broader formulation regarding the ability to depart from the meeting format is proposed. The Board considers that there is no reason to enable departures from the number of represented mandates. The Board further proposes that decisions on extraordinary General Assembly meetings with departures regarding meeting format should appropriately be made jointly by the Board and the Operational Auditors, in order to ensure that decisions remain proportionate with regard to, for example, the scope of matters to be handled and democratic principles.

SFS Committees

Special rights for SFS committees are abolished.

Chapter 2, § 4, Item 1

Current wording

Notice of and other documentation for the meetings of the General Assembly shall be sent to:

- Member unions;
- Representatives at the meeting, to the extent they have been notified to the Board;
- Members of the Board;
- Members of the Third-cycle Students Committee;
- Members of the Election Committee; and
- Auditors.

Proposed wording

Notice of and other documentation for the meetings of the General Assembly shall be sent to:

- Member unions;
- Representatives at the meeting, to the extent they have been notified to the Board;
- Members of the Board;
- Members of the Election Committee; and
- Auditors.

Chapter 2, § 6, Item 1

Current wording

The following persons are entitled to be present, to speak and to make proposals at the meetings of the General Assembly:

- Representatives;
- Members of the Board;
- Members of the Third-cycle Students Committee;
- Members of the Election Committee; and
- Auditors; and
- Meeting chairs of the meeting.

Proposed wording

The following persons are entitled to be present, to speak and to make proposals at the meetings of the General Assembly:

- Representatives;
- Members of the Board;
- Members of the Election Committee; and
- Auditors; and
- Meeting chairs of the meeting.

Chapter 2, § 12, Item 6

Current wording

Motions and interpellations to the meeting may be submitted by:

- A member union;
- A group of at least ten members of a member union; and
- The Third-cycle Students Committee.

Proposed wording

Motions and interpellations to the meeting may be submitted by:

- A member union; and
- A group of at least ten members of a member union.

Chapter 3, § 4, Item 1**Current wording**

The following are entitled to nominate persons to the bodies and elected posts stated in § 1.

- A member union;
- A group of at least ten members of a member union;
- A General Assembly representative at the meeting when the election is to take place;
- A member of the Board;
- A member of the Third-cycle Students Committee; and
- A member of the Election Committee.

Proposed wording

The following are entitled to nominate persons to the bodies and elected posts stated in § 1.

- A member union;
- A group of at least ten members of a member union;
- A General Assembly representative at the meeting when the election is to take place;
- A member of the Board; and
- A member of the Election Committee.

Chapter 4, § 4, Item 1**Current wording**

In addition to the Board, the following persons have the right to be present and to speak at the Board meetings:

- Members of the Third-cycle Students Committee;
- Members of the Election Committee;
- Auditors; and
- Personnel representatives.

Proposed wording

In addition to the Board, the following persons have the right to be present and to speak at the Board meetings:

- Members of the Election Committee;
- Auditors; and
- Personnel representatives.

Statement of problem

The organisation's Charter currently treats two committees differently by giving one a formal special status. This is because the SFS Third-cycle Students Committee (Doktorandkommittén) is assigned more rights than SFS's other committees, for example, SFS's international committee Komit, in several chapters and sections of the Charter.

This construction risks creating ambiguity around mandates, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. The difference may also affect perceptions of fairness and transparency in the organisation's governance. Against this background, the question arises as to whether the Charter should be revised to ensure more uniform regulation of committees' standing.

The background to the Third-cycle Students Committee's special regulation is partly that the committee was a body under SFSFUM, with its members elected by the General Assembly. This arrangement was abolished at SFSFUM 2019.

However, the Third-cycle Students Committee's special regulation in Chapter 7, § 4, Item 1 is proposed to remain. The background is that the committee has a long history within SFS, and the Board considers it still appropriate to establish in the Charter that the Third-cycle Students Committee shall exist. The Board also wishes to clarify that all committees formally report to the Board.

Conflict of interest

Changes to existing regulations

Chapter 2, § 9, Item 1 - Proposed to be removed

A member of the Board may not, as a representative to the General Assembly, participate in a decision on discharge from liability for him-/herself.

Chapter 5, § 4, Item 1 - Proposed to be removed

A member of the Election Committee may not be a candidate for an elected post prepared by the Election Committee.

Chapter 6, § 3, Item 1 - Proposed to be removed

An auditor may not examine an SFS body in which the auditor themselves is active during the same term of office.

New proposed Chapter 11 - All wordings are new

§ 1 General provisions

Item 1

An elected representative may not participate in the handling of or decisions on a matter that personally concerns themselves or their close relatives.

Item 2

An elected representative may not participate in the handling of or decisions on a matter in which they can be assumed to be affected to a non-negligible extent.

Item 3

An elected representative may not participate in the handling of or decisions on a matter if there is any other special circumstance that gives reason to question their impartiality in the matter.

Item 4

Anyone who is aware of a circumstance that may be assumed to constitute a conflict of interest shall immediately report this to the relevant body.

Item 5

If there is suspicion of another person's conflict of interest, a representative in a body may raise the matter for a decision and, if necessary, consult the Operational Auditors.

Item 6

The relevant body shall examine whether a conflict of interest exists by means of a decision as soon as possible. The person who is disqualified may participate in the examination only if this is required for the body to have a quorum. In the event of disagreement, the Operational Auditors shall be informed.

Item 7

If it is evident that the question of impartiality is of no significance, the body shall disregard the conflict of interest.

§ 2 Special provisions

Item 1 - The Board

A member of the Board may not, as a representative to the General Assembly, participate in a decision on discharge from liability for him-/herself.

A member of the Board may not participate in the handling of or decisions on a matter that directly concerns a member union in which the Board member is or has been active.

Item 2 - The Election Committee

A member of the Election Committee may not be a candidate for an elected post prepared by the Election Committee.

Item 3 - The Auditors

An auditor may not hold a position in an SFS body that the Auditors are reviewing during the same term of office.

If a conflict of interest arises for an Auditor, the matter shall be reported to the SFS Presidium.

Statement of problem

Like many organisations, SFS's conflict of interest provisions have been unclear and open to different interpretations across different parts of the organisation and from one operating year to the next.

The new conflict of interest chapter aims to create a shared definition of what shall be considered conflict of interest in SFS, and to establish a clear process for how conflict of interest shall be handled.

§ 1 aims to create a shared definition for the entire organisation of what constitutes conflict of interest and to establish a transparent system for how conflict of interest situations shall be handled.

Items 1–3 constitute the situations in which an elected representative in SFS shall be disqualified due to a conflict of interest.

Item 4 establishes an obligation to report circumstances that may constitute a conflict of interest.

Item 5 gives other members of a body the ability to raise the question of conflict of interest if they feel that another member is not fulfilling their obligation under Item 4.

Item 6 describes the process that SFS bodies shall undergo in order to determine whether a conflict of interest exists or not.

Item 7 draws a lower threshold for which situations shall not constitute a conflict of interest, so that situations that clearly will not affect the decision do not result in an elected representative being disqualified.

§ 2 establishes special provisions for the SFS Board, Election Committee, and Auditors.

Item 1 contains provisions for Board members, meaning that they cannot vote on their own discharge from liability or participate in decisions that concern member unions in which the Board member is or has previously been active.

Item 2 establishes a special obligation for the Election Committee not to stand as candidates for elected posts for which the Election Committee itself is preparing the election.

Item 3 establishes an obligation for the Auditors not to place themselves in a position where they are reviewing themselves.