

# Governing Universities

How the Swedish Government has attempted to govern the universities between 1999 and 2021, and how it can be understood

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# Abstract

Knowledge about how the Government governs its agencies is important to ensure legitimacy of the public exercise of power, and to further develop governing methods suitable for diverse types of agencies. This study focuses on a type of agency that is perceived as particularly difficult to govern – the university. The purpose is to describe how and to what extent the Government has attempted to govern the universities, how this exercise has changed over time, and how it can be understood.

The study shows that the extent of the attempts to govern the universities decrease over time. Moreover, it shows how multiple governing tools are used throughout the studied period. By applying two typologies from functionalist governance theory to the results an argument is made that the Government's attempts to govern the universities can be understood both in terms of command and control, and corporatism.

The analysis focus on the contents of all original common appropriation directions, and a selection of the original university specific appropriation directions decided upon for the fiscal years of 1999 through 2021. This ensures both a general and a specific description, and exposes how the Government has tailored its attempts to govern the various universities.

*Key words:* govern, higher education and research, functionalist governance, public universities, government – university relation

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# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Relevance and objectives of the study .....	1
1.2	Research problem .....	2
<b>2</b>	<b>Research design and method .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Focusing on description and understanding .....	4
2.2	Population and case selection.....	4
2.2.1	Criteria for selection.....	5
2.2.2	Criterion based selection .....	6
2.3	Appropriation directions .....	7
2.4	Applied method .....	8
2.4.1	Content analysis .....	8
2.4.2	Validity and reliability .....	9
2.4.3	Interpretation .....	9
<b>3</b>	<b>Literature, governance, and the analytical model .....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1	Literature review .....	10
3.1.1	The Swedish administrative model .....	10
3.1.2	Governing agencies .....	11
3.1.3	Governing higher education and research institutions .....	13
3.1.4	The eternal debate .....	14
3.1.5	Higher education and research policy reforms.....	14
3.2	The concept of governing.....	15
3.2.1	Governing through rules.....	16
3.2.2	Governing through goals and resources .....	16
3.2.3	Governing through organising .....	17
3.3	Governance with a functionalist approach .....	17
3.4	Model of analysis .....	19
3.4.1	Qualitative classification .....	19
3.4.2	Quantitative measurement.....	20
<b>4</b>	<b>Content analysis .....</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1	How are the tools used in the attempts to govern?.....	22
4.1.1	Governing through rules.....	22
4.1.2	Governing through goals and resources .....	24
4.1.3	Governing through organising .....	27
4.2	What is the extent of the attempts to govern? .....	31
4.2.1	Common appropriation direction for all universities .....	31
4.2.2	Blekinge Institute of Technology .....	32

4.2.3	University of Gothenburg.....	33
4.2.4	University of Skövde.....	34
4.2.5	Royal College of Music.....	35
4.2.6	Luleå University of Technology .....	36
4.2.7	Mälardalen University .....	37
4.2.8	Mid Sweden University.....	38
4.2.9	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.....	39
<b>5</b>	<b>Discussion and conclusions .....</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1	What story does the analysis tell? .....	41
5.1.1	How has the various Government constellations used the tools? .....	41
5.1.2	What about the extent of the Government's attempt to govern?.....	44
5.1.3	Is the Government tailoring its attempts to govern to the various universities? .....	46
5.2	How can we understand the attempts to govern? .....	47
5.2.1	How can we understand the attempts to govern higher education? .....	48
5.2.2	How can we understand the attempts to govern research?.....	49
5.3	Summary of conclusions .....	49
<b>6</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>53</b>
7.1	Appendix 1: Swedish universities and university colleges that are public authorities.....	53
7.2	Appendix 2: Tables for strategic selection .....	54

# 1 Introduction

The Swedish sector of higher education and research engage almost half a million people as students or employees which makes it one of the country's largest sectors and it is dominated by public organisations. For some time, actors within and stakeholders around academia has publicly voiced critique regarding an experienced increase of political control and governing. This has occasionally spurred a vivid debate around the concept of academic freedom in opposition to political decrees. While academic freedom, although often vaguely defined, is something to protect and promote, the Government<sup>1</sup> also has a need, some would say a right, to choose how to govern their agencies – which most Swedish universities and university colleges are.<sup>2</sup> The universities are to a great extent publicly financed and stating that such activities should in some way be governed<sup>3</sup> by the public is easily argued for. This debate makes the conflict between competing interests visible, and makes rooms for my study about how the Government has attempted to govern the universities and how it has changed over time.

## 1.1 Relevance and objectives of the study

Knowledge of how a Government attempts to govern its agencies and how it has developed over time is not only interesting as an academic subject in political science, but also has a societal relevance in relation to the public as stakeholders in public organisations. It is of utmost importance that citizens perceive the public exercise of power as a legitimate undertaking which said knowledge and understanding can contribute to.

This study focuses on the government of a sector and a certain type of organisation within that sector. It is a case of public governance and specifically of the

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<sup>1</sup> Government with a capitalized initial denotes the Swedish central government as a collective decision-making body, consisting of the Prime Minister and a number of ministers with different areas of responsibility. In contrast, government with a lower-case initial is used when government is referred to in general, used as an adjective or to denote the act of governing.

<sup>2</sup> In the Swedish system of higher education and research a distinction is made between universities (*universitet*) and university colleges (*högskolor*). In short, universities has a general permission to issue third cycle general qualification degrees, while university colleges only have permission to issue such degrees in specific subject areas. However, for the sake of readability they will all henceforth be referred to as 'universities', if a distinction is not necessary.

<sup>3</sup> The exercise of the Government's political authority is denoted by the term govern and its different transitive forms: governs, governing, governed. The term should be considered as synonymous with 'steering' and other concepts used in political science referring to the Government's exercise of political authority over the agencies.

governance aimed at a type of organisation that are thought of as particularly ungovernable – some has even express it as herding a clowder of cats.

The aim of the study is firstly to provide a description of how the Government has used different tools in the attempts to govern the universities, as well as of its extent and how it has changed over time. Secondly, the aim is to discern if the Government has differentiated its governing to the various universities and describe in what shape such differentiation occurs. Thirdly, when the description is finalised, the study's last aim is to develop an understanding of the governing based on governance theory. By responding to these aims the study is contributing to the knowledge of governing as well as to the public debate. The study also serves as a foundation for future research, perhaps about why the Government is governing the universities in the way it does.

## 1.2 Research problem

Based on the aims of the study a research question and subsequent questions are developed. The research question captures the objectives of the study, and the sub-questions focuses the study and guides the choice of research design (Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls 2014, p. 51). There are many ways through which research questions can be developed and it is closely related to the type of research problem. The previous section states that the study is descriptive. Based on that, the research question takes an unprejudiced form, driven by the interest in the academic field of government and the empiric field of universities as government agencies. Despite that the previously mentioned debate is clear on the development, no hypothesis will be deduced beforehand. The reason is that the debaters' claim is often based on a combination of the governing exercised both of the Government, as well within the universities, and by other stakeholders. The research question is:

- In what way has the Swedish government's direct and formal attempt to govern the public universities been exercised and changed between 1999 and 2021, and how can it be understood?

The primary research question is followed by sub-questions. These naturally subsume to the same delimitations and demarcations as the primary question, which are presented below. The sub-questions are:

- How are the tools for governing used in the Government's attempt to govern the universities?
- Does the extent of the Government's attempt to govern the universities change?
- Does the Government differentiate its attempts to govern the various types of universities, and if so, in what way?

The study focuses on the governing exercised of the Government and is one-sided in the sense that it does not focus on feedback loops, implementation, or effects of the governing. Further, the study is delimited to governing that is both direct and formal. Meaning that the study exclusively studies the governing that is explicitly aimed (direct) at all universities or a specific university, and formalized (formal) into a document that have been decided upon by the Government. While indirect and informal governing, such as speeches made in political campaigns, meetings between the university and the Government, and directives to research councils, also has governing power, it will be too large to fit the scope of this study and is therefore excluded.

The suggested period, more specifically 6 October 1998 to 1 January 2021, covers the last six terms of office in the Swedish government, including the current.<sup>4</sup> The chronological demarcation is based on three considerations. First, the period includes important and transforming events when it comes to government and to the empirical area, e.g., an increase in the number of students and the research appropriation throughout the period, and a sectorial reform under the flag of institutional autonomy in 2011. Second, the period includes four different Government constellations. Between 1998 and 2006 the Social Democratic Party formed a two-term single-party minority cabinet under PM Persson.<sup>5</sup> Between 2006 and 2014 a two-term coalition cabinet consisting of the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the Liberals, and the Christian Democrats was formed under PM Reinfeldt. The coalition formed a majority cabinet in their first term (2006–2010) and a minority cabinet in their second term (2010–2014). Between 2014 and 2018 the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party formed a minority coalition cabinet with support from the Left Party under PM Löfven, and since the 21 January 2019 the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party constitutes a coalition minority government under PM Löfven with support from the Centre Party and the Liberals. The third consideration is based on the fact the Swedish research politics and the governing of the universities has already been addressed in a few studies up until the turn of the millennium.

By demarcating the studied period in this manner, I will be able to study material that is both current and historically important, which has not extensively been studied before (cf. Benner 2001, pp. 26–27). I will also be able to discern between the various Government constellations in the discussion – in line with previous studies (see Benner 2001 and Persson 2001) when it comes to the extent and shape of the government of the universities. One must, however, be aware that a strict chronological demarcation is unnatural since current politics often depends on previous politics, and that the analytical distinction between the various terms of office is unnatural in relation to the constant ongoing processes within the universities being governed.

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<sup>4</sup> The current term of office that began after the general election in 2018 and runs until the general election in 2022 will however for obvious reasons not be studied in its entirety since this study is conducted during the first months of 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister Persson took office already the 22 March 1996, however a new term of office officially started the 6 October 1998.

## 2 Research design and method

This chapter presents the research design. The purpose is to provide a roadmap for the execution of the study's analysis as well as to position the study into a certain category of social science inquiries. Beyond that, the strategic selection of studied universities, and the material is presented and discussed. Furthermore, the chapter includes an introduction to the applied method that will be used to inference data. A brief address of the question of validity, reliability and interpretation is also included.

### 2.1 Focusing on description and understanding

Recall that the aim of the study is to provide a description of how the Government has attempted to govern the universities. Some foundational requirements are placed on descriptive studies. First, the concepts used, and the classification of the studied phenomena must be made clear. Second, it should be possible, based on the first requirement to say more about the studied material than what is made explicit in it, and third, it should be related to its societal and scientific context (Esaiaasson et al. 2017, p. 37–38). The first and second requirement is managed through the discussion of the concept of governing in tandem with the construction of the analytical model, and through application of the theoretical perspective presented in the next chapter. The third requirement, however, has already been addressed through the establishment of what this study is a case of in section 1.1.

### 2.2 Population and case selection

In order to answer the study's questions, and especially the third sub-question, there is a need to define the population of universities, and to select specific cases that function as representatives for various universities with certain attributes. The study will both look at the population consisting of all the universities that are government agencies<sup>6</sup> to discern the general image of the governing, and at a selection drawn

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<sup>6</sup> Not all universities and university colleges in Sweden are government agencies, it is, however, most common. There are a few examples of higher education institutions in Sweden that are, for example, run by private companies (Stockholm School of Economics), trust funds (Chalmers University of Technology and Jönköping University), religious communities (Newman Institute)

from the population. Through this design I can study both the general level and focus on the specific governing aimed at the various universities to discern any differences.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.2.1 Criteria for selection

The study makes use of a criterion-based selection (Ritchie et al. 2014, pp. 113–114) and focus on horizontal differentiation between the universities. Even though there is no ambition to reach generalizability it is interesting to study differentiated cases to understand if the Government tailors its attempts to govern. By using a criterion-based selection some differentiation is ensured, but the standards are lower than if generalizability was a goal.

The first criterion is the size of the university. The size is represented by the total direct government funding for higher education and research (Swedish Higher Education Authority 1). The Swedish Higher Education Authority's database of statistics includes figures of the direct government funding in current prices until 2019. The latest figures will be used to make the selection within this criterion.<sup>8</sup> There are alternative ways of how to measure the size of a university, e.g., the number of students enrolled, or the number of full-time equivalents of employees that the university have. However, using the size of the funding as the indicator is more suitable for a couple of reasons. First, by using the size of the direct government funding there is an explicit link to the political sphere and to the budget decided upon by the Swedish parliament – the Riksdag. Furthermore, the funding is a measurement with high reliability compared to other measures where there is not one, but several ways in which one could construct the measurements.

The second criterion is the *age* of the university. The age is represented by the year the university was 'founded' in its current form. The importance of pointing out current form is because some universities has evolved so drastically throughout history that they are incomparable to what they represent in the modern system of higher education and research. One example of this is the Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences that originally was founded in 1813 but has changed shape many times and did not gain its current form until 1993 (Swedish School of Sports and Health Sciences 2013).<sup>9</sup>

However, it is not the age itself that is interesting, but rather what the age can indicate based on the politics of its time. Even though the term age is used, it must be understood in a wider sense. When talking about age, we can think of three waves of expansion politics for higher education and research in Sweden. The first

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or non-profit organisations (Swedish Red Cross University College), and these are excluded from the population.

<sup>7</sup> See Table 7A in Appendix 1 for a complete list of the 31 universities and university colleges that are government agencies.

<sup>8</sup> See Table 7B in Appendix 2 for a complete list of the direct government funding to the universities and university colleges in 2019.

<sup>9</sup> See Table 7C in Appendix 2 for a complete list of the universities and university colleges in order after the year they were founded.

wave spans between 1477 and 1975, the second wave revolve around the higher education reform in 1977, often referred to as “H77”, and the third wave consist of younger universities that was founded in the late 1980’s to early 1990’s until present time. Age is supposed to capture the dynamic between the universities and the Government that stems from the ideational foundation for the formation of the universities. Many of the second wave universities was founded in a time where education politics was closely connected to regional policy and labour market politics. The H77-universities were supposed to respond to the regional labour markets’ need of educated personnel (Sörlin & Törnqvist 2000, p. 93). This short deviation is meant to point to the idea that the time in which a university has been founded, is formative for the different profiles that the universities have – some are broad and provides a wide range of disciplines, some are more focused on professional qualifications, and some are strictly trade oriented – and it is this this the criterion of age is intended to capture.

Lastly, two universities within the population are disqualified from the strategic selection because they have not existed during the entire period that is to be studied. They are Linnæus University and Stockholm University of the Arts who was both founded through mergers in 2010 and 2014, respectively.

## 2.2.2 Criterion based selection

The criteria come together in a three-by-three matrix, see table 2.1. Each criterion is divided into three groups. The first criterion of size is divided into one group of ten small universities, one group of ten medium universities, and one group of nine large universities. The criterion of age is divided into one group of ten old universities, one group of twelve middle aged universities, and one group of seven young universities. The six groups are matched to each other resulting in a selection of eight universities, the only match that cannot be made is a large and young university. One note to make is that the individual universities are only relative to each other within each criterion. Moreover, in some matching situations there are several matches to make, in those cases geographical spread or the aim of finding the median size match is decisive.

The eight selected universities are: Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), Luleå University of Technology (LTU), Mid Sweden University (MIU), Mälardalen University (MDH), Royal College of Music (KMH), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), University of Gothenburg (GU), and University of Skövde (HiS). The selection consists of four university colleges and four universities. BTH, MDH, and HiS are university colleges and KMH is a university college of fine, applied and performing arts. GU and MIU are universities, MIU is a new university and was granted their status within the studied period, and LTU and SLU are specialised universities in technology and agricultural sciences, respectively. Moreover, SLU is special since it is not governed by the Ministry of Education and Research.

		AGE		
		Old	Middle	Young
SIZE	Small	<i>Royal College of Music</i>	<i>University of Skövde</i>	<i>Blekinge Institute of Technology</i>
	Medium	<i>Luleå University of Technology</i>	<i>Mälardalen University</i>	<i>Mid Sweden University</i>
	Large	<i>University of Gothenburg</i>	<i>Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences</i>	N/A

Table 2.1: Criterion based selection matrix

## 2.3 Appropriation directions

In order to discern the Government's attempts to govern the universities there is a need to look at the material that is used to convey this exercise of power and inference empirical data. The primary sources in the study consist of appropriation directions which are formal documents decided upon by the Government.

Appropriation directions are not legislative documents, but they are important to study when it comes to discerning the Government's attempt to govern its agencies and realize its politics. Each year, the Riksdag decides on the Government's budget. Based on the budget, the Government makes separate decisions of the financial terms and funding for each of their agencies, but also sets specific targets and give assignments that the agencies need to execute to collect the funding – these come in the shape of appropriation directions (Persson 2011, pp. 638–640).

There are both common appropriation directions that applies to all universities and specific appropriation directions for each university. The material consists of all common appropriation directions and the specific appropriation directions for each of the selected universities between 1999 and 2021. One demarcation made in relation to these documents is that only the original appropriation directions for each year will be analysed. It is not unusual that the Government decides to revise or to amend something to the appropriation directions during the year. All these revisions and amendments are excluded. This is because the fundamental idea behind the governing is of primary interest, and presumably, that is to be contained in the original appropriation directions.

## 2.4 Applied method

The analytical material must be analysed with a method that considers both qualitative and quantitative aspects and therefore grasps both semiotics and phenomenology. The method that is used to uncover the meaning of the texts and inference the exercise of governing is called content analysis. Content analysis is a scientific tool and a text analytical orientation through which the substantive element – the content of a text, is analysed (Spencer et al. 2014, p. 271; Bergström & Boréus 2018, p. 24; Esaiasson et al. 2018, p. 198).

### 2.4.1 Content analysis

A classic approach to content analysis is used and focus on what is manifested in the texts by systematically code the meaning of what is expressed in relation to the analytical model (Boréus & Kohl 2018, pp. 50–52, Krippendorff 2019, p. 25). Historically, content analysis had a quantitative focus on counting representation of different manifestations in for example political communication but have evolved to also focus on qualitative aspects (Payne & Payne 2011). A strength in using content analysis is that the technique aids the work with finding patterns and making comparisons over time (Boréus & Kohl 2018, p. 55; Esaiasson et al. 2017, p. 198–199; Krippendorff 2019, p. 25).

Before moving on, some housekeeping is necessary. First, textual analysis does not promise the only interpretation of a text, instead they are considered to have varied meanings depending on the perspective of the analyst. This does not mean that I can make the text mean whatever I want it to (Lockyer 2012), but I must be aware of the multiplicity of meanings and expose my interpretation to scrutiny. Second, textual analysis does not only consider written material, however, in this study that restriction is made. Third, the content relates to phenomena outside of the texts and must be related to certain and specified contexts. The context that this study operates within is the political and administrative relational context between the Government and universities. And fourth, texts inform a reader and allows inferences to answer research questions (Krippendorff 2019, pp. 27–30). The inferences made by this study is inductive when drawing conclusions of the extent based on the empirical observations, and abductive when drawing conclusions of the tool usage.

For content analysis to work, decisions must be made on what elements that are studied and how to identify them (Krippendorff 2019, p. 61–62). This means that the research question is operationalised into categories and measurements. The analytical model presented in section 3.4 constitutes these decisions and includes both the quantitative measurement and the qualitative analytical instrument.

## 2.4.2 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are core concepts in relation to every scientific study. In this case, validity relates to the choice of content analysis to answer the research questions and the choice of the analytical material in relation to what the research questions ask. The choice of method and material – and thereof validity – has been discussed in the previous sections.

Reliability on the other hand is in its simplest form concerned with replicability. This study refrains from the empiricist perception of reliability and instead face this issue in terms of transparency and precision (Bergström & Boréus 2018, p. 40–41). This means that I am transparent with steps in the analytical process and the interpretations made within this study, but also aim to design as precise analytical tools as possible and let that analytical tool be assessed for its utility in relation to the material that is analysed (Krippendorff 2019, p. 6). A CAQDAS is used to aid the work with manual coding, compiling, and analysing of the material, and to get an overview of the data. Yet, with manual coding comes consequences in relation to the shorter time frame of this study. I am not able to assure reliability of the coding by double coding since it will not pass the sufficient length of time to forget the reasoning in the first round of coding (Boréus & Kohl 2018, pp. 60–62).

## 2.4.3 Interpretation

Interpretations are made when engaging with the texts. The quantitative part of the analysis contains less interpretation than the qualitative but for the sake of transparency I will clarify that the quantitative interpretation is dependent on unitizing. This means that the units are unambiguously defined and mutually exclusive, and the rules for how to interpret the textual content when it comes to the extent of the governing is transparent and exemplified.

The focus of the qualitative categorizing is on the tools used to govern the universities. The act of governing is by itself more or less manifested in the texts, but the sorting into categories need interpretation and a clear description of each of the different tools of governing. What is being studied is essentially communicative messages or signals, and disruptions can occur along the way. There are various strategies for qualitative interpretation. The most common are to interpret texts in accordance with what it means to an analyst, or to interpret texts in accordance with what it means to the sender of the text (Esaiasson et al. 2017, p. 227; Bergström & Boréus 2018, pp. 31–33). The qualitative interpretation strategy that I use is the former, since it enables the use of the constructed analytical model as a guide for abduction from the texts and for developing “patterns and particularities” from the meaning of the texts (Bergström & Boréus 2018, p. 35). This means that there might be a discrepancy between what I make explicit from the documents compared to what the sender or the receiver would interpret as governing in their relationship and interaction (Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls 2014, p. 55, Bergström & Boréus 2018, pp. 30–31).

# 3 Literature, governance, and the analytical model

This chapter includes a presentation of the research field of governing and higher education and research that the study contributes to. The previous research is foundational for the construction of the model of analysis. Furthermore, it includes a presentation and discussion of a theory of governance. The reason for this exposé is to position the study in relation to what is already known and theorised, and to sort out what is brought to the discussion.

## 3.1 Literature review

Clarifying the current knowledge within a field assists and strengthens the cumulative ground of research, but also works to sort out contested concepts and different approaches to the research field that the study is positioned within. This section presents a selection of what has previously been written about governing but also the Swedish administrative model, and related subjects.

### 3.1.1 The Swedish administrative model

What characterises the Swedish administrative model is disputed. Yet, some traits are more reoccurring than other. In this brief overview I will only mention two, which have implications on the relationship, and the way the Government can govern its agencies: dualism, and stakeholder influence. The dualism is often stated to originate from reforms in the seventeenth century. Stemming from these is the separation between the agencies and the executive power (Hall 2015 b, p. 300, Jacobsson & Sundström, p. 4). Today's dualism is underpinned by structural and formal conditions. The structural condition depends on the Government Offices' small size in comparison to the hundreds of semi-autonomous agencies, which decreases the possibility of detailed governing. The formal condition depends on two articles in a fundamental law which states that the Government makes decisions collectively as one entity<sup>10</sup> and that the Government is forbidden to interfere in particular cases of the agencies.<sup>11</sup> This stops individual ministers from governing the agencies as they please and the collective decision making decreases the

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<sup>10</sup> Instrument of Government (SFS 1974:152), chapter 7, article 3.

<sup>11</sup> Instrument of Government (SFS 1974:152), chapter 12, article 2.

individual minister's power (Hall 2015 b, p. 301; Jacobsson & Sundström 2007, p. 6). Even though Sweden is not a full-fledged corporatist state, formally inviting organised interest groups to influence policy is a natural procedure and safeguarded through a fundamental law.<sup>12</sup> The law states that beyond public and local authorities, organisations and individuals shall also be given an opportunity to express opinions when Government business is being prepared (Hall 2015 b, p. 309). This means that the Government cannot propose new legislation without first listening and responding to what the stakeholders think about the ideas.

### 3.1.2 Governing agencies

How a Government attempts to govern its agencies is naturally connected to ideas about democracy and power. The former is based on the idea of the parliamentary chain in which the Government should govern its agencies in such a way that the political program that it has been elected to pursue is realised (Jacobsson 2015, p. 13; Sundström 2016, p. 148). The latter is because the elementary definitions of governing and power respectively, are so similar – governing *or* power is making an agency *or* actor do something that it otherwise would not have done (Jacobsson 2015, pp. 14–15; 1984, p. 11; Lundquist 1992, p. 76; cf. Lukes 2008, p. 116). In the following I will not focus on the aspects of democracy and power, but rather on research that connects more closely to the relationship between the Government and its agencies.

There are a lot of difficulties connected to making government successful in the sense that intended goals are reached. To make the agencies do what they, presumably, otherwise would not have done the Government employs a governing strategy. The most prominent strategy in Sweden's modern history is performance management<sup>13</sup>, heavily inspired by New Public Management (NPM) and its management ideals (Jacobsson & Sundström 2007, p. 14). Beside this, it is common that governing is performed through decisions on organisational matters, appointments, legislations, and through funding and financial terms (Hall & Löfgren 2006, p. 10). Governing through legislation can be sorted into groups of rules that deals with organisational matters, processing of administrative matters, and material regulation about what an agency should do. Governing of the funding is derived from the Riksdag's decision on the budget, and from the Government's decisions on the appropriation directions. Governing by appointment is a way for the Government to maintain influence in the agencies' top tier by appointing its officials (Marcusson 2010, pp. 4–6). However, since performance management has been the most prominent tool, it is focused on more than the others, and it is mainly employed through appropriation directions (Marcusson 2010, p. 5).

NPM entails ideas inspired by private markets and businesses, and its aim is to make the public administration more efficient and decrease its costs (Ahlbäck

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<sup>12</sup> Instrument of Government (SFS 1974:152), chapter 7, article 2.

<sup>13</sup> Performance management, management by objectives, goal management and management by results is in this text considered to be synonyms to each other.

Öberg & Widmalm 2016, pp. 11–12). By dedication to performance management the Government moves away from attempting to govern through hard law, and instead govern through soft law (Hirschfeldt & Petersson 1997). This means that goals are formulated at the political level, but the agencies decide how to reach them. However, the Government figured that to secure that the agencies stay focused on the goals, the work must be measured and assessed (Jacobsson & Sundström 2007, p. 16). A similar system was introduced already in the 1960s when the Swedish government worked with program budgeting which, as well, focused on management by objectives and control (Jacobsson 1984, p. 25).

The strategy of performance management has suffered massive critique since its launch in 1988 (Hall 2015 a, pp. 13, 40). In a general movement of governing less the Government has seemed to govern more. A Swedish Government Official Report (SOU 2007:75) criticized the Government's way of governing its agencies and stated that the strategy was failing. The governing was changed due to this critique – among the changes was a decreased focus on the appropriation directions, and an increased focus on tailoring the governing to the different agencies (Jacobsson 2015, pp. 29–31; Sundström 2016, p. 152).

Empirical studies of the Swedish governing of the public agencies has shown that the Government in first hand attempts to govern through an organisational dimension. This means that the Government governs (1) by assigning goals, instructions and funding to agencies, and by annually demanding increasing efficiency, (2) by positioning the agencies in relation to other actors within a sector (horizontal distance), (3) by stimulating competition, (4) by giving the agencies a distance to the Government in relation to the issue's governability, or due to reasons of accountability (vertical distance), and (5) by communicating its policy (Hall 2015 a, pp. 9, 45; Jacobsson 1984, p. 152; Jacobsson et al 2015, pp. 46–47).

I will now end this sub-section with a brief review of two empirical studies that has been made in the Swedish context that posed questions quite similar to mine. The first is Jacobsson's dissertation from 1984, and the second is Hall's book from 2015. Jacobsson studied five agencies (1984, p. 31) and could not find evidence of performance management amongst them, neither did he find that the Government governed the agencies to a great extent through legislation or budgeting. Another finding was that the Government attempted to govern more extensively in areas that were considered more central to the political leadership. In those areas they employed a range of governing tools and did so for a sustained period. Jacobsson concludes that success in governing was dependent on continuity in the political leadership (1984, pp. 151–155). Hall, in turn, also studied five agencies, of which one was a university. The findings from his study shows that the Government has increased its governing power since Jacobsson's study. However, the performance management of the selected agencies are considered a rhetorical act. Further, Hall states that the agencies are still to a great extent autonomous, but the autonomy is limited as soon as the agency's business turns into a politically important issue. It also seemed as if informal governing is becoming less important since the Director Generals have tried to formalize contacts with the Government Offices (2015 a, pp. 218–220).

### 3.1.3 Governing higher education and research institutions

Formally, most universities are government agencies. The universities' head – the Vice-chancellor – and the majority of the board are appointed by the Government. However, the universities have a tradition of autonomy and self-governance through collegial bodies, which is contrasting compared to other agencies.

Marcusson exemplifies how the Government has attempted to govern the universities through the different tools presented in the last section. Governing through legislation has, since 1992, mainly been executed through the framework law the Higher Education Act and, among others, the detailed Higher Education Ordinance. The organisational dimension is contained in this category of governing and the legislation puts emphasis on procedural matters (2010, pp. 4–5). When it comes to funding the Government has mostly governed the universities' education through the appropriation directions. Research, on the other hand, has mainly been governed indirectly through the research councils, and the direct funding of research has increasingly gained a focus on results (2010, p. 5). The Government appoints most of the universities' board and the Vice-chancellor – but the process has changed over time. In 2010 the universities nominated the external board members to the Government prior to appointment, the board in turn suggests a Vice-chancellor to the Government (2010, p. 5). Performance management is employed through the appropriation directions' assignments and reporting requirements and there is a direct link between performance and resource allocation (2010, p. 5).

Hall on the other hand has shown that the Government essentially governs through direct funding, and states that as long as the universities complies with legislations, they are free to do whatever they like (2015 a, p. 169). The Government seem to be satisfied to have the universities at a far distance from itself and is focused on governing through the financial framework (2015 a, p. 193). Since the focus of my study is on the vertical relationship between the Government and the universities, I will not discuss the matters of the universities' internal organisation in detail. I will however say that many studies have shown that the collegial rule has been weakened after de-regulating decisions made by the Government in the early 1990s and within the studied period (Hall 2015 a, p. 191; Ahlbäck Öberg & Sundberg 2016; Wedlin & Pallas 2017, p. 18).

A few studies has been made with focus on Swedish research policy. A general point made from those is that one must understand that research cannot be governed solely by politics since it has a “dynamic” of its own (Benner 2001, p. 11). Yet, to understand modern research policy, the so-called shift from the academic to the post-academic model must be described. This shift entails that, beside established academic values, societal and financial values has been incorporated into research policy (Benner 2001, p. 12) and new arenas for all these interests to be tended to have been created (Benner & Sörlin 2008, p. 19). This allows a political govern that presume that universities can respond to much more than before (Benner 2001, pp. 17–18). This has brought with it an increasingly governed system for higher education and research with ideals of performance management, in contrast to classic govern by resource allocation and formal structures, has prevailed (Benner 2008, pp. 16, 47).

### 3.1.4 The eternal debate

This study revolves around how much and in what shape the democratic society has influence on the universities. The tension between these two worlds is not new but have been increasingly discussed in the post-war period (Benner 2001, p. 20). The period began in a mode where science was considered to flourish in freedom. The idea was that leaps that was possible to make in the free scientific communities would benefit societal development. During the 1960s concerns were raised regarding letting just a few people make decisions on such large sums of money, and in the 1970s a more detailed research policy was shaped in Sweden. The new idea was that research had to be governed and centrally planned to benefit society. The idea prevailed throughout the 1980s and 1990s where the idea was to govern higher education and research to increase national competitiveness in a globalised world and to stimulate growth (Persson 2001, pp. 15–17).

Scholars now suggest that the debate has been radicalised into extremes. These two extremes have, by the former Vice-chancellor of Lund University, who I have borrowed the title of this sub-section from, been named academic traditionalism and academic instrumentalism. The first proclaims freedom through “no govern”, and often refer to a Humboldtian ideal of academic freedom. Advocates of academic traditionalism often draws strength from collegiality and considers themselves as guardians against politicisation of higher education and research. Contained in this position is a hesitation towards considerations of societal interests (Bexell 2011, pp. 67–69). The second extreme puts innovation and utilization as the highest ideals and proclaims that governing must aim to meet these (Sörlin & Benner 2008, p. 269). This, which is quite salient in the modern political sphere, advocates for universities as the motor of the knowledge society and growth, and universities are seen as producers of goods (Bexell 2011, pp. 71–72).

### 3.1.5 Higher education and research policy reforms

For a long time, the Swedish system of higher education and research was modelled after a German precursor, the Government was the sole financier, but the collegium of professors governed themselves. As schooling was reformed after WWII, reforms of the universities followed. In the 1960s the universities got democratized; the number of students increased, teaching positions was created, and stakeholders was granted positions in the decision-making bodies (Hedmo 2017, pp. 42–44). Moreover, the Government increased its funding to research and created sectorial research funds (Benner 2001, p. 21). The system kept expanding, new universities was founded and the education’s connection to the labour market was emphasised. A new resource allocation system was launched together with H77. The system started highly centralised but was over time decentralised which gave the universities a greater autonomy (Hedmo 2017, pp. 44–47; Benner 2001, p. 22). In 1993, the system was reformed with institutional freedom in mind. The idea was that the international arena for higher education and research was so developed that the universities required freedom to compete, and the universities was de-regulated.

The reform contained cuts in central legislations and performance management was introduced (Hedmo 2017, pp. 47–51). Lastly, in 2011 the Government made reforms under the flag of institutional autonomy. The idea was to strike a balance between autonomy and government, and to limit governing to a general performance management. The commission of inquiry's report was progressive and suggested that universities should not be agencies, but instead a separate form of public institutions (Marcusson 2010, p. 10). The Government did not concur, but instead focused on further de-regulation of the universities' management and internal organisation, except regarding the Vice-chancellor and the board which still was to be appointed by the Government (Hedmo 2017, pp. 56–58). The reform led to a de-collegialisation of the universities in favour of hierarchy (Ahlbäck Öberg & Sundberg 2017, pp. 101–107).

## 3.2 The concept of governing

The attentive reader has noticed that I refer to the Government's acts as *attempts* to govern. The reason for that is that I am not looking at outcomes. Rather, the point of comparison can, in the best case, be perceived as the Government's effort to achieve a certain future state – unknowing of what the results will be of their actions. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000, p. 27) make this distinction in their theoretical model of public management reform and states that

[...] although we locate elite decision making at the centre of the process of reform, and although we would maintain that intentional acts of institutional redesign have been crucial to the story we have to tell, this should not be read as an elevation of organizational elites into God-like designers who are routinely able to realize bold and broad schemes of improvement. On the contrary, we envisage their schemes as frequently vulnerable to cognitive limitations, cross-cutting actions, politico-administrative roadblocks and unforeseen developments of a wide variety of kinds.

The Government shall in this comparison be understood as the organisational elite who, in the number of ways, might be restricted in succeeding with their attempts to govern.

I have already stated that governing is a way for the Government to exercise power. The Government engages in this exercise in at least two relationships: with the agencies, and with the society. The former is about the Government's attempt to make the agencies function in the way that it wants, and the latter is about the Government's attempt to govern the members of society (Lundquist 1992, pp. 69–71). The focus of this study is on the governing of agencies. Agencies are in turn defined as the public organizations subordinate to the Government.

There are many ways to talk about and classify the tools that the Government can use in its attempt to govern the agencies. Below is a selection made from the literature:

- Orders, rules, funding, recruitment, organising, and information (Lundquist 1992, p. 80),
- Rules, goals and resources, organising, personnel, informal contacts, statements, and control (Hirschfeldt & Petersson 1997),
- Resources, legislation, appointment, and control (Pierre 2004),
- Goals, rules, programmes and projects, and resources (Lidhard & Petrusson 2012, p. 9), and
- Resources, goals, special assignments, appointments, informal contacts, rules, and organising (Åkerlund 2020, p. 22).

As evident, some terms are synonyms or reoccurring, such as rules–legislation, resources–funding, and recruitment–appointment, while others are not. My study is unable to comprehend all of the tools. This is partly due to the focus on the Government’s direct and formal attempts to govern, and partly due to the selected material. The concluding part of this section is devoted to defining the tools that the study can focus on. The definitions are based on what has been learned from the previous research.

### 3.2.1 Governing through rules

The agencies must comply with legislation passed in the Riksdag – laws, and by the Government – ordinances. Yet, governing through rules can be performed through other means than legislation. The appropriation directions often include references to ‘rules’ in, for example, relation to a resource allocation system. In this sense, rules imply a wider meaning of procedures and material conditions that must be tended to in order to reach a certain outcome.

### 3.2.2 Governing through goals and resources

The Riksdag annually make decisions on the Government’s budget. Those are in turn transformed into detailed decisions on how much resources the Government grants the agencies and how the resources are to be discounted. When making the detailed decisions, the Government can state certain goals that must be reached in compensation. The agencies are in theory at the Government’s disposal to implement its policy. The Government can assign them to do certain things, and reach certain goals, outside of what the agencies are instructed to do by legislation. In addition to that, the Government often wants the agencies to report on the progress and therefore sets up specific reporting requirements. These two latter traits belong to performance management.

### 3.2.3 Governing through organising

One way for the government to govern the agencies has been to make decisions on organisational matters. This tool can in some definitions contain the tools presented above. For mutual excludability, governing through organising is here defined by the act of positioning. Positioning agencies is about giving them a horizontal distance towards other actors or agencies within or outside of its sector, or a vertical distance to the Government.

## 3.3 Governance with a functionalist approach

Descriptive studies are not testing theory, although, it is efficient to use theoretical typologies to understand the empiric reality. This has been shown in previous studies which used theory to discuss data without explaining actions (Benner 2001, Benner 2008, Hall 2015). This means that it is not necessary to choose between theories based on explanatory power. Rather, it is enough to conclude that different theoretical perspectives can provide different suggestions and insights into the studied material. In this section governance theory combined with a functionalist approach is presented, and two ideal-types with this combination is introduced which will be brought to the discussion.

The theoretical shift from government to governance supposed to signal that governing had become structured in processes and networks, in contrast to government's hierarchy and organisation (Sundström 2005, pp. 7–8). There is not one agreed upon definition of governance, however foundational is that it is a theory of governing. A central argument from the early governance literature is that governing from the centre has turned complicated, and that the networks of governance are self-organizing and works in their own pace. This has later been disputed by many governance scholars (Sundström 2005, p. 10).

Since so much must be decided upon at the centre of the political sphere one cannot simply talk about governance without including the Government. The Government's role and importance has never ceased, and it still has a central function as a formal decision maker in the governance of public administration (Peters & Pierre 2016, p. 2). Based on this argument it is suitable to combine governance theory with a functionalist approach since the approach provides an understanding of where certain functions of governance belongs and identifies central prerequisites for the political system. The vast governance literature is not overlooked. But for this study a more traditional approach, where the Government's centrality is maintained, fits well with the empirical focus on the governing of agencies who have not outsourced much of its mandate to private businesses or networks. Through this combination the workings and shortcomings of how the state is governed and organized, with the Government giving directions to its agencies can be highlighted (Holmwood 2010; Peters & Pierre 2016, p. 7).

The functionalist governance model identifies five central functions: decision-making, goal-selection, resource mobilisation, implementation, and feedback,

evaluation and learning (Peters & Pierre 2016, p. 30). The first four are included in this study. For the sake of clarity, a further development of this model is needed by stating that decision-making is included in all other functions as well. The process of goal-selection, for example, often entails interaction between the Government and stakeholders and this interaction, broadly speaking, is underpinned by earlier decisions of what the stakeholders and the Government could bring to the table. Therefore, decision-making must be understood as both a formal and social process (Peters & Pierre 2016, pp. 60–64).

The functional governance model appears as a linear process, but this is a vast simplification. Yet, despite that real-world governance experiences interruptions in this chain, the structural components, and the roles that actors play in these are important to grasp which a model like this can ensure (Peters & Pierre 2016, pp. 57–58). I will take hold of two ideal types of functionalist governance: *Étatiste Governance* and *State-Centric Governance*, as defined by Peters and Pierre. The basis for focusing on these is that they resemble the Swedish case. Yet it is important to keep in mind that they are ideal types and dimensions from other typologies occur in the empiric reality. *Étatiste Governance* identifies the state as the core actor for governance while the *State-Centric Governance* emphasise participation from stakeholders while leaving control of the governance process and resources to the state.

In *Étatiste Governance* decision-making and goal-selection are characterised by ideas of rationality and central planning, and belongs to the Government but can involve consultative procedures with stakeholders. Resource mobilisation is connected to decision-making and is characterised by prioritisation among several interests and scarcity. Dividing costs between the state and other actors is seldom an option and funds are allocated through taxation. Implementation depend on the bureaucracy and should be equivalent across the state through formal control mechanisms. The typology is summarised with the words “command and control” (Peters & Pierre 2016, pp. 90–97).

In *State-Centric Governance*, decision making is more open and rely on bargaining among actors. Goal-selection is characterised by involvement of stakeholders, but the formal selection remains in the Government. Resource mobilisation involves less bargaining and depends on the government budget. In most variants, focus is rather on the policy issues than the resources, but they cannot fully be separated. Lastly, when it comes to implementation, tendencies to involve the stakeholders appear but is not central. Rather it is common that the bureaucracies are tasked to execute the outcomes of the bargaining processes. The typology is summarised with “corporatism” (Peters & Pierre 2016, pp. 104–107). The two typologies are compared in table 3.1.

Another theoretical perspective considered for this study was the policy instruments approach to governance and employing the Policy Instruments Framework. This approach focuses on the tools used and understands them as both a technical and a social object. This means that tools are not thought of as neutral but instead shows the governors perception of the relationship with the governed (Lascoumes & Le Gales 2007). Although, the framework could aid the understanding of the tools, it was disregarded since governance with a functionalist

approach is considered to provide a more insightful image of the Government's attempts to use the tools.

	<b>ÉTATISTE GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>STATE-CENTRIC GOVERNANCE</b>
<b>DECISION-MAKING</b>	<i>Dominated by the Government, minor consultations.</i>	<i>Depends on bargaining between Government and other actors.</i>
<b>GOAL-SELECTION</b>	<i>Dominated by the Government, ideas of rationality.</i>	<i>Dominated by the Government, systematised stakeholder influence.</i>
<b>RESOURCE MOBILISATION</b>	<i>Intertwined with decision-making, tax-based.</i>	<i>Dependant of the Government budget's shape and size.</i>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<i>Dependant on bureaucracies, equal across the state through external control.</i>	<i>Dependant on bureaucracies, might involve stakeholders.</i>

Table 3.1: Comparison between functionalist governance typologies

## 3.4 Model of analysis

In order to guide the content analysis, a model of analysis is used. The model consists of the qualitative analytical instrument and the quantitative measurements that will guide the analysis to discover and describe the phenomena of governing.

### 3.4.1 Qualitative classification

In order to answer the study's first and third sub-question a qualitative analytical instrument is constructed. The qualitative reading of the material and the analysis of each section of the material begins with three questions:

1. Is this an attempt to govern?  
– *If yes, proceed to next question.*
2. Is the attempt to govern direct and formal?  
– *If yes, proceed to next question.*
3. What type of direct and formal governing does this represent?

By asking these questions, I can focus on representations in the texts that are of importance and arrive at the point where the task of classifying the attempts can

take place and bring order to the meanings of the text. In order to assess the empirical reality, the theoretical constructions of the governing tools are operationalised. First, governing through rules is operationalised as references made to laws and ordinances. Second, governing through goals and resources is operationalised as references to funding and financial terms, and by references to objectives that the universities shall achieve. In some cases, the objectives are explicitly mentioned as a goal, in other cases an interpretation must be made. One demarcation that is made is that only the goals that relate to education, research, or third-stream activities<sup>14</sup>, and objectives that have a direct effect on these are classified. Third, governing through organising is operationalised as references made to one or several other actors or so called third parties. What I am searching for in the reading and interpretation of the text when coding for this tool is that the Government states that the universities shall relate to someone else in their operation.

### 3.4.2 Quantitative measurement

A part of this study's description of how the Government has attempted to govern the universities is to describe the extent of the governing in quantitative terms and how and if it has changed over the course of the years. To answer the second and third sub-question I will make use of the definition of performance management described previously and operationalise it by developing measurements that can be applied to the appropriation directions at different points of comparison.

The extent of the govern is to be measured by quantifying (1) the number of assignments, defined as stated goals or assignments for education, research or third stream activities or assignments that has direct implications on these, (2) the number of reporting requirements, defined as a stated requirement to report a defined area of results at one or several defined moments in time, and (3–4) the number of words that are dedicated to the assignments and reporting requirements respectively. This type of quantification is usual within content analysis where representations of various phenomena have been studied by counting concepts or the space dedicated to certain messages within larger sets of text. The variables are measured with a mathematical method and the act of measuring the number of words is computer assisted. Typographical symbols used to introduce objects in a list such as a hyphen-minuses are erased so that the computer does not count them as a word.

By quantifying different parts of the texts, we can uncover change and draw conclusions about what those parts represents to the different actors that the texts are aimed at. By using a mathematical method together with the definitions of the different parts that are measured the study ensures a high reliability and enables other to control the result.

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<sup>14</sup> These three are the core objectives in the universities' mandate according to the Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434).

In some cases, it is not evident how to interpret the number of assignments and reporting requirements which is why an exemplification is in place. The following is a translation of a part of the common appropriation direction from 1999:

1. The universities shall intensify the work with pedagogical development and actively work with renewal of both first, second and third cycle education. The universities shall educate all newly employed teachers in teaching methods, methodological approaches, examination and assessment, and other areas that are important to reach high quality in the higher education. Furthermore, the universities shall on a regular basis offer the teachers further education and training in the above mentioned areas. [...]

The scope of the newly employed teacher's education and the share of the newly employed teachers who have participated in such education shall be included in the annual report. Furthermore, the universities shall report the share of teachers who have participated in further education and training, and its focus and scope. [my translation and highlight]

In cases such as the above I have interpreted that the Government has given the universities three assignments in the first paragraph, and two corresponding reporting requirements in the second paragraph. However, my interpretation is not self-evident since the Government has written everything within the same point in a numbered list. It could therefore also be interpreted as one assignment accompanied by one reporting requirement. The reason for my interpretation is that the assignments and reporting requirements are linguistically separated from each other and have three respectively two separate focuses. Beyond this, in some cases the same sentence contains both an assignment and a reporting requirement, in those cases I have measured each, but distinguished what words of the sentence that belong to what part. Text that expresses meaning of an assignment or a reporting requirement that have implications for a time period outside of the appropriation direction's time of validity are excluded from the analysis. If a reporting requirement contains a requirement to report a defined result at several times, such as each quarter, it is accounted for once for each defined moment in time.

## 4 Content analysis

This chapter presents the results of the application of the model of analysis to the appropriation directions (AD). The two separate parts of the model of analysis has been used simultaneously to abduct qualitative and induct quantitative data, and the consistency of the coding has been controlled by comparing the coding of the same or similar wording in the ADs between different years.

### 4.1 How are the tools used in the attempts to govern?

This section presents the result of the qualitative content analysis after application of the qualitative analytical instrument.

#### 4.1.1 Governing through rules

The general image provided by the material is that the Government throughout dedicates parts of the appropriation directions to reference legislation. This is partly done by mentioning different new and old tasks that the universities must perform according to the legislation, but also in the shape of what can be interpreted as pure reminders that the Government expects that universities comply with legislation.

The most common reference is to the Higher Education Act (HL). The law is referenced in the beginning of all common appropriation directions, and in the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' ADs for 2018 through 2021. The introductory part of the ADs refers to this legislation in conjunction with a statement that the law contains overall goals for the universities. In 2002 the Government also referenced HL in the common AD and in Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' AD when stating that all universities should establish action plans for widening participation. In 2014 and 2015 the universities were reminded of their mandate stated by the law regarding third stream activities. Lastly, in 2020 and 2021 the Government referenced the law in conjunction with a reporting requirement regarding how each university has developed its work with sustainable development.

The Higher Education Ordinance (HF) is referenced in all common appropriation directions in relation to the universities' task to arrange the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test together with the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR), and its predecessor. Beyond this, HF is referred to when the Government, in the common AD for 2001, states that all higher education shall be free of charge, and in the ADs for 2004 through 2008 when the Government assigns a reporting

requirement regarding how the universities have applied the regulations regarding validation of prior learning and alternative selection. Relating to this, the Government also seem to remind the universities in the ADs for 2008 and 2009 that they have changed the ordinance regarding the universities' possibility to utilise a larger alternative selection quota for entrants to first-cycle education.

A first theme in which the Government governs through rules is in relation to the provision of special types of education. The Government makes references to six special legislations for these purposes. In the common appropriation directions for 2003 and 2004, and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' ADs for the same years a subtle attempt to govern the universities was made through what appears to be a reminder of the fact that the universities based on the ordinance regarding qualifying education are allowed to provide such education. Moreover, Mid Sweden University was for the years of 2002 through 2004 assigned to, in cooperation with the municipality's provider of adult education at upper-secondary level, develop higher education access programmes in accordance with such an ordinance. The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in turn was tasked to report to the Government regarding the scope of their higher education access programmes in the ADs for 2003 through 2006. In the common AD for 2005 the Government stated that contract education provided by universities must comply with a corresponding ordinance, and in the ADs for 2006 and 2007 the Government stated that the universities must provide such education. During the same years, the Government also stated that the universities was supposed to provide special education in accordance with an ordinance regarding a special teacher education for unemployed academics. Furthermore, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences was for 2005 through 2007 tasked to provide complementary theoretical and practical education in accordance with a corresponding ordinance to answer to the goal of widening participation. Lastly, in the ADs for 2012 through 2021 the Government stated that the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences was commissioned to use a minimum of their funding to provide additional education for people with a foreign veterinary degree in accordance with the ordinance regarding complementary education for people with foreign degrees.

A second theme in which the Government attempts to govern through rules relates to the universities' finances. The Government attempts to govern through five legislations, the ordinances of: donations, appropriations, capital supply, fees and charges, and application and tuition fees. They apply to all universities but is not mentioned in everyone's appropriation directions. The last one, regarding application and tuition fees is referenced only in the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' ADs for 2015 through 2021, while the others are mentioned in many of both the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' and the common ADs. The purpose of the attempts to govern differ. When the ordinance regarding donations is referred to it regards follow ups, when the ordinance regarding capital supply is referenced, it regards a certain paragraph which applies to the universities' fee-based activities, and those activities are in turn regulated by the ordinance of fees and charges. The Government both states some exemptions from it, and a principle of full cost coverage when collecting fees. It is however in relation to the ordinance regarding appropriations that the most prominent attempt to govern the

universities occur. The universities are exempted from certain paragraphs that apply to other agencies, and are each year allowed to, without Government approval, save up to ten percent of their unused, but granted, funding to the following fiscal year.

Lastly, a number of detailed legislations are referenced which cannot broadly be thematically organised. The ordinances regarding agencies' annual report and regarding reporting of studies are referred to in the common appropriation directions in the beginning of the studied period, but cease to occur after 2005, as reminders in relation to the universities' responsibility to deliver follow-ups and basis for the budget to the Government. The ordinance regarding internal audit is referenced in the common ADs until 2005 when it comes to its applicability and exemptions for the universities. The law regarding equal treatment of students is referred to in conjunction with assignments to develop action plans for promoting student rights through the common ADs for 2003 and 2004. In 2007 the Government referred to the ordinance regarding agencies' responsibilities to implement the Government's disability policy when tasking the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences to develop an action plan for accessibility. In 2008, the Government reminded the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences that they, according to their instruction ordinance, had to provide education in aquaculture. In 2010 the University of Gothenburg was reminded that the Government had signed an agreement with the regional authorities regarding cooperation in education for physicians, medical research, and development of healthcare in accordance with a law of special employments as medical doctors. In 2012 the Government reminded the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences that they, by ordinance, were responsible for information regarding geographical environment. In the 2014 ADs for Blekinge Institute of Technology, Mälardalen University and Mid Sweden University the Government states that these universities are obliged to report how their work has progressed regarding digital options to order information in accordance with an ordinance regarding exchanging electronic information. In 2020 and 2021 the University of Gothenburg, Luleå University of Technology and Mid Sweden University were allowed to finance their holding companies' work with Idea banks, in accordance with an ordinance from the European Commission. Lastly, in 2021 the Government tasked the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences to report on their routines and processes as they, by ordinance, are an agency responsible for civil contingency in crisis.

#### 4.1.2 Governing through goals and resources

The Government's attempt to govern through goals and resources is evident in both common and specific appropriation directions. Due to the frequency of how this tool has been coded the presentation of the analysis has been limited to the most prominent and reoccurring ways in which the Government has used this tool, but focus is also on the particularities for each of the selected universities.

The Government has used this tool most frequently in the common appropriation directions. To start with, the Government issued overall objectives for higher education and research. Initially they were called effect objectives and highlighted what

the Government wants in terms of outcomes. In the ADs for 1999 and 2000 they regard equivalent education of high quality, and research that stimulates critical thinking and a scientific approach contributing to development in central sectors. In addition, the Government stated an effect objective in the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' ADs for the same years connected to care and sustainable use of natural resources. Over time the overall objective was changed, and for 2001 through 2008 the goal was to make Sweden a leading knowledge society characterised by education of high quality and lifelong learning, to ensure growth and justice. For the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, the Government stated that the overall goal for 2009 through 2015 was to develop knowledge of biological resources and man's sustainable use and management of such. In the common ADs for 2002 through 2006 the Government express a long-term goal that half of a cohort should have entered higher education at the age of 25.

The common appropriation directions are used to attempt to govern the universities' provision of education. Initially, in the ADs for 1999, and 2001 through 2003, the provision was to be coordinated between the universities, and respond to the labour market's demand for educated personnel. This was widened in 2004 through 2008, and returned in 2019 through 2021, to also respond to the students' demand for education. The Government's attempt to govern the size of the provision through targets regarding the number of full-time equivalents in education. Each of the studied universities, except for the Royal College of Music, was given such targets. Most of them between 1999 through 2007 or 2008, but the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences had these targets for the entire studied period except for 2012. In relation to these goals, the Government also pointed out special targets in relation to education in science, technology and freestanding courses, and limitations in relation to education in fine, applied and performing arts.

All universities had specified targets regarding the number of issued higher education degrees. For the majority, the targets were issued for 1999 through 2012. Yet, for the Royal College of Music they did not come in place until 2001, and for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences they ceased in 2008. Corresponding goals was set until 2012 for third-cycle degrees for all universities except for the University of Skövde and the Royal College of Music. However, the period of validity for the goals differed among them. Mälardalen University was in their appropriation direction for 2007 urged to adapt their admission to such education in a way that the target could be reached. Furthermore, the common ADs for 2002 through 2006 includes a statement regarding efficiency in third-cycle education which is to be reached by increasing quality, and the Government also points out that the education shall prepare the doctoral students for a career both within and outside academia.

The Government also attempts to govern what education is provided through the specific appropriation directions. Blekinge Institute of Technology is in 2002 tasked to develop short vocational educations; the Royal College of Music is for the entire period tasked to provide conductor education, education in electroacoustic composition and training for piano tuners; Luleå University of Technology is for the entire period tasked to provide teacher education in three minority languages – Sami, Finnish, and Meänkieli; Mid Sweden University is for 2004 tasked to develop

education in science and technology of importance for regional development; and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is for the entire period tasked to provide education for people with foreign veterinary degrees. Beyond this, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is in their AD for 2001 tasked to provide education in food, animal husbandry, -health and -welfare, forest, forestry and raw material, natural resources, recreation, landscaping, and land use in rural and urban areas.

Another theme in which the Government attempts to govern through goals is internationalisation. In the common appropriation directions for 2002 through 2004 the universities are tasked to work actively with internationalisation and student mobility by providing internationally attractive educations. For 2005 through 2007 the Government adds that internationalisation seeks to promote the quality of education and understanding of other countries and international relations, and in 2009 through 2010 the Government sets a target of increasing mobility. In addition, through the common ADs for 2001 through 2009, the Government attempts to govern research toward the same objective by stating a target for the universities to provide internationally competitive research and development. In the common ADs for 2013 through 2014 the Government states that research in strategic areas of societal relevance should strengthen Sweden's international competitiveness. The Government dedicates specific parts of the research funding for the University of Gothenburg, Luleå University of Technology, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences to strategic areas during the latter half of the studied period.

In the common appropriation directions for 1999 through 2009 the Government states a goal regarding the universities' responsibility to develop the quality of education and research. Over the course of the years, participation from students and employees is added to the goal. In the common ADs for 1999 through 2001, 2005, and 2015 through 2021 the Government reminds the universities of their mandate to conduct third-stream activities, and states that the activities should benefit society, and for 2000 and 2001 the universities should work to stimulate growth.

Furthermore, for 2002 through 2010, the universities are tasked to promote widening participation. The common appropriation directions for 2001 through 2010, and 2017 through 2021 includes goals regarding promotion of equality through recruitment and gender mainstreaming. Connected to this, the Government, with a few interruptions, states recruitment goals for teaching staff during the entire studied period. Lastly, in the University of Gothenburg's AD for 2021 the Government states that the university is to provide a nationwide perspective to promote gender studies.

Naturally, the government attempts to govern through resources through the appropriation directions. The Government uses the common ADs in their attempts to govern both the funding and the financial terms. In the common ADs for 1999 through 2010 the Government reminds the universities that they are allowed to save unused funding to the coming fiscal year. However, in Blekinge Institute of Technology's AD for 2006 the Government announce a withdrawal of previous appropriations due to the university saving too much. Furthermore, in the ADs for 1999 through 2010, terms regarding student financing for third cycle education is declared and reads that at least 75 % of the funding for such education must be

dedicated to doctoral studentships. In the ADs for 2011 through 2021 the Government attempts to govern Mid Sweden University's resources by singling out the Swedish Winter Sports Research Centre and pointing out that the centre can be financed through fees.

Included in all appropriation directions are terms for how the universities can discount appropriation for higher education and the size of the appropriation in relation to disciplinary domains, and the size of the direct funding for research and third cycle education. In relation to this, the Government states specific funding for certain objectives. In the ADs for 2001 through 2021 the Government dedicates a maximum amount of the University of Gothenburg's appropriation to regional co-operation regarding education in the medical, and odontological area. Beyond this, the Government also singles out two other research areas that the University of Gothenburg must spend a minimum on – in 2013 through 2021 on strengthening research and third-cycle education in fine, applied and performing arts, and in 2018 through 2021 on statistical election surveys. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, in turn, have during 2004 through 2021 over ten separate research and education areas connected to their sectorial role in which the Government attempts to govern how the university is to use the resources. In the common ADs for 1999 through 2001 the Government states that the universities must set aside funding for research conducted by senior lecturers and lecturers, and for 2017 through 2021 a temporary increase of funding for education in humanities, social sciences, theology, and law was supposed to be used for quality reinforcement – and particularly to increase the time of teacher directed learning. Except for the University of Skövde and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, all universities have a specific amount of direct funding dedicated to life-long learning in their ADs for 2021. In addition, the Government dedicates parts of the funding for Blekinge Institute of Technology and the University of Gothenburg to freestanding courses aimed at people with previous work experience.

### 4.1.3 Governing through organising

The Government frequently attempts to govern through organising. In general, the organising is structured around one or a combination of the universities' mandate of higher education, research, and third-stream activities, and connected to different targets related to them. Starting with the first, the Government has attempted to govern by letting the universities purchase education from each other, and has emphasised this fact in all common appropriation directions. Since 2008 this was internationalised as universities within the European Economic Area got included on the list of institutions from which to purchase education. In addition, the tool has been used with a focus on programmes leading to professional qualifications. Between 1999 and 2010 universities providing teacher education was supposed to contribute to regional centres, collaborative projects and arrange related activities. Simultaneously and until 2021 the same universities were governed to hear a couple of other agencies, collaborate with municipalities and private organisers, and plan in relation to student's and the labour market's demands before making decisions

on the size and orientation of the teacher education. In the ADs for Mälardalen University in 2003 and 2004 this is especially pointed out in relation to pre-school teacher education. Beyond this, universities providing healthcare educations was for 2020 and 2021 asked to participate in regional collaborations aiming to ensure an educated workforce.

When it comes to what education and how many places that should be provided the Government has attempted to govern through organising in a few different ways. In 1999 the Government stated that the universities should adapt their provision of education to areas in which there was a lack of educated workforce, and especially points out information technology, and the universities should also coordinate with each other in the provision. Relating to this, the 2003 and 2004 appropriation directions for Blekinge Institute of Technology states that the university should develop IT education in close cooperation with the labour market's stakeholders and inform other universities about this project. The Government positioned the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in relation to the agricultural sector in the ADs for 1999 through 2003 by stating that the connection between the education and the sector should be strengthened. In the AD for 2004 the Government stated that the higher education should be designed in close collaboration with businesses to be relevant for students and employers. In 2007 through 2010 it was pointed out that the provision was to answer to both the student's demand and the labour market's needs – this returned in the ADs for 2013, and 2017 through 2021. In 2007 Blekinge Institute of Technology, the University of Skövde, Luleå University of Technology, and Mid Sweden University are all governed to consider the labour market's specific need for people with bachelor's degrees in engineering.

There are also organising attempts regarding joint educations between two or more universities. One took place between 1999 and 2007 when Mälardalen University and the Royal College of Music was to collaborate on education in chamber music and another subject. Another is a teacher education mentioned in the Royal College of Music's appropriation directions for 2006 and 2007 between the university and three other universities, with the purpose of utilising their various competencies. The University of Gothenburg in turn is, according to the ADs of 2005 through 2007 responsible for the development of two specialisations and orientations of a joint teacher education with four other universities. Lastly, in Luleå University of Technology's ADs for 2001 through 2007 the Government positioned the university in cooperation with Umeå University regarding a space and environment campus in Kiruna, which Luleå University of Technology was responsible for, with a connected education and research in space physics. There are also statements were the Government attempts to govern the universities around joint education between a university and another type of actor, such as the 2002 through 2004 cooperation between Mid Sweden University and a municipality regarding higher education access programmes. The same applies to the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences but for 2004 and 2005. Between 2010 and 2021 the Government positioned the University of Gothenburg in relation to a regional agreement regarding education, research, and development in the medical and odontological area. And, in two instances the Government positions the Swedish

University of Agricultural Sciences as a consumer of education, by stating in their ADs for 2006 through 2010, and 2009 through 2010 that the university should purchase further education, and education in hippology from two third actors.

Another attempt of organising regards the quality of education. First, in the appropriation directions for 2000 to 2001, 2003 to 2004 and 2007 it is stated that the universities must develop the quality of education and research and that they must take action based on international and national evaluations done by the Higher Education Authority (UKÄ). Secondly, in the AD for 2006 it is stated that the universities should cooperate with each other to increase the quality of education and research and to use their resources in an efficient manner. In relation to the UKÄ's thematic evaluation the Government states in the ADs for 2020 and 2021 that the universities must follow-up and act on the recommendations regarding sustainable perspectives in education.

When it comes to research, the period starts with a general organising to collaborate more with the surrounding society. Until 2002 it is stated that the universities shall collaborate with businesses, public administration, civil society organisations, the cultural life and popular adult education, and that the universities shall use these actors' experiences and problems in the research, and inform them of the results. Between 2003 through 2005 the actors are not named by the Government and thereafter these attempts disappear from the appropriation directions. However, they returns in the same shape in 2016 and stays in the common ADs for the rest of the studied period. In addition to this, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is through their ADs for 1999 through 2008 also supposed to make their research relevant for the agricultural sector.

Between 1999 and 2001 the Government positions Blekinge Institute of Technology and Mid Sweden University around a joint graduate school in tele informatics, and between 2005 and 2007 the University of Gothenburg was hosting two graduate schools with four partner universities in genomic and bioinformatic, and linguistics. Between 2012 and 2019 the University of Gothenburg was reimbursed by Karolinska Institutet for clinical education and research. Furthermore, between 1999 and 2007 the Government stated that the University of Gothenburg's board had to cooperate with Stockholm University's board to decide upon regulations for a marine biological laboratory which the University of Gothenburg was hosting. Beyond this, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences have a number of research areas pointed out to them through the Government's attempt to organise the university. For example, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is asked to participate in the European Union's framework programme for research and technology between 1999 and 2008, and in the appropriation direction for 2009 asked to create a collaboration structure for Swedish research and development regarding non-food crops. Furthermore, in 2014 the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is made responsible to cooperate with the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute regarding a shared research ship.

Beyond this, the Government also attempts to use organising in relation to other agencies' assignments. The universities are to collaborate in a number of research councils' assignments between 2012 and 2015. The aim for this was to evaluate the strategic research areas, and to adapt the council's routines to better match their

research funding to the universities' planning procedures. In 2016 the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences was told to cooperate with UKÄ in their work with creating a new veterinary nursing degree.

Two subjects of organising are part of all common appropriation directions. The first is that the universities are to collaborate with the UHR when arranging the SweSAT, and the second is that the universities must consider the special needs of students with disabilities, and that Stockholm University are to reimburse the universities financially for this work.

Beyond these the Government has attempted to govern through this tool in regard of areas where education and research is not the primary goal. Between 2000 and 2001 the universities were to stimulate sustainable economic growth and contribute to businesses to increase employment. This focus was also found in the attempt to govern the universities to function as partners in the work with regional economic growth in the common appropriation directions for 2000, and 2003 through 2006. In 2002 the UKÄ and the universities was supposed to cooperate to develop performance indicators in relation to widening participation. In 2003, 2004 and 2008 the universities were to collaborate with each other, municipalities, and businesses to develop a method to validate prior learning. This objective returned in 2016 and lasted to 2018 but as a collaboration within the frames of UHR's assignment to create a lasting and cooperative structure. In 2006 activities to create mobility between the universities, private and public organisations was supposed to be arranged. In 2007 through 2009 the universities were asked to cooperate to increase profiling and division of labour amongst them. In 2008 cooperation between local upper-secondary schools and universities was to be established for widening participation, and in 2008 through 2010 the universities were to collaborate with the Higher Education Authority to improve the follow-up regarding the student's establishment on the labour market.

In the common appropriation directions for 2015 through 2020, the Government stated that the universities should collaborate with the Swedish Migration Agency. Furthermore, in 2016 through 2018, the universities were reminded that they could get support from the University of Gothenburg in their work with gender mainstreaming and in the ADs for 2019 and 2021 it is stated that the support will henceforth be given by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency. The University of Gothenburg, of course, had a corresponding attempt of organising aimed at them between 2016 and 2019. Beyond that, the University of Gothenburg was positioned through its AD for 2018 to consult the Government's Center for Preventing Violent Extremism. Lastly, through the ADs of 2017 through 2020 the universities are told to actively participate in UHR's assignment regarding assessment of foreign upper-secondary school qualifications, whenever UHR asks for that participation.

The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences stands out in comparison with the other selected universities in this analysis due to the extent that the Government has attempted to govern them through organising, especially between 2006 and 2021. In addition to what has been written above, the Government has stated 22 other areas in which the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences has been positioned to a third actor. These regard cooperation, collaboration, coordination, contribution, assisting, and participation in both the Swedish University of

Agricultural Sciences' own areas of responsibility of education, research and sectorial development, and the Government Offices' and other agencies' main responsibilities. These range from working with aquaculture together with the Board of Fisheries, to preparing the Government for chairing the EU Council of Ministers, and to developing national strategies in a couple of selected areas.

## 4.2 What is the extent of the attempts to govern?

This section presents the results of the quantitative content analysis. The results, illustrated in diagram 4.1 – 4.9, show the extent of the Government's attempt to govern the universities at each point of comparison, and the temporal development of the assignments and reporting requirements (RR).

### 4.2.1 Common appropriation direction for all universities

The common appropriation directions were initially applicable for all universities that are government agencies. However, from the fiscal year of 2018 the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences was excluded and has been ever since.

The general trend for the assignments is that the number increased from the year of 1999 until the peak in 2007 when the Government stated 20 assignments. From the peak, a drastic decrease occurred, and reached minimum in the years of 2011 and 2012. These years, the Government did not give the universities, at a common level, any assignments at all. After the trough, the assignments started to increase again, however never reaching the previous levels, and for 2021 the Government stated two assignments. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between 13 in 2013 and 2014 to just over 48 in 2016. The mean for all years was roughly 26 with a median of roughly 25 words per assignment.

The general trend for the reporting requirements follows the trend for the assignments. For all years, except 1999, the universities have more reporting requirements than assignments and the peak is found in 2006 when the Government stated 30 RRs for the universities. From that point, the same drastic decrease as for the assignments occurs and the trough is found in 2011 and 2012 with just four reporting requirements for these two years, respectively. From 2012 there is an increasing trend which ends in 15 RRs for the year of 2021. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between roughly 20 in 2011 and 2012 to just over 41 in 2005. The mean for all years was roughly 32 with a median of just over 28 words per reporting requirement.

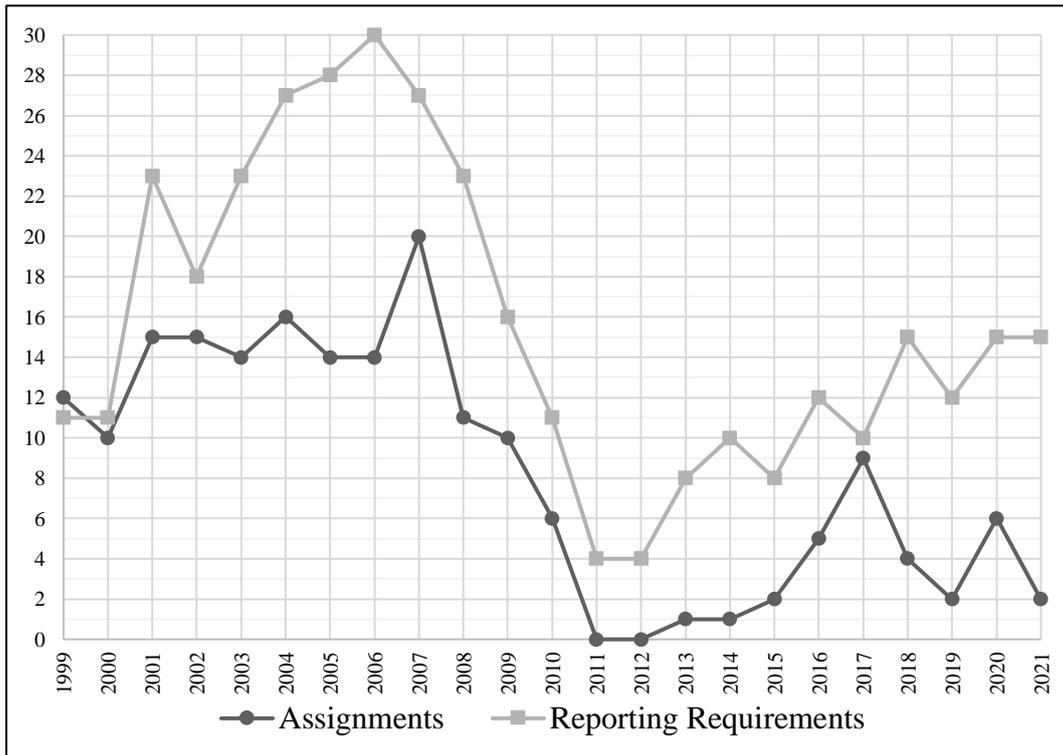


Diagram 4.1: Temporal development of performance management in the common appropriation directions

#### 4.2.2 Blekinge Institute of Technology

The general trend for the assignments that the Government stated in Blekinge Institute of Technology's appropriation directions is decreasing. The peak is found in the first nine years when the Government yearly states between five and seven assignments. From 2007 the decrease gets more drastic for a couple of years and ends up at zero in 2011 and 2012. Thereafter the number of assignments alternate with a couple of years with one and a few years with zero before ending up at three assignments in the appropriation direction for 2021. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between 15 in 2010, and roughly 32 in 2001. The mean for all years was just over 25 with a median of roughly 27 words per assignment.

The general trend for the reporting requirements starts with an increase until a peak in 2004 when the Government stated six RRs. Thereafter it decreases to a plateau at three reporting requirements between 2005 and 2008 before the decrease continues with one RR per year until the trough in 2011 and 2012 when the Government does not state any RRs. After the trough, the amount increases for two years with one reporting requirement before going back to zero in 2015 where it stays until 2021. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between roughly 12 in 2000, and 41 in 2014. The mean for all years was roughly 19 with a median of just over 17 words per reporting requirement.

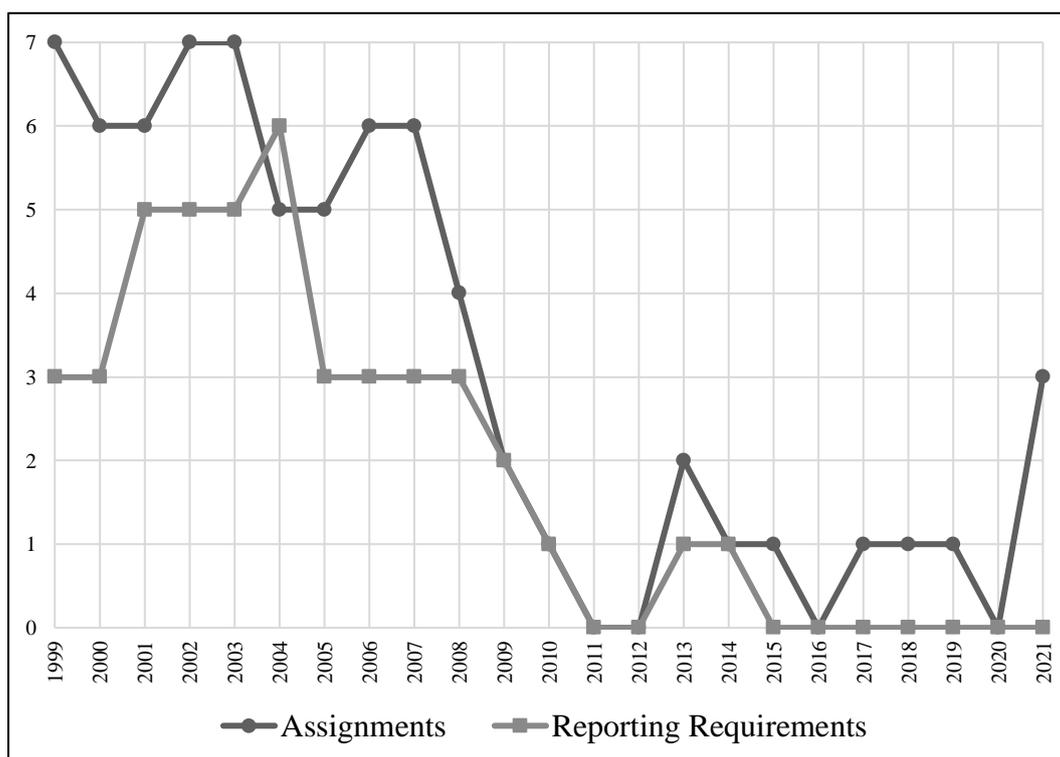


Diagram 4.2: Temporal development of performance management in the appropriation directions for Blekinge Institute of Technology

### 4.2.3 University of Gothenburg

The general trend for the temporal development of the assignments that the Government stated in the University of Gothenburg's appropriation directions is decreasing even though there is a two-year peak at 13 assignments in 2006 and 2007. After the peak, the trend resumes drastically to the trough at one assignment in 2011 and 2012. After the trough, the trend shifts to a brief increase which ends with five assignments in the appropriation direction for 2021. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between just over 27 in 2000, and 61 in 2011 and 2016. The mean for all years was just over 36 with a median of just over 35 words per assignment.

The general trend for the reporting requirements widely follows the trend for the assignments but peaks at a higher level of 16 RRs for 2006. Thereafter the decreasing trend continues, however not as drastically as for the assignments. The trend plateaus between 2015 and 2017 at five reporting requirements before starting a careful increasing trend, ending up at seven in 2021. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between 16 in 2013, and roughly 35 in 2008. The mean for all years was just over 25 with a median of just over 23 words per reporting requirement.

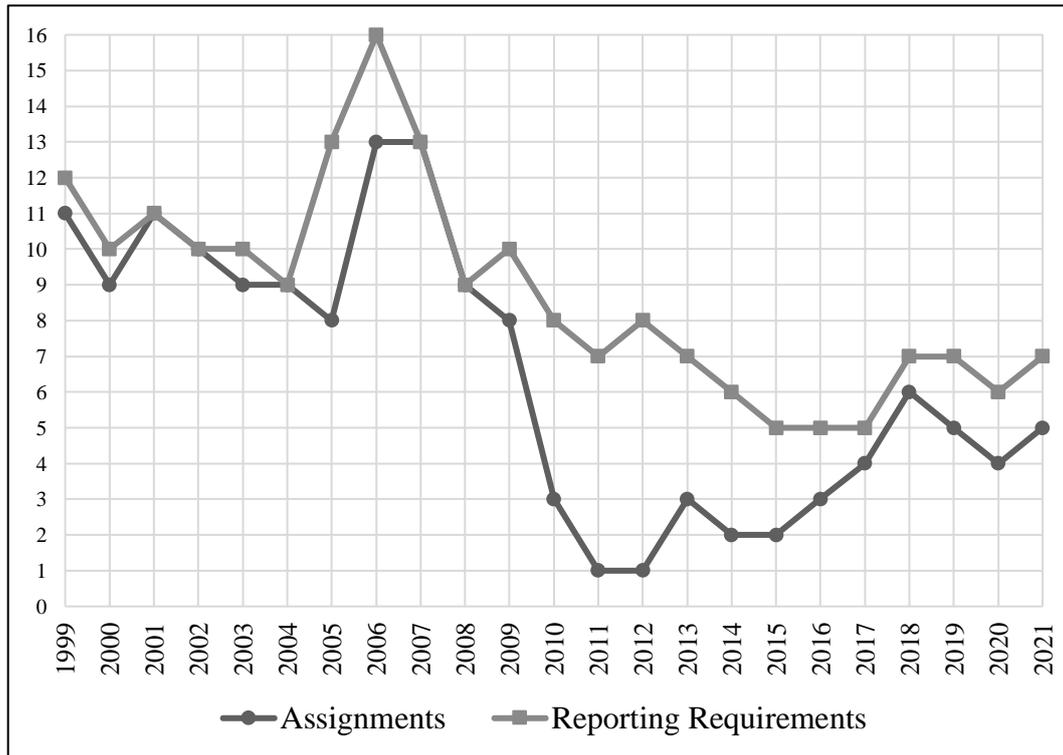


Diagram 4.3: Temporal development of performance management in the appropriation directions for the University of Gothenburg

#### 4.2.4 University of Skövde

The general trend for assignments in the University of Skövde's appropriation directions is shaped as a decreasing staircase with declines and plateaus interchangeably. It starts at the peak point in 1999 with five assignments and decreases to the minimum at zero in 2011. After the trough, the Government starts to state assignments again and the trendline increase to two assignments in 2013 before it plateaus at one assignment except for two of the remaining studied years. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between roughly 12 in 2010, and 84 in 2008. The mean for all years was roughly 42 with a median of 27 words per assignment.

The general trend for the reporting requirements is initially shaped like an increasing staircase up until the peak at four RRs in 2005. The reporting requirements decrease to three the year after that before moving up again for two years. After 2008 the number of reporting requirements drastically decrease to zero in 2011. Except for 2013, when the Government stated one reporting requirement, the amount stays at zero for the rest of the studied period. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between roughly 11 in 2001, and 31 in 2006. The mean for all years was just over 20 with a median of roughly 18 words per reporting requirement.

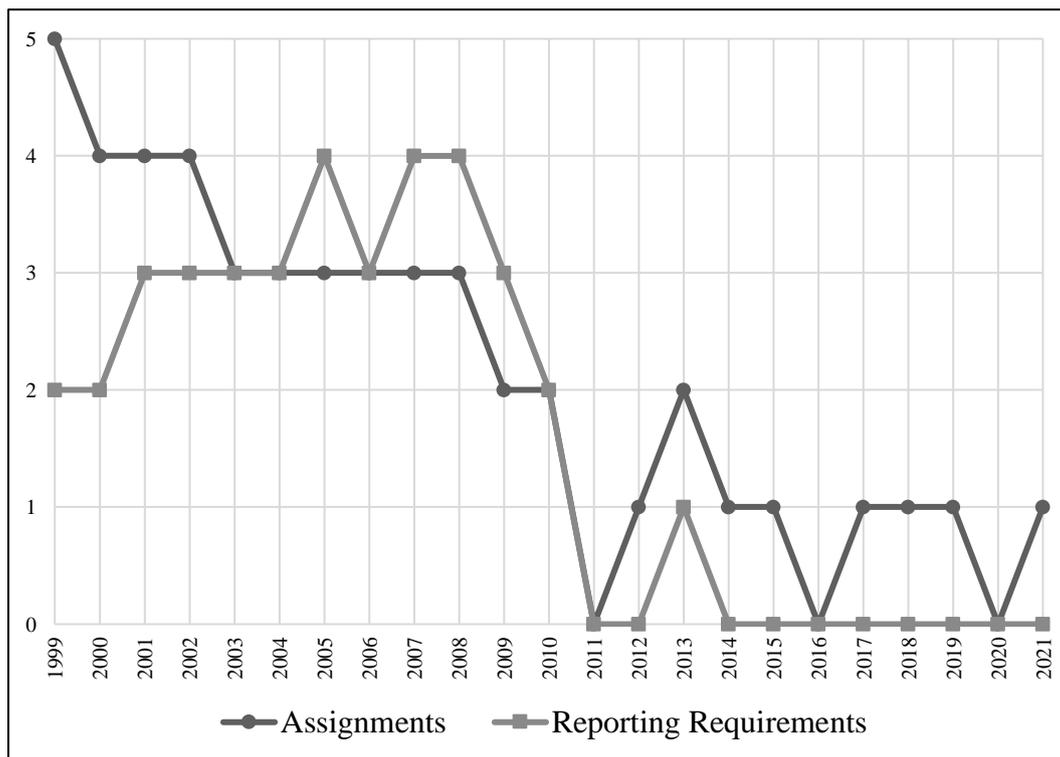


Diagram 4.4: Temporal development of performance management in the appropriation directions for the University of Skövde

#### 4.2.5 Royal College of Music

The trend for the number of assignments that the Government stated for the Royal College of Music is initially shaped like an increasing staircase from 1999, where it starts at three, to the peak of six assignments in 2006 and 2007. Thereafter it decreases to four assignments in 2010 where it plateaus for the remaining time except for 2015 and 2020 when it drops to three. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between five in 2016 and 2020, and roughly 25 in 2006 and 2007. The mean for all years was roughly 12 with a median of roughly 10 words per assignment.

The trend for reporting requirements is initially increasing from the plateau of three RRs during the first couple of years, to the peak of six in 2006 and 2007. After the peak, the trend decreases to a plateau of four reporting requirements where the amount stays for almost the rest of the studied period, except for the two troughs at three RRs in 2016 and 2020. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between just over seven in 2011 to 2021, and just over 18 in 2007. The mean for all years was roughly eleven with a median of just over eight words per reporting requirement.

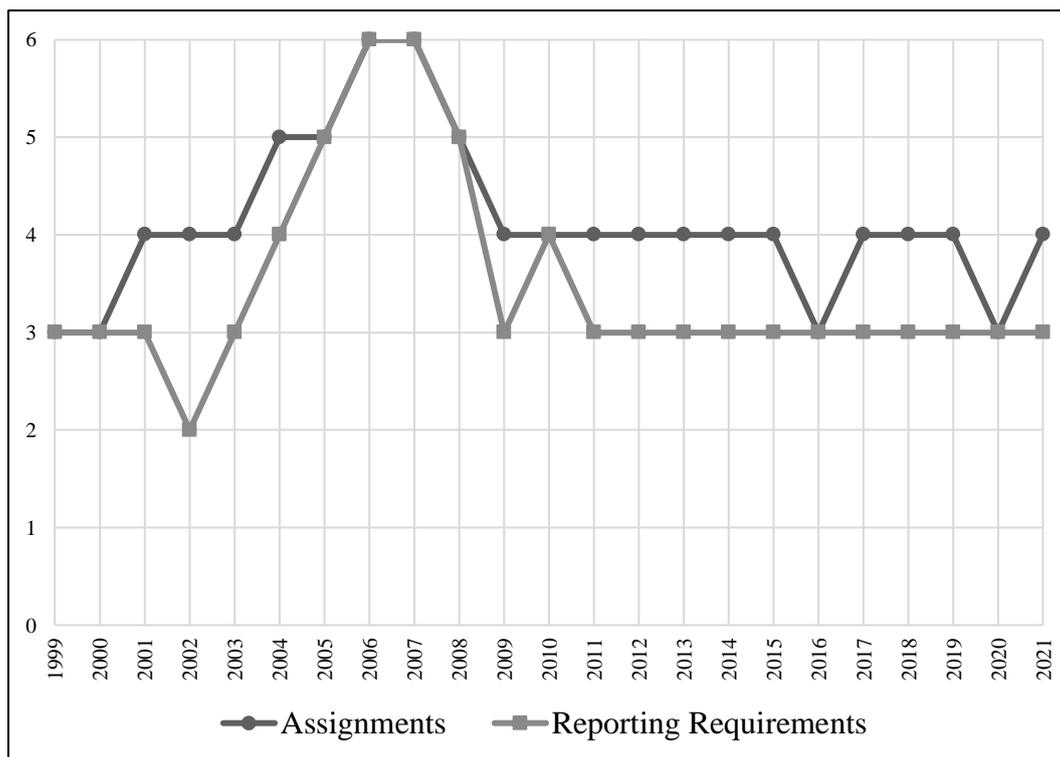


Diagram 4.5: Temporal development of performance management in the appropriation directions for the Royal College of Music

#### 4.2.6 Luleå University of Technology

The general trend for the number of assignments that the Government has stated for Luleå University of Technology is decreasing from the peak at 12 assignments in 1999 and 2000 before settling at three in 2011. The number of assignments stays at three, except for three years, until 2021. The trough is found at two assignments in 2016 and 2020. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between roughly 9 in 2016, and just over 29 in 2009. The mean for all years was roughly 26 with a median of roughly 16 words per assignment.

The trend is decreasing for the reporting requirements as well. It starts with a brief increase to the peak of 12 in 2001 before decreasing to six in 2005. Thereafter it increases again to 10 reporting requirements in 2007, before continuing the decrease to the trough at two RRs in 2014. At that level, a plateau is found which continues for roughly the rest of the studied period, with just a brief increase to three reporting requirements in 2018 and 2019 prior to returning to the plateau. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between just over 13 in 2000, and just over 28 in 2005. The mean for all years was just over 22 with a median of roughly 23 words per reporting requirement.

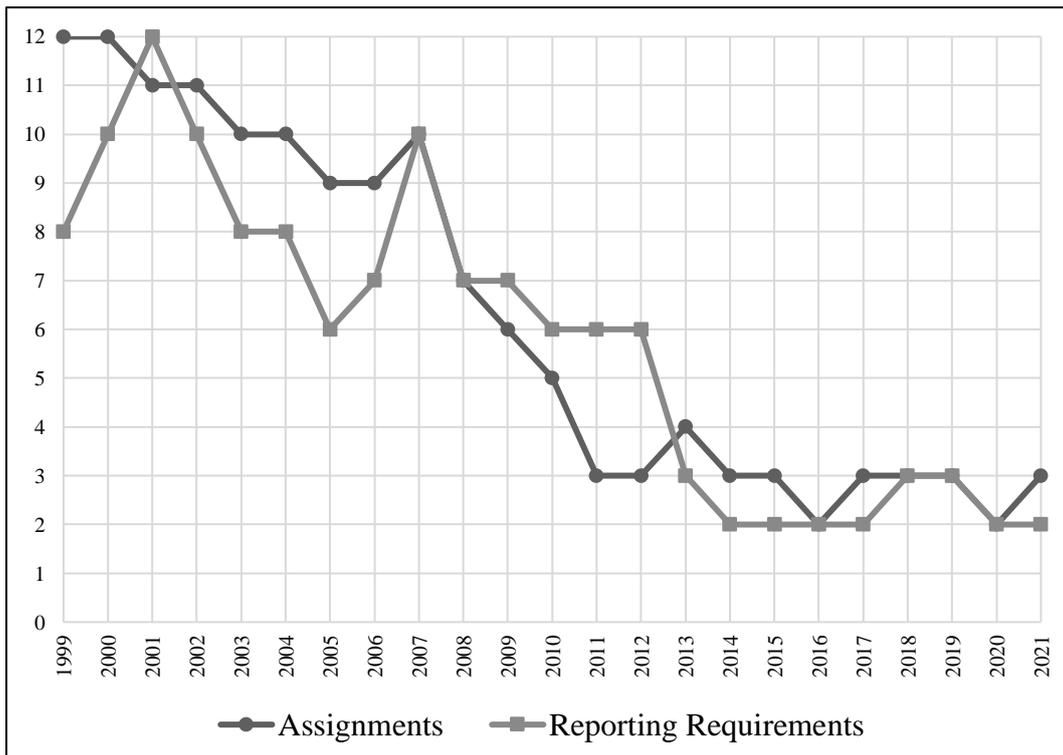


Diagram 4.6: Temporal development of performance management in the appropriation directions for Luleå University of Technology

#### 4.2.7 Mälardalen University

The number of assignments that the Government states for Mälardalen University starts at seven in 1999 and decreases with one per year until 2001. Thereafter a general increase occurs up to the peak plateau at nine assignments in 2006 and 2007. After the peak, a drastic decrease of two assignments per year takes place, down to the trough plateau at one assignment in 2011 and 2012. After the trough, a brief increase occurs to four assignments for one year. Thereafter a new plateau is found at two, with just a few drops to one for two of the remaining years. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between six in 2011 and 2012, and 45 in 2001. The mean for all years was just over 26 with a median of roughly 21 words per assignment.

The trend for reporting requirements begins with a slight increase from four in 1999 to the peak at six in 2005 and 2007. Thereafter the same drastic decrease occurs as for the assignments and a trough plateau is found at one reporting requirement in 2011 and 2012. The number of reporting requirements experiences a brief bump for 2013 and 2014 before plateauing again at one for the rest of the studied time. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between just over 9 in 2013, and roughly 24 in 2006 and 2008. The mean for all years was just over 17 with a median of 13 words per reporting requirement.

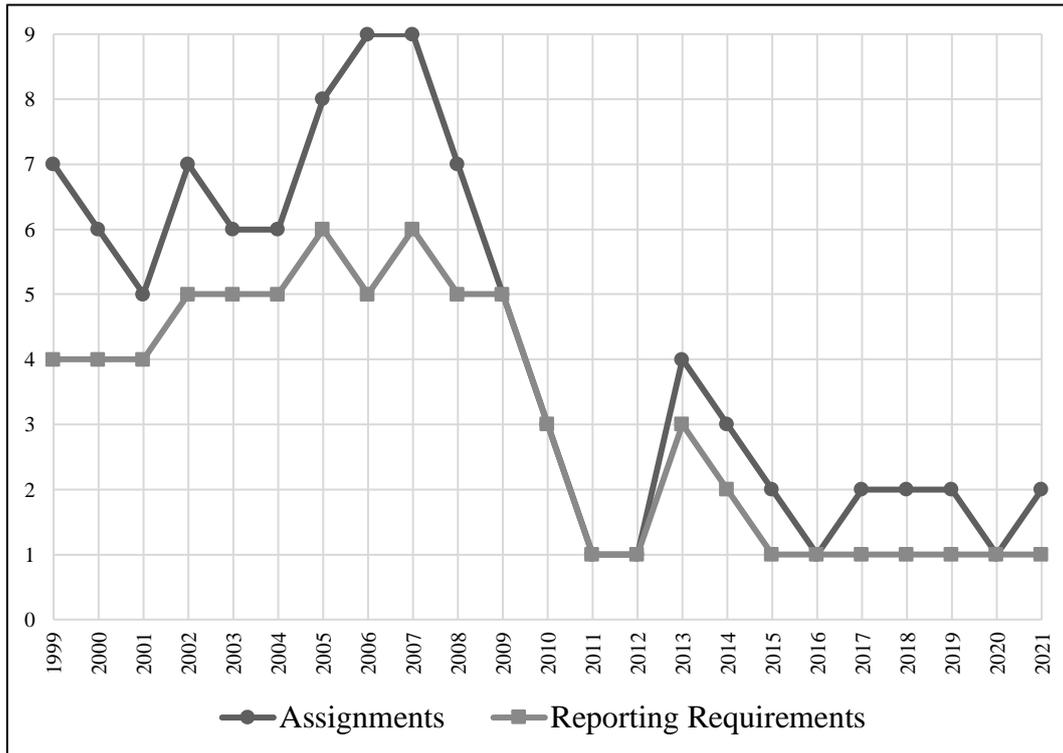


Diagram 4.7: Temporal development of performance management in the appropriation directions for Mälardalen University

#### 4.2.8 Mid Sweden University

The number of assignments stated for Mid Sweden University starts at the peak of nine and decreases to a relatively stable level between six and eight for a couple of years, before drastically decreasing to the trough at zero in 2011 and 2012. After the trough, the extent increases and finds a plateau at one assignment for all but three of the remaining years. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between just over 10 in 1999, and 41 in 2009. The mean for all years was just over 28 with a median of 27 words per assignment.

The trend for the reporting requirements is initially opposite where it increases during the first years, from four to the peak at seven in 2005. After the peak, the trend is decreasing to a plateau of four reporting requirements per year before decreasing further to a new plateau at the trough of zero from 2011. This plateau is consistent for the rest of the period except for 2013. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between 12 in 2010, and just over 28 in 2005. The mean for all years was roughly 21 with a median of 21 words per reporting requirement.

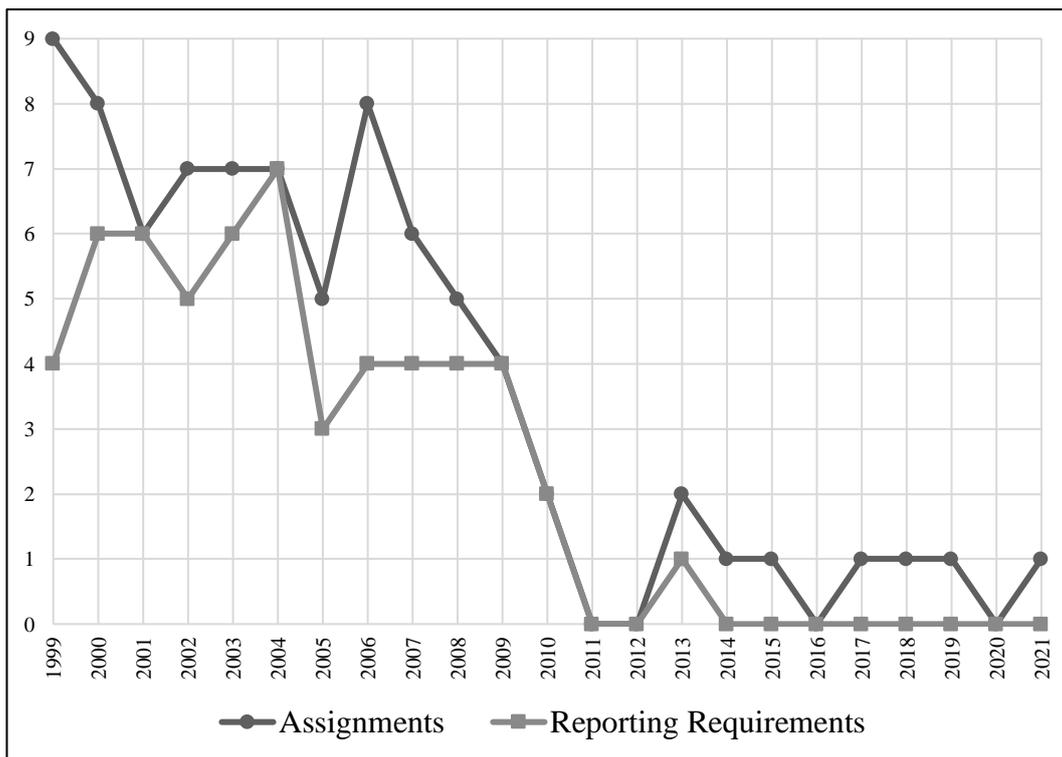


Diagram 4.8: Temporal development of performance management in the appropriation directions for Mid Sweden University

#### 4.2.9 Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

The initial trend for the assignments stated for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences are not as clear as for the other universities. It starts off at 19 in 1999 and drops down to 12 in 2002 before peaking at 22 during 2003 and 2004. After the peak, a general, and initially drastic, decreasing trend occurs to the trough at zero in 2012. After the trough, a slight increase takes place and the number of assignments for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences spans between two to four assignments per year and ends with a plateau of three assignments in 2020 and 2021. The average amount of words per assignment spanned between roughly 15 in 2010, and 47 in 2021. The mean for all years was roughly 20 with a median of just over 20 words per assignment.

The trend for the reporting requirements is similar to the trend for the assignments. It starts at 21 in 1999 and decreases to eight in 2002, before increasing to the peak of 22 in 2005. After the peak, the number of reporting requirements spans between 20 to 21 RRs per year until 2008 when it drastically drops to five in 2009. After this decrease, increases and decreases interchange for the rest of the studied period and ends in an increasing motion at 10 reporting requirements in 2021. The average amount of words per reporting requirement spanned between roughly 22 in 1999, and roughly 42 in 2018. The mean for all years was just over 30 with a median of roughly 31 words per reporting requirement.

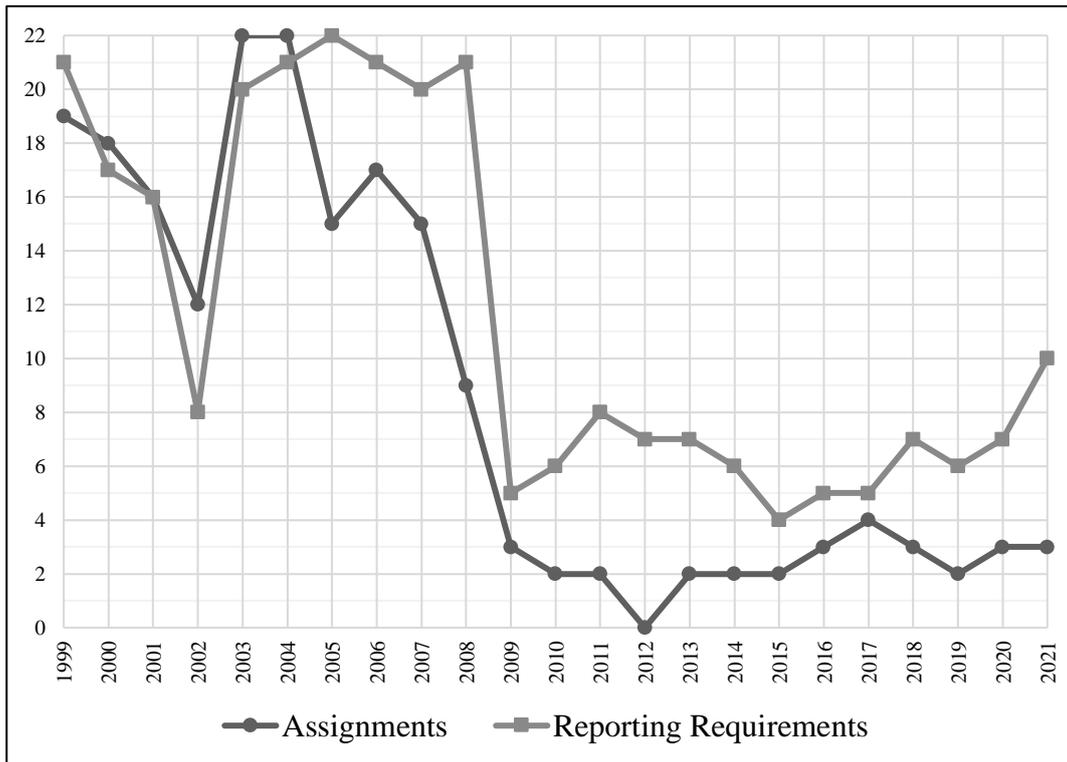


Diagram 4.9: Temporal development of performance management in the appropriation directions for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

## 5 Discussion and conclusions

This final chapter contains the discussion and conclusions of the study, the chapter is structured in accordance with the research questions, and ends with the application of the typologies found in the functionalist approach to governance.

### 5.1 What story does the analysis tell?

This part contains a brief reflection of what story the analysis tells in relation to the three sub-questions. It starts with a reflection of how the different Government constellations has used the different tools. This is followed by a discussion regarding how the extent of the attempts to govern has changed over time. The subsection ends with some conclusions of how the attempts to govern has been differentiated to the various universities.

#### 5.1.1 How has the various Government constellations used the tools?

The three tools that this study has focused on in the Government's direct and formal attempts to govern the universities has been used throughout the studied period. Governing through rules is generally used more frequently in the beginning of the studied period. During the first twelve years, governing through rules is performed by references to both general and detailed legislations, while the amount of references and its degree of detail decreases during the last eleven years. However, while reading the appropriation directions it is evident that some things that previously was mentioned in combination with a reference to legislation lost the reference in the later years or seemed to have been moved to appendices, which was not part of the material. It might therefor be a mistake to say that the use of the tool decreases, however that can neither be confirmed nor denied based on the analysis.

The reminder of HL's overall goals and the reference to HF's task regarding the SweSAT is present during the entire period. The Persson Government reference legislation by reminding the universities of the contents of certain legislations, tasking the universities to do and report on certain objectives, and by stating applicability and exemptions of specific rules. In the last years of the Persson Government an extensive use of detailed legislation for special types of education is employed. Just a few of these remain in the first year of the Reinfeldt Government's rule and diminishes entirely in the second year of the term. The Reinfeldt Government uses the tool in the same way as the previous, and focus on reminders and tasks, but to a lesser extent. In three cases the Government uses the tool in

attempting to govern all universities and it seems like the purpose of those attempts is to allow more freedom to the universities by de-regulation, but also to position the universities closer to the surrounding society by reminding of the responsibility for third-stream activities. In five cases the tool is used relating to specific universities and regard both education and administrative tasks. The reminder of third-stream activities stays in the first common appropriation direction issued by the first Löfven Government. However, from the second year the Government only employs the tool in the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' appropriation direction regarding education and tuition fees. When it comes to the second Löfven Government the tool is increasingly employed, however still at a low level. The Government use the tool in relation to the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' provision of education and their use of tuition fees, by allowing the University of Gothenburg, Luleå University of Technology, and Mid Sweden University to finance connected holding companies, and in relation to the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' responsibility of civil contingency in crises. Lastly, it is used when asking the universities to report on how they worked with sustainable development.

Governing through goals and resources is employed quite evenly throughout the studied period but with a slight decrease at the latter part. Some attempts to govern through goals and resources remains throughout the period. Such as the financial terms and detailed goals on certain educations that should be provided by the Royal College of Music, Luleå University of Technology, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. In addition, some objects are governed for the entire period except for just one or a few years. Such as the size of the education provided by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, which is governed for 22 years, that the University of Gothenburg is to provide medical and odontological education, which is governed for 21 years, and there are stated recruitment goals regarding teaching and researching personnel for almost the entire period. One issue that I would like to emphasize separately is the opportunity to save unused funding between different fiscal years. This is stated by the Government in the appropriation directions for 1999 through 2010, but also in relation to the ordinance of appropriations valid for the entire period. This ensures some freedom for the universities to plan their operations in a longer perspective compared to other public agencies.

The Persson Government uses the tool by stating overall objectives for all universities and separately for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, and regarding a goal for the share of a cohort that should enter higher education before a certain age. The Government also sets a target for the universities' role in regional and national economic growth. Moreover, the Government states the principles for provision of education and certain goals for issued degrees. What type of education that is provided by the universities is pointed out in the specific appropriation directions for Blekinge Institute of Technology, Mid Sweden University, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. There is also a focus on internationalization of education and research, and the Government attempts to govern the universities by setting goals for quality development. The Government explicates the universities' societal role through the goals that higher education and

research should lead to increased economic growth, but also to widen participation in higher education and research, and through the goals regarding gender equality among students and staff. The Reinfeldt Government also stated overall objectives, and gave new ones to the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The Government kept some of the attempts to govern through this tool that was initiated during the previous term of office, however they also terminated some. During the Reinfeldt Government's second term of office, they refrained from stating further goals regarding the size of the provision of education, and the number of issued degrees. Yet, the Government also stated some new goals and focused more on governing through resources by devoting certain parts of the direct funding to specific areas in the universities' appropriation directions. The first Löfven Government kept the overall objectives for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in their first appropriation direction, but then refrained from stating the goals again. Instead, focus was shifted to goals regarding third stream activities and gender mainstreaming. The Government increased the focus on governing through resources and extended it to new areas. In the case of quality enhancement of education in humanities, theology, social sciences, and law it even stretched to state details on how the funding preferably was to be used. The second Löfven Government returned to stating the principles for the provision of higher education and kept on with their attempts to govern third stream activities and gender mainstreaming. In addition, some new attempts to govern was added in regard of education and to promote gender research within the academic sector.

The Governments has attempted to govern through organising throughout the studied period. Yet, clearly more liberally during the first half. Some attempts to govern through this tool spans over the entire period. Such as the universities' possibility to purchase education from third actors, arranging the SweSAT together with UHR, positioning the universities to Stockholm University in relation to the work with supporting students with disabilities, and the hearing process with third actors before deciding upon the size and orientation of teacher education. The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is the single university which the Government attempts to govern most with this tool.

The Persson Government focus a lot on education and attempts to govern through organising in regard of provision, and joint educations between two or more universities. The universities are also positioned as actors in their geographical region in regard of teacher education. Moreover, the Government focus on quality cooperation, and on cooperative research and its benefit for growth and certain regional and national public and private actors. The Persson Government also initiates cooperation with a shorter time frames, e.g., regarding validation of prior learning, and widening participation. The Reinfeldt Government keeps the previous focus on education, however more or less just for the first year after which the Government attempts to govern the universities towards joint educations less than before. Yet, the Government still states the principle for provision of education, and maintains the positioning to regional centres for teacher education. However, both ceases during the first term of office. The Government also maintains the attempts to govern the work with validation and widening participation. Two things that stands out for this term of office is the cooperation between UKÄ and the

universities regarding follow-ups for students' establishment in the labour market, and the collaboration with the research councils to evaluate the Government's strategic research areas and adapt the routines for research funding. The first Löfven Government reinstated the principle for higher education provision, the focus on positioning research in relation to the surrounding society, and the work with validation. The general trend for the Government's attempt to govern through this tool is although decreasing. Beyond this, new attempts are included in the appropriation directions, e.g., regarding gender mainstreaming, but also regarding cooperation with the Swedish Migration Agency. The second Löfven Government maintains their previous attempts to govern through organising. Some new areas are added and some old are reinstated with a focus on education and quality.

In conclusion, there are some differences between how the different Government constellations has attempted to govern the universities. Although explaining why that is the case is left out of this study. The trend seems to be that the Government attempts to govern less over time, or at least has a decreased focus on the appropriation directions. Yet, the trend is not as strong when it comes to governing through goals and resources. The post-academic model, and academic instrumentalism, where the universities are to operate within other areas than just the academic one is evident. However, the analysis does not show that the attempts to govern through resources are diminishing as the post-academic model convey, on the contrary, in some cases the Government focus more on it. Yet, that might be an effect of the Government's tendency to govern more in politically hot issues.

### 5.1.2 What about the extent of the Government's attempt to govern?

The extent of the attempts to govern was measured in relation to the operationalisation of performance management. This section does not put the extent in numbers at the centre but rather focus on diachronic change. This means that what is relevant for the discussion is not if the extent is much or little but rather if there is change as explicated in the corresponding research question.

Each of the general trends for the number of assignments has been expressed in the analysis, the temporal development for assignments stated in all appropriation directions is compiled in diagram 5.1, which makes the trend even more evident. A similar compilation is made for the reporting requirement, shown in diagram 5.2. The trend for reporting requirements is generally decreasing. For some universities there is a moderate increase during the latter part of the studied period. Yet, for the common level the late increase is more evident, and the last point of comparison exceeds the first, which it does not for any other case.

As the analysis has shown, some years the Government did not state any assignments. However, this do not necessarily mean that the universities were free from any attempts of governing that entire year but rather that choices made in the research design restricts a deeper description. Taking the common appropriation directions for 2011 and 2012 as an example, where the analysis did not show any assignments. There is a weakness in the limitation of the material in relation to the construction of the model of analysis, because stated in the original appropriation

directions for these years was a sentence about the Government’s intention to get back to the universities regarding recruitment goals. Since the sentence contains just an intention it could not be coded as an assignment. Although, in hindsight it is known that such goals were set for the period of 2012–2015, and later stated in the amendments to the specific appropriation directions for each university. Hence, it is possible that the analysis missed assignments and reporting requirements that was valid during the studied period.

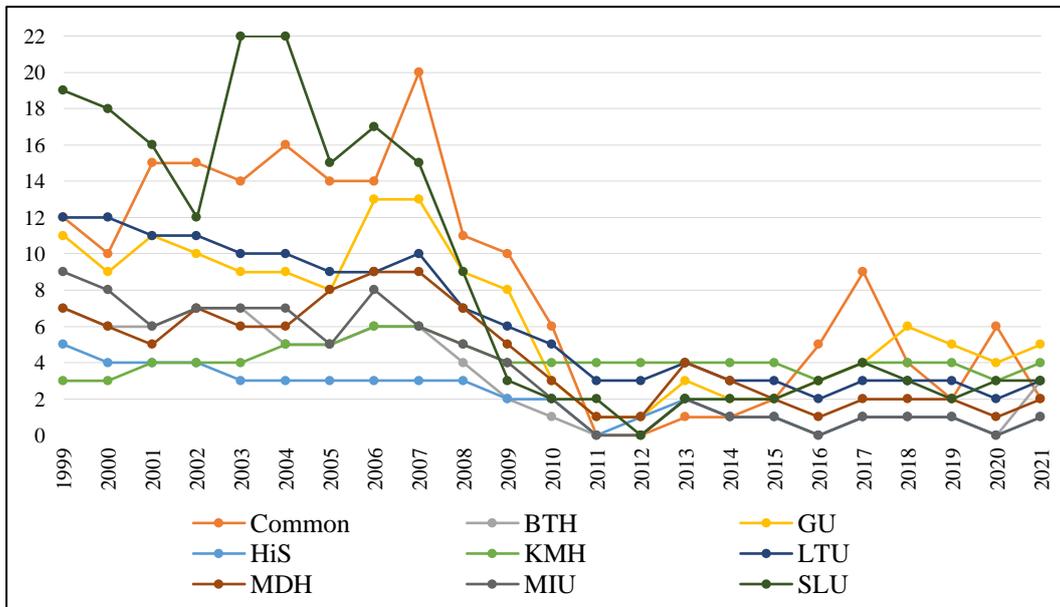


Diagram 5.1: Temporal development of stated assignments

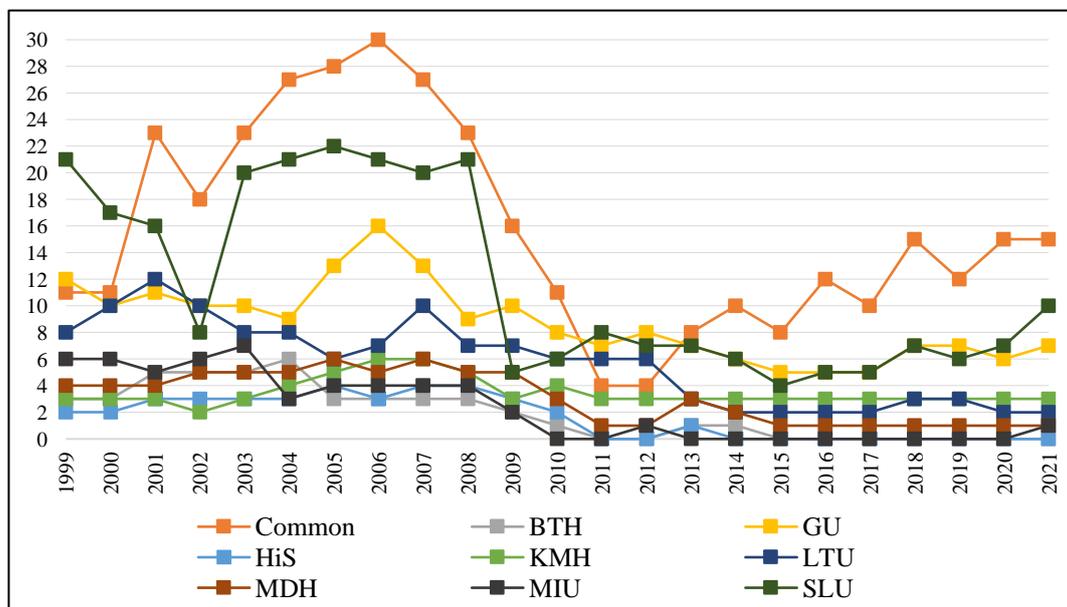


Diagram 5.2: Temporal development of stated reporting requirements

Based on these results it is evident that performance management’s centrality is diminishing in the attempts to govern. I cannot sort out if the use of performance management is a rhetorical act, as Hall states. However, the analysis indicates that

the changes made based on the critique from the commission of inquiry, summarised in SOU 2007:75, of the Government's use of performance management, and in the reform of institutional autonomy in 2011, has made an impact on the extent of the attempts to govern.

### 5.1.3 Is the Government tailoring its attempts to govern to the various universities?

The short answer to the question of if the Government tailors its attempts to govern to the various university is 'yes' – since the contents of the appropriation directions differ for each university. However, there is a longer answer to this.

As evident from the analysis and the previous discussion, the different Government constellations has made use of the various tools in different ways in relation to the universities and governed the universities to different extents. The diagrams presented above shows that the extent differ over the years as well as among the universities. The analysis has shown that most assignments and reporting requirements are directed at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, the University of Gothenburg, and Luleå University of Technology. Most words per assignment are written for the University of Gothenburg, the University of Skövde and Mid Sweden University, and most words per reporting requirements are written for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, the University of Gothenburg, and Luleå University of Technology. The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is further unmatched when it comes to the attempts of governing through all tools. For governing through rules, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is followed by Mid Sweden University, and third the University of Gothenburg, for governing through goals and resources, and for governing through organising the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is followed by the University of Gothenburg, and third Luleå University of Technology.

Yet it is not only the extent that differs but also the content of the Government's attempt to govern the specific universities. Blekinge Institute of Technology is mostly governed in the beginning and the end of the period and mostly with the use of goals and resources, and organising, and in regard of education matters. The University of Gothenburg is mostly governed in the beginning and the end of the period and mostly with the use of goals and resources, and organising. The content of the attempts to govern the University of Gothenburg regard both education and research matters. Yet, what stands out in comparison with the other universities are the organising attempts regarding collaboration and cooperation around gender mainstreaming, and against violent extremism in the end of the period. The University of Skövde and the Royal College of Music is mostly governed in the beginning of the period, and in regard of the provision of education. The Government points out three subjects that the Royal College of Music should provide education in throughout the entire period. Luleå University of Technology is mostly governed in the beginning of the period, and in regard of both education and research. What stands out in comparison with others are the special responsibility of teacher education three minority languages. Mälardalen University is mostly

governed in the beginning of the period, and in regard of education. Yet, what stands out is the attempt to govern through goals and resources when the Government states that Mälardalen University should adapt its admission to third-cycle education to reach the goal on the number of issued third-cycle degrees. No other university is governed in this way, despite having similar goals. Mid Sweden University is mostly governed in the beginning and the end of the period, and in regard of both education and research. Lastly, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is governed throughout the period and in relation to both education and research. Hardly surprising at this point, what stands out is the focus to attempt to govern the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in relation to its sectorial role.

In conclusion it does not seem as if the Government changed its governing of the universities to focus more on tailoring the governing in line with the critique presented in the previously mentioned SOU-report from 2007, but rather that it was tailored before and the critique led to a general decrease of attempts to govern for a period – however picking it up again in the most recent years. This might be an effect of the reform decided upon by the Reinfeldt Government regarding institutional autonomy in 2011, and since the first Löfven Government the interest to attempt to govern the universities has increased. For the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences an explanation to the large amount, and the degree of detail of the Government's attempts to govern the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences could be that they are simply not like other universities due to their sectorial role. Yet, an alternative explanation could be that the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is not governed by the Ministry of Education and Research. However, explanans are a question for another study.

## 5.2 How can we understand the attempts to govern?

As the description is laid out of how the government has attempted to govern the universities between 1999 and 2021. The focus shift to see how the governing can be understood with help of the functionalist governance model, by comparing the typologies to the empiric reality. Politics is the authoritative allocation of values, and both a social and a physical process. We must therefore consider the appropriation directions to be more than just representations of a physical decision – it is also a social object. Within the social sphere the Government attempts to govern the universities to make sure that values in society are allocated in the way that voters wish, despite that universities are tough to govern. I am not trying to downplay the ungovernable trait of higher education and research but argue that based on the description of the governing it is possible to take the first steps of understanding the attempts to govern through a theoretical lens. In the following sections just a few examples connected to education and research will be made, and it does not cover all of the Government's attempt to govern the universities.

### 5.2.1 How can we understand the attempts to govern higher education?

When it comes to education, the Government has attempted to govern the universities through all three tools. Initially the Government shows clear signs of *Étatiste* Governance's ideas of central planning and rationality. This argument is based on the focus on the Government's attempt to lay out detailed figures for the provision of education through goals and resources. But not only that, in many cases the Government also point out what type of education that was to be provided by referring to certain legislations, and states that certain degrees would be more suitable than others to match the labour market's need for educated personnel. In addition, there does not seem to be much stakeholder influence involved in this, the resources are tax based, and the implementation is left to the universities to manage, making this an even clearer case of *Étatiste* Governance. Yet, over time the Government's attempts to govern the provision of education lessens, and left is often just a maximum figure that the universities can discount resources to education for.

When it comes to joint education there are cases in which the universities are to collaborate with a third actor outside of academia in provision of the education, e.g., medical education at the University of Gothenburg. In this there are signs of State-Centric Governance due to the involvement of stakeholders in implementation, and in how the Government explicates that budgetary limits are decisive on the maximum number of students that can be discounted for. The goal-selection is dominated by the Government since it is both the negotiating and assigning party, yet can be assumed to be influenced by the regional party since the provision is based on an agreement. However, it is not evident from the analysis that the decision-making is in line with the typology's bargaining traits. In the end of the period there are evidence of a return to *Étatiste* Governance. This is indicated by the, in comparison, very detailed decision to designate resources to increasing quality in humanities, theology, social sciences, and law education through increasing the amount of teacher directed learning, and by the dedication of resources to development of free-standing courses. Yet, it is not evident in the appropriation directions if these objectives have been preceded by stakeholder influence and bargaining between parties.

Regarding education the governing can be understood both from an *Étatiste* Governance, and a State-Centric Governance perspective. Based on what is contained in the appropriation directions there are just signs, yet implicative signs, of "corporatism" that seem to gain ground in comparison with "command and control" as time passes. Another evidence of this is that the recruitment goals for teaching and researching personnel over time turned more into a communicative and tailored process as the universities themselves was consultative to the Government in goal-selection in the latter part of the period.

## 5.2.2 How can we understand the attempts to govern research?

When it comes to research the Government has attempted to govern the universities through all three tools. Yet, there are more evident signs, compared to education, that the attempts to govern research can be understood as *Étatiste* Governance.

Contained in the appropriation directions is a one-sidedness where the Government take charge of certain shares of the resources and dedicates them to specific purposes in the universities' research. Examples of objectives relating to this are statements regarding strategic research areas, specific research projects, and co-operation in graduate schools, laboratories, and directions of participation in the European Union's research programmes. Connected to these there are no signs of corporatism within the appropriation directions, but rather that it is centrally planned and heavily dependent on the universities to perform their part in the name of societal interest and utility through third-stream activities.

Yet, a weakness is that the analysis does not capture what is not manifested in the appropriation directions. What this means is that while signs of *Étatiste* Governance can be observed in the attempts to govern research the universities do conduct most of their research without manifestations of it in the appropriation directions. This has implications on this discussion and the application of the typologies since the results might be quite the opposite – that the universities, except for just a few areas, are roaming free without government of their mandate. This is especially the case in the latter part of the period which surely includes dedicated shares of the funding to specific research areas by dictating the financial terms, but the degree of detail of how the research is to be performed is diminishingly low.

## 5.3 Summary of conclusions

This study has shown how the Swedish Government has attempted to govern the public universities, the extent of these attempts and how they are differentiated to the various universities, and its temporal change. It is clear that the Swedish case is quite far from the ideals of academic traditionalism. Rather, the Government's attempts to govern are closer to academic instrumentalism. Yet, the amount of direct and formal attempts to govern through the appropriation directions has decreased over time. The Government do tailor their attempts to govern to the various universities, by focusing more on one or several parts of the universities' mandate and make use of the universities' different profiles and areas of expertise to find synergies within and outside the sector of higher education and research. When it comes to how we can understand the Government's attempt to govern I have turned to functionalist governance theory and made use of two typologies summarised in "command and control" and "corporatism" respectively. The application of these two typologies to the results show that we can understand the attempts to govern education in both senses, and that it has been a shift towards corporatism over time. The attempts to govern research on the other hand only show signs of command and control.

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## 7 Appendix

### 7.1 Appendix 1: Swedish universities and university colleges that are public authorities

<b>Universities</b>	<b>University colleges</b>	<b>University colleges of fine, applied and performing arts</b>
Karlstad University	Blekinge Institute of Technology	Konstfack
Karolinska Institutet	Dalarna University	Royal College of Music
Linköping University	Halmstad University	Royal Institute of Art
Linnaeus University	Kristianstad University	Stockholm University of the Arts
Luleå University of Technology	Mälardalen University	
Lund University	Swedish Defence University	
Malmö University	Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences	
Mid Sweden University	Södertörn University	
Royal Institute of Technology	University of Borås	
Stockholm University	University of Gävle	
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	University of Skövde	
Umeå University	University West	
University of Gothenburg		
Uppsala University		
Örebro University		

Table 7A: List of Swedish universities and university colleges that are government agencies

## 7.2 Appendix 2: Tables for strategic selection

<b>University / University college</b>	<b>2019 government appropriation (SEK)</b>
Lund University	4 762 921 000
University of Gothenburg	4 337 635 000
Uppsala University	4 159 979 000
Stockholm University	3 379 302 000
Karolinska Institutet	3 068 862 000
Umeå University	2 893 720 000
Linköping University	2 606 471 000
Royal Institute of Technology	2 409 564 000
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	1 874 711 000
Linnæus University	1 424 531 000
Malmö University	1 257 174 000
Örebro University	1 177 369 000
Luleå University of Technology	1 109 818 000
Karlstad University	916 787 000
Mid Sweden University	815 093 000
Mälardalen University	751 890 000
University of Borås	580 001 000
University of Gävle	565 006 000
Dalarna University	517 871 000
Södertörn University	517 018 000
Halmstad University	473 324 000
Kristianstad University	469 023 000
University West	442 452 000
University of Skövde	373 376 000
Blekinge Institute of Technology	342 001 000
Swedish Defence University	280 358 000
Stockholm University of the Arts	261 832 000
Konstfack	188 343 000
Royal College of Music	180 331 000
Swedish School of Sports and Health Sciences	134 861 000
Royal Institute of Art	78 102 000

Table 7B: Direct government funding in SEK for 2019 to universities and university colleges that are government agencies (Swedish Higher Education Authority 2).

<b>University / University college</b>	<b>Founded (year)</b>
Uppsala University	1477
Lund University	1666
Royal College of Music	1771
Karolinska Institutet	1810
Royal Institute of Technology	1827
University of Gothenburg	1954
Stockholm University	1960
Umeå University	1965
Luleå University of Technology	1971
Linköping University	1975
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	1977
Örebro University	1977
Mälardalen University	1977
University of Borås	1977
University of Gävle	1977
Dalarna University	1977
Kristianstad University	1977
University of Skövde	1977
Karlstad University	1977
Konstfack	1978
Royal Institute of Art	1978
Halmstad University	1983
Blekinge Institute of Technology	1989
University West	1990
Mid Sweden University	1993
Swedish School of Sports and Health Sciences	1993
Södertörn University	1996
Swedish Defence University	1997
Malmö University	1998
<del>Linnaeus University</del>	<del>2010</del>
<del>Stockholm University of the Arts</del>	<del>2014</del>

Table 7C: List of universities and university colleges in order of the year they were founded. Disqualified individuals are crossed out.