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Website usability and provision of information on the English version of the Karlstad University website

In the perspective of current exchange students at Karlstad University

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Abstract

Website usability is an important factor that has to be kept into mind when an academic websites design in built up, as it has an influence on all users. This paper is dealing with website usability issues regarding the website design of the Karlstad University (KAU.SE) website and the provision of information in English in comparison with the information provided in Swedish on this website. The possible impacts on the specific user group of current exchange students of the Karlstad University will be analyzed. Therefore literature was studied, an online survey conducted and spread to current exchange students at Karlstad University as well as a detailed investigation of the KAU.SE website executed. Moreover an interview with an expert of web development team of the KAU.SE website was conducted. The research was undertaken due to the fact that the KAU.SE website does not provide the same amount of information in both languages, Swedish and English. As it was found out that the English version was providing in comparison to the Swedish version less information and was overall a more limited and compressed information source, the foundation of this study was laid. Furthermore the website usability of the KAU.SE website was investigated by adding some specific questions in the online survey. The research is relevant for the web development team of the KAU.SE website as well as other academic websites. It could be useful for finding out which information is mandatory needed or required and of primary importance for current exchange students during and in their university education.
Table of contents

Acknowledgements .................................................. I
Abstract .............................................................. II
Table of contents ..................................................... III
List of figures .......................................................... V
1. Introduction ......................................................... 1
   1.1. Background .................................................. 2
       1.1.1. Problem identification ................................. 2
   1.2. Purpose of the paper ....................................... 3
   1.3. Target groups ............................................... 4
   1.4. Delimitation ................................................. 4
   1.5. Structure of the thesis .................................... 5
2. Theory ................................................................... 6
   2.1. Website ......................................................... 6
       2.1.1. Audience of an academic website ................. 6
       2.1.2. Information design and information architecture . 7
       2.1.3. Website navigation .................................... 7
       2.1.4. Website design ......................................... 10
       2.1.5. Website structure ..................................... 11
   2.2. Website usability ............................................. 12
       2.2.1. Definition of website usability ................. 12
       2.2.2. Influence factors of website usability ....... 12
   2.3. Information management on websites .................. 14
       2.3.1. Search systems ........................................ 14
       2.3.2. Navigation system ................................... 15
3. Methodology ......................................................... 17
   3.1. Qualitative research ...................................... 17
   3.2. Quantitative research ..................................... 17
   3.3. Trustworthiness ............................................. 18
       3.3.1. Validity ................................................. 18
       3.3.2. Reliability ............................................ 18
   3.4. Inspection of the KAU.SE website ...................... 19
   3.5. Online survey ............................................... 19
       3.5.1. Development of online survey questions .......... 20
       3.5.2. Selection of respondents ............................ 21
       3.5.3. Sampling ............................................... 21
   3.6. Interview with an expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website ................................... 22
   3.7. Literature studies ......................................... 23
4. Empirical studies .................................................. 23
   4.1. Inspection of the KAU.SE website ...................... 23
       4.1.1. Navigation structure .................................. 23
       4.1.2. KAU.SE website structure and design .......... 35
       4.1.3. Quick links ............................................ 47
       4.1.4. Search box in the main navigation ............... 47
       4.1.5. Footer ................................................. 48
4.2. The results of the online survey of exchange students at Karlstad University ........................................................................................................... 49
4.3. The results of the interview with the web development expert ........ 52
5. Discussion ........................................................................................................... 57
6. Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 62
7. Recommendations ............................................................................................. 65
References ............................................................................................................... 70
Appendices ............................................................................................................. 72
List of figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Main navigation of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;KAU.SE&quot; navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Education&quot; navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Future Students&quot; navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Current students&quot; navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Library&quot; navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Breadcrumbs of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Navigation sidebar &quot;About the Library&quot; of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sidebar of the KAU.SE start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dropdown menu &quot;Organisation&quot; on the sidebar of the KAU.SE start page</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dropdown menu &quot;Search for&quot; on the sidebar of the KAU.SE start page</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dropdown menu &quot;Go to&quot; on the sidebar of the KAU.SE start page</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sidebar of the EDUCATION start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sidebar of the FUTURE STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>&quot;Advanced search&quot; linked page of &quot;FUTURE STUDENTS&quot; sidebar link of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>&quot;Plan your course of study&quot; linked page of &quot;FUTURE STUDENTS&quot; sidebar of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sidebar of the CURRENT STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sidebar of the LIBRARY start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Search field &quot;Go to&quot; in the Sidebar of the &quot;LIBRARY&quot; start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Design grid of the KAU.SE start page</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>KAU.SE start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>EDUCATION start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>FUTURE STUDENT start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>CURRENT STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>LIBRARY start page of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Content page &quot;External relations&quot; on the &quot;KAU.SE&quot; navigation level of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Content page &quot;Programmes&quot; on the &quot;EDUCATION&quot; navigation level of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Content page &quot;Courses in English&quot; on the &quot;EDUCATION&quot; navigation level of the KAU.SE website</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

The paper is concerned with website usability and information provision issues in the aspect of the quality of websites that have a selection of more than one language. The research of this paper is based on reviewing academic websites and in this particular case on the website of the Karlstad University and its English version. Issues regarding website usability and provision of information will be illustrated on a specific example, the Karlstad University website. The general theory is based on important aspects regarding website usability as well as web design. The focus of this paper lies on current exchange students as they mainly interact with the KAUSE website continuously and make use of the selection of the English language version. These assumptions enable the analysis and evaluation of the KAUSE websites usability, information structure and navigation in the best way.

Usability is an important factor when it comes to Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), especially the successful operation of Internet users with websites. An organization has to deliver and maintain a website that is usable for all users, both targeted and casual. If this does not occur, the consequence of dissatisfaction of the user will affect the performance of a company. The users’ dissatisfaction may have an effect on the image of the organization or cause declination or even lost of confidence as well, which is in this case might decrease the Karlstad Universities reputation of new exchange students. This effect need to be avoided and therefore the usability has to be maintained and improved continuously to keep the relationship to the students in a good balance as this will have an influence on the achievement and performance of the Karlstad University.
1.1. Background

The Karlstad University (www.kau.se) was founded in 1999 and is one of the youngest and smallest of Sweden’s universities. Yet its smaller size gives Karlstad University an advantage as the key is not to be great, it is important to be really good at what you choose to do and do it well. Therefore the goal of Karlstad University is to get better and compete with the bigger universities ranked best in Sweden. Karlstad University is recruiting students on both a national and international scale. A balanced growth provides space for approximately 10,000 full-time students.

Karlstad University received in 2011 for the second time the ECTS Label from the European Commission. The ECTS Label is an accreditation for facilitating international student mobility and diverse quality of education. Karlstad University set one of its strategic goals to attract international students for one semester or a full academic year at Karlstad. Therefore the Karlstad University offers a wide range of courses and programmes in English. University communication is directed among target groups, which include both current and prospective students. The Karlstad University rate their website (KAU.SE) as a good platform and main channel to communicate with their target groups. The web team is group of different experts who are responsible for the design, content and information on the KAU.SE Website. The website is publicly available and constantly updated in order to reflect current events and to be a source of reference for all members of the student body. However, this effort is not without its problems. Specific efforts have to be made to overcome a number of possible problems regarding the satisfaction of the diversity of the expected users. Academic information and news content has to be filtered in order to be current and relevant to users, while simultaneously serving both: current and future exchange students from abroad. In addition, content has to be presented to audiences in both English and Swedish languages in a way that satisfies both user groups.

1.1.1. Problem identification

The author of this thesis is a current exchange student of the Karlstad University and therefore familiar with the current issues of website usability, navigation and information provision on the English version of the KAU.SE Website. The problem was identified by observing the KAU.SE Website where it was found out that not all information on KAU.SE that is offered in
Swedish are available in English. Additionally, the navigation could probably be improved to reduce the number of users that get lost on the website. The development of this investigation stems from the current circumstance and utilization of the KAUSE website. As a foreign exchange student utilizing the website, the author of this thesis was motivated to conduct first hand research into its utility and communicate relevant recommendations directly to university staff. A comparison of the content of the different version of the KAUSE website is possible, which shows that the content of the English version is not similar to the content of the Swedish version. This fact was acknowledged by the web development team coordinator Kina Nilsson, who is an expert of the KAUSE website. The author of this thesis did the interview with her to have another point of view from the experts’ side of investigations issue.

For further information please have a look at the sitemap of the English version of the KAUSE website is available in Appendix F. The sitemap of the Swedish version of the KAUSE website is available in Appendix G.

This paper will examine which information in English need to be provided for the current exchange students at Karlstad University. Therefore an analysis and evaluation of the required information in specific sections of the website and the content of the website will be executed. Furthermore the navigation structure as well as the effects of it on the website usability of the KAUSE website will be determined.

1.2. Purpose of the paper

The purpose of this study is to measure qualities of website usability related to the English version of the KAUSE website as not the same amount of information is offered in Swedish and English which leads to an disadvantage of the international students, in this special case for the current exchange students of Karlstad University.

The provision of information in English on the KAUSE Website need to be improved as already some complaints about missing information were announced by exchange students. This issue has to be solved to reduce or even avoid the feeling of inequity of current exchange students. Consideration is given to finding an appropriate way to decide what kind of information is provided for current exchange students. The research of the paper is based on topics of both website usability and website design. These are particular
qualities, which are important for academic websites as they have an influence on the long-term reputation of the University as reflected by the opinions of the student body. These principles are discussed in the theoretical part of this paper as well as in the empirical part during the inspection of the KAU.SE website.

Website design and website usability has to be kept in mind as it is an important factor for finding out if the user is attracted by the appearance of the website’s design, satisfied during use and gaining sufficient and adequate information through the provided information of the website’s content. Therefore the following research question was formulated:

**Which elements on the English version of the KAU.SE website could be adjusted and improved to ensure a better website usability?**

**How could the provision of information for current exchange students of the Karlstad University be extended?**

### 1.3. Target groups

This research has influence on a number of different target groups related to Karlstad University. First of all the web development team of the KAU.SE website has to be mentioned, as they will get recommendations of the research which adjustments of the KAU.SE website could be implemented. Second, the International Office that is responsible for the exchange students of the Karlstad University, as well as the exchange students itself are addressed with this research as they are affected with the website usability and provision of information issues in their daily university and educational life. Thirdly, the student union is addressed as well as they are representatives for all students and have the ability to make changes as they have an influence on the processes of the Karlstad University.

### 1.4. Delimitation

The paper is delimited to academic websites as the Karlstad University website is an academic website which was deeply inspected regarding the website usability and information provision of current exchange students by the author of this thesis.
1.5. Structure of the thesis

The paper starts with approaches and issues in the Theory. The Theory Part is divided in two separated categories. The theory starts with information about websites by giving explanations and outlining approaches regarding the audience of a website, website content, website navigation, website design, and website structure. The theory continues with issues that are relevant for website usability. First of all the term usability is defined and influence factors of website usability are mentioned. Furthermore the theory part of this paper ends up with information about information management, which is important for provision of information especially on academic websites by mentioning search and navigation systems.

The methodology part of the paper is concerned with the definition of methods, reasons for using the methods and an explanation of the different research approaches of qualitative and quantitative research. Additionally, the used research methods are elucidated in detail. It starts with the methodology part of this paper and finishes with the inspection of the KAU.SE website. Therefore the navigation structure, the KAU.SE website structure and design, quick links as well as the search box in the main navigation and the footer are examined. Additionally, for the online survey, the advantages and disadvantages of surveys are discussed and then the development of the online survey questions and the selection of respondents. The conduction of an interview with an expert, Kina Nilsson, of the web development team of the KAU.SE website will be explained.

Besides literature studies, the trustworthiness of the paper is explained by mentioning validity and reliability issues. The paper finishes with the results of the investigations in the empirical part, discussion, conclusion, and recommendations regarding the topic and research question of this paper.
2. Theory

This part of the paper is concerned with the theoretical aspects regarding websites with focus on the audience, content, navigation and design of websites. Furthermore the term usability will be defined and the reasons for its importance mentioned, as well as the different behaviours on a website depending on the users gender listed.

2.1. Website

Websites are not just for companies but also for universities an important method for communication (Esrock & Liechty 2000). From the point of view of a companies’ stakeholder, every company has to offer a website that provide the users with the required information (Huang 2003). This has the effect that a website has become an important factor when it comes to the companies’ image, which has to be kept in a good way by supplying the user an interface that is highly usable and will generate a satisfaction of their information needs (Huang 2003). Moreover it has to be considered that "websites provide an organization’s face to the world" (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010, p. 199).

2.1.1. Audience of an academic website

A multiplicity of internal and external audiences is attracted by academic websites. Therefore the university website needs to offer information that is vital for all kind of users, such as current and prospective students, alumni, parents as well as staff and researchers (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010). The content analysis conducted by McAllister & Taylor (2007) identified four main target groups of community college websites: current and prospective students, current and prospective employees, external stakeholders and media. The current and prospective students are interested in the educational content and information about the University, the programmes and courses. Current and prospective employees focus on the quality of the universities’ education as they want to employ skilled staff. The external stakeholders and media are checking the news, events and press releases of the university to be able to make the interesting topics public.

Groneman Hite and Railsback (2010) state that the diversification of the website audience includes both internal as well as external users. Therefore it is essential to identify the audience members and their diverse needs as the age varies and they have different skills in technologies as well as diverse
backgrounds in culture and education (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010).

2.1.2. Information design and information architecture

The content of a website has become more important as users of a website prefer the content of a website in its substance and usability over the glamorous style of a website (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010). The content of the website should be illustrated by graphical images that are related to the content of the web page and are aesthetically pleasing (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010). It should be considered that the loading time of the website is quick and does not take too long time (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010) as the user might change to another page it takes to much time to load the website.

While users explore or search for information in the web, they become the recipients of several different segments of information (Katsanos et al. 2010).

2.1.3. Website navigation

Website navigation allows the user to navigate or surf through a website in a structured way as the different information published and provided on a website are structured in different sectors. The sectors are grouped and the user is able to get easier to the information requested (Katsanos et al. 2010).

Navigation design seems at the first glance very easy, as it appears to be just about linking every page to another to enable the user getting around on the site. But if the developer of a website has a closer look, it is not as easy as it seemed in the beginning. Three simultaneous objectives of navigation design have to be executed for any site. First of all the user has to be able to successfully switch from one point on the site to another one (Garrett 2002). It is not a good idea and even impractical if it is not possible for the user to access every page, as the website might have links that are not visible on every page and additional clicks on specific pages of the website have do be clicked to be redirect to another page (Garrett 2002). That is essentially what Garrett (2002) points out with the statement that it does not make sense "to link to every page from every other page"(Garrett 2002, p. 125).
An effective navigation does not only provide links to other pages in the website, but also give information about the user’s location (Sklar 2009). This is necessary for being able to provide the user with information about on which section they currently are located on the website. This information is useful to avoid that the users’ get lost on the website. The users should be provided with the information of the current page and the content type, where they are located in relation to the rest of the website, and alternative ways to go back to the start page except the back button of the browser (Sklar 2009). In addition, the navigations elements and how they are related to each other need to be communicated and explained in a self-evident way, as it is important that the user recognizes what choices he is able to make (Sklar 2009). Furthermore what might differ them from each other should be visible as well. Moreover "navigation design must communicate the relationship between its contents and the page the user is currently viewing" (Garrett 2002, p. 126). It is of paramount importance that a clear communication about where the user is currently located on the website and which possibilities he has takes place (Garrett 2002).

Effective locations of navigations are based on specific studies about the user behaviour on a website. Tullis (2004) did research in eye tracking and found out that two areas of a website are very important as users look immediately there and spend the most of the time viewing these areas. The navigation of websites is easier if the menus on the whole website are similar located (Davis & Merritt 1998). Pipes (2011) adds that "along the top, under the logo or down one of the side columns" (Pipes 2011, p. 69) are the most logical places to locate a navigation. The study of Tullis (2004) brought out that the users look first to the top of the screen on a horizontal line, followed by a view on the vertical side of a screen.

The following paragraphs give some examples of navigation opportunities and explain what they are and how they can be used. "The menu of links to other pages is a form of navigation, the means by which your users will move around the site" (Pipes 2011, p. 69). The placement of navigation elements in the same positions on each page can help the users to orient quickly to the navigation structure of the website (Sklar 2009). A consistency throughout the website can be accomplished by using the same navigation graphics (Sklar 2009).

"In a complex site, with many levels of navigation, it may be useful to include 'breadcrumbs' to remind the users where they are located within the website"
(Pipes 2011, p. 69). "A navigation 'breadcrumb' is one or more links near the top of the page that show the current page and any pages above it in the site hierarchy" (Sklar 2009, p. 35). "The term 'breadcrumbs' comes from the trail of breadcrumbs left in the woods by Hansel and Gretel in the Grimms' fairytale. They typically appear horizontally across the top of a page, usually below title bars or headers" (Pipes 2011, p. 69). "A navigation 'breadcrumb' shows users where they are in the site" (Sklar 2009, p. 35). Users can click "any of the links in the path to move through the content structure." (Sklar 2009, p. 93). Especially for users who may have arrived from an external website with a link or an entered search term in a search engine from outside the website, can this location device of breadcrumbs be of special effectiveness as it allows to guide them within the entire website (Pipes 2011). 'Breadcrumbs' allow the users to return to a particular section, subsection or to the homepage with one mouse click (Pipes 2011).

Text-based links are often "the most effective and accessible way to provide navigation" on the website (Sklar 2009, p. 94). The advantage of text-based links is that the functionality of the link has no relation to the properly display of images. Links such as "News", "Library" and "Calendar of Events" should be used in University website designs, as they are according to the research of Kang, S. and Norton, H. (2006) used on over 90% of the college and university homepage websites and it is familiar to many users of websites.

The choices presented by the navigation systems need to be communicated in a successful way as well as actually be offered appropriately without occurring any errors (Garrett, 2002). The usability of a website can be accomplished by naming the hyperlinks in the navigation in a consistent way such as the title academics for course schedules and catalogues of educational programs and the title admission for application forms and related information to this area (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010).

The information architecture is all about being able to offer a well-structured web site within the multitude of published information in a definite and significant way that is consistent for users (van der Geest 2001). The structure of the site in combination with the decision about the content and design is in many cases interconnected with the look and feel of a web site. "Designing the structure of the site here is referred to as the information architecture, the grouping and ordering of content elements" (van der Geest 2001, p. 68). Users are able to assume the structure of the website just by having a look at the
names of buttons and links of the navigation or the structured content how the information architecture might be built up (van der Geest 2001). Nevertheless a good navigation combined with a clear structured information offer, is the best way for providing information to a user without causing the effect of feeling lost in the labyrinth of the world wide web (van der Geest, 2001).

Both, navigation design and information design, meaning a comprehensive communication of information, are concerned with the wayfinding on websites (Garrett 2002). Wayfinding is a connected term to a good navigation. "Good wayfinding enables users to quickly get a mental picture of where they are, where they can go, and which choices will get them closer to their objectives" (Garrett 2002, p. 134).

2.1.4. Website design

The achievement of an effective design of a website that meets user needs remains to be still a hard objective (Katsanos et al. 2010). The development of usable websites is a challenge and time consuming (Huang 2003). The arrangement and accomplishment of the right interface elements in an easily understandable way on a web site is the main task interface design of websites is dealing with (Garrett 2002).

Website interfaces are designed in a good way and successful, if the user is immediately able to notice which elements and information are important (Huang 2003). The things that are unimportant for a website don't get noticed by the user as it in the best case does not exist at all (Garrett 2002). Therefore users expect on a website interfaces that are familiar to them. This could be the placement of certain functions on particular locations of the website (Huang 2003). As an example could be mentioned that the visitors expect that the main navigation with the websites major categories shows up on a horizontal menu bar at the top of the screen and the secondary navigation in categories on the side of the screen (Huang 2003).

The design process of an interface is a big challenge as the designer has to find out which aspects are not relevant for the user and due to this some design issues have to be reduced in their visibility (Garrett 2002). "A well-designed interface recognizes the courses of action users are most likely to take and makes those interface elements easiest to access and use" (Garrett 2002, p. 120). Several different approaches simplify the way how users get to their goals
exist and are employed by interface design (Huang 2003). It has to be taken in consideration which options will be visible on the first glance when a user enters the web site for the first time (Garrett 2002). For repetitive visits "a system that automatically remembers the options a user selected the last time they stopped by" (Garrett 2002, p. 121) is even better.

This design principles related to hyperlinks should be avoided: using photos as hyperlinks, using other colours than the default colour blue for linked text, using bullet point as links as well as not providing an easy method for getting back to the home page from the linked page (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010). Website developers should check the website if any of these mentioned design principles is used and remove if necessary the hyperlinks of images and bullets since many people tend to ignore or disregard these kind of links (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010).

According to Lengel (2002) the background colours of a website must have a high contrast to the text, this can be accomplished by designing the background in a pale and the text in a dark colour. This principle should be concerned in every case, not just with concerns of the website users age (Lengel 2002). If the design is made of dark background colours and white or pale text, not just the readability for users would decrease but also printing problems would occur (Lengel 2002).

Websites that attempt to the user as being used in an intuitive way, meaning that the user is familiar with the used layouts and the design as it is common on many other websites, website developers have to keep an eye on what their competitors [in this case other website developers of academic websites] are doing and how their design of the websites look like (Huang 2003).

Different kind of input, such as expertise in the knowledge areas of Internet technology, characteristics of hardware, standards in networking, human behaviour as well as aesthetics are needed to develop a successfully website design (Huang 2003).

**2.1.5. Website structure**

If it takes too many clicks to get the information to the audience, such as prospective students or their parents, and what they are searching for they may leave the current website and move to another one (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010). Therefore a website need to be structured in a way that is clear for all users. The content of the website need to be grouped in different
sections with titles and different navigation levels. They have to be well arranged to ensure a good structure of the whole website and an easy usage of the website (Huang 2003).

Coming up with a decision about how information could be presented to the user in an easy and understandable way, is the main task of information design (Garrett 2002). This can be enabled by groupings and arrangements of the information elements in a logical order that is comprehend to the users way of thinking and encourages of their goals and tasks as well (Garrett 2002).

2.2. Website usability

2.2.1. Definition of website usability

The usability of websites may be defined as an attribute of quality that has influence on the easiness of the usage of interfaces (Nielsen 2000). Therefore many design aspects including the features in navigation of websites, their functionality and usefulness of the websites usage have to be considered to imply a good usability (Nielsen 2000).

"Usability includes not only the content and layout of web pages but also how easy it is for a user to navigate through a website" (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010, p. 108). The goal of the usability of a university websites is the consideration of important factors regarding the usage of a website in the point of view of a user. Usability has a main influence on the easy use and successful experience of a user on a website (Huang 2003).

Usability features such as a search engine box and menu items, words that are hyperlinked, are commonly accepted (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010). The usability of menu items is improved not only by their clarity, but also with the users' familiarity with them (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010).

An important requirement for the achievement of usability is manifested in the process of user-centered design which is not easy to conduct as several factors has to be kept into mind such as culture, strategy and technical implications (Bevan 1999).

2.2.2. Influence factors of website usability

The following factors have an influence on the users cognition of the systems easiness in usage. Behaviour, intensity and frequency of using web
technologies depend on the gender of the user, as males are more intense and frequent user than females (Simon & Peppas 2005). It is a totally different approach how designers of the web sites think, see or use web technology designing the websites. Consumers, which have no experience in web design, have a different point of view. Especially website designers don't have to deal with disorientation or navigations problems as they perform in a better way by using fewer hyperlinks and have a more critically analysis of the website than user with any design knowledge (Chevalier & Kicka 2006). Moreover the approaches regarding the usage of web technologies differ between women and men, in the manner of men are searching for information that will deliver enjoyment and women are driven by motives with reference to social aspects (Simon & Peppas 2005). The comprehension of how genders are related to usability and how it differs is an important aspect should not be left behind. The website user have to know how to use websites in an efficient way. It is efficient if they can find the information they were searching for without any help from someone else and in a short time. Therefore the users of websites have to be online in a regular way on different websites to get used to that websites designs differ from each other. The user has to realize that not every website looks the same and offers similar information. It is necessary that the user is able to work with search engines such as Google to be able to get results for the information requested.

It is a logical implication that you gain more knowledge about something the longer or more often you are using it. This outcome also applies to the usage experience of the world wide web (McDonald & Stevenson 1998). A user will be more confident and with less concerns of performing online activities when a belief in knowing and understanding the world wide web does exist (McDonald & Stevenson 1998). The simplicity and usefulness of using the web depends on the assurance of the users, as the focus lies more in the aspects of spending time and effort. Contradicting users with less experience in dealing with online activities, as they don’t use the Internet in a regularly way, have in a result of that more problems in the usage of navigation (McDonald & Stevenson 1998) and might not even know where they can find the information they were searching for by using the web in an effective way.

User expectations are varied by technological developments, which has an influence on how the user is interacting with the website (Vollmer & Precourt 2008). It is important that the users knowledge about the usage of technology should be kept in mind, as it has an influence on the management and design
of the web (Vollmer & Precourt 2008). A lack of confidence in this knowledge area of technology usage affects how the user is participating and it even might be the case that it does not happen at all. Furthermore targets concerning the design such as the satisfaction of a site or the effect that a user is stuck to the site might not occur at any time (Danaher et al. 2006).

2.3. Information management on websites

The organization of information on websites should be arranged in the sense of searchable website design that allows the user to search for information (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010). This fact can be adapted to academic websites as well.

Sandvig and Bajwa (2004) mention that it is common that user have problems to detect and rediscover information on a website. The dissatisfaction of users is based on malfunction of seeking information that is of relevance for them (Nayak et al. 2006). According to Alkindi and Bouazza (2010) the skills of a user to search for information on a website is encouraged by search systems and navigation which are designed in a good way state that "it is important to adopt information architecture in designing and organizing information on academic websites" (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010, p. 50).

2.3.1. Search systems

Search systems are according to Alkindi and Bouazza (2010) of prime importance when it comes to support the users in the process of finding information on a website. According to Rosenfeld and Morville (2002), during the development of search systems the content of a website should be taken into account, as well as the users’ required information and needs what should be contained on the website.

"Academic websites serve students and researchers and, therefore, need search systems to make their sites more accessible and to support users in retrieving information" (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010, p. 53). Furthermore, the accessibility and usability of academic websites can be ensured and increased by adopting the organization and structure of information with an information architecture. In addition to this navigation and search systems should be considered in the design of websites for an effective enhancement of usability and organization of information (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010).
The user should be provided with a search system that includes a list from A-Z to enable a more efficient search and discovering of information (Robertson 2006). Alkindi & Bouazza (2010) add that the A-Z list on academic websites should contain enough links.

"It should be noted that a good website provides users with more than one option for searching with the help of links" (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010, p. 53). This can be implemented by providing users not only with search boxes that contain keywords, but also with many links that are related to the topic that was looked for (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010).

A description of the page as well as keywords, a list with hits of the results of the search list and the opportunity to search on the website should be provided on every single page of the website as this will help the users in the process of requesting information (Nielsen 2000).

The usage of Google for searching for information can have the positive effect that the search will be automatically corrected, if spelling mistakes were made by the user and this will lead to more flexibility of search results (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010). A study executed by Sandvig and Bajwa (2004) found out that websites without search engines and options for searching returned with poor results. Furthermore users can save their time that would have been spent in searching for information by navigating through the hierarchy of menus, if the website offers the opportunity to search with a search engine.

A website that is developed to offer its users services of high quality, should contain search systems, as they are one of the essential systems of website design (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010).

2.3.2. Navigation system

A navigation system helps the users, such as students and researchers to have a better orientation and to find which information on the website is available (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010). Therefore it is of primary importance that the navigation system is designed in a good way that the user is able to get a quick overview of the different sectors of the website and is able deal with the linked sections of navigation on the website.

The navigation system is the most important and prominent component of the website (Rosenfeld & Morville 2002). Search and navigation systems are useful tools for supporting the user during searching and navigating through a
website. Additionally users who have different backgrounds can make use of these systems. It is very important to implement these systems that they are able to retrieve the information they were searching for (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010).

Different navigation systems for websites are possible. Simple navigation systems have hyperlinks disappear when the user is scrolling the page. Basic Global navigation systems have navigations bars. On top of the website are the current also called parent level, on the left side are the child level and on the bottom are the top level navigation bars. The sitemap is located in the top and left part of the website. The location of the search function is on the left side of the website (Webster & Ahuja 2006).

The hierarchical navigation system should be considered when the information on an academic websites has to be organized clearly, as it enables a high accessibility of the websites design (Alkindi & Bouazza 2010).
3. Methodology

This section contains detailed information about how the research will be conducted and reveals the way of collecting the data as well as an explanation about the reasons for choosing the selected research method. Generally, the findings of this study are derived through a quantitative research strategy. The KAU.SE website was analysed and an online survey has been conducted by and distributing them to current exchange students of the Karlstad University. In addition the issues of reliability and validity of this research will be discussed.

3.1. Qualitative research

It is reasonable to use defined research methods to guarantee the best outcome and replicable results that have a high quality. It is important that the researcher decides which approach he will pursue and keep in mind how the data analysis and data collection will be realized and implemented (Robson 2007). Therefore the two different approaches, qualitative and quantitative research, will be explained in the following section.

Qualitative research is a subjective approach to gather information about how people act and what they say (Bryman 2012). Different methods are used for the collection of information in a mainly individual way, such as in focus groups and in-depth interviews (Bryman 2012). The result of the research can be interpreted in many concepts and is dependent on the context of the questionnaire and it is not possible to generalize the findings. The observations takes place in a natural environment and the human behaviour is dynamic, personal, situational and social with a smaller and randomly selected group of participants (Robson, 2007). The reasoning is inductive and dialectic. The aim of the data analysis is to identify patterns, features and themes (Bryman 2012).

3.2. Quantitative research

Quantitative research is a more objective approach and the results of the research can be measured (Bryman 2012). In the quantitative research method data is collected and later on transformed into numbers, which can be tested in an empirical way to prove if a relationship between the different objectives can be found. This offers the possibility to make a conclusion of the gathered data and results of the quantitative approach. Robson (2007) points out that the purpose of the quantitative research approach is to outline numerical data. The
reasoning is deductive and logistic and the nature of observation is under controlled conditions with a larger group of randomly selected participants. The human behaviour can be described as regular and predictable. The aim of the data analysis is to identify statistical relationships (Bryman 2012). This aim can be easily realized as "virtually all fixed design, particularly experiments and surveys, yield such numerical data" (Robson 2007, p. 117) and thus generate results that can be easily evaluated in statistical research.

3.3. Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are both essential for the research and determine the trustworthiness and acceptance of the findings (Robson 2007). Therefore validity and reliability are important issues that need to be taken into consideration by conducting research.

3.3.1. Validity

"Validity refers to whether or not something actually measures what it claims to measure. A measure can be reliable without being valid" (Robson 2007, p. 72). Validity concerns the issue measurement of concepts. The researcher has to make sure they have chosen the correct method to be able to present valid data. Two types of validity can be distinguished – internal and external. Internal validity indicates the structure of the research design and the process of collecting data. External validity is defined as if the results include all possible causal relationships (Shuttleworth 2008) and if generalization is possible (Trochim 2006). Generalization can be enhanced with random sampling or control groups.

3.3.2. Reliability

Reliability deals with the condition if the results of the study are repeatable. Therefore three coefficients ought to be included. First of all the stability of the research should be proved with a repeated conduction of the research method, as it is supposed to deliver the same results any number of times. The results are assumed to be mutually related, as well as without any changes over time (Bryman 2012). "Data collection is reliable if you get essentially the same data when a measurement is repeated under the same conditions" (Robson 2007, p. 71). In contrast, Robson (2007) states that a repetition of a survey is not possible if you have human respondents, as the situation or specific circumstances of the respondent may have changed and will lead to different results. Even if the survey is conducted at a different time to control
whether the results will be the same, the answers of the respondent "may lead to a different answer out of perversity or boredom" (Robson 2007, p. 71).

If the research is conducted by more than one researcher different approaches of dealing with the gained data and performance of the procedure or way of evaluating might occur. This will allocate an inconsistency of the result and reliable findings could not be provided. Moreover the researcher should keep the aim of the study in mind and therefore only indicators that are related to the research should be considered (Bryman 2012).

Reliability can be declared if an alternate survey with equal questions is asked and the results of both versions of the survey deliver the same equal patterns of respondent data (Robson 2007).

3.4. Inspection of the KAU.SE website

The KAU.SE website will be inspected and examined based on the theoretical aspects that were discussed in the Theory. Therefore the KAU.SE website will be analysed in the aspects of the audience of a website, website content, website navigation, website design, website structure and website usability, information management on websites, search systems and navigation systems. The whole inspection of the KAU.SE website will be illustrated with screenshot of the navigation and design elements as well as the structure of the content area.

3.5. Online survey

Conducting a survey was selected as the most suitable research strategy for this issue. "A survey typically involves seeking answers to a number of standard questions from a carefully selected group of people" (Robson 2007, p. 41). The survey approach is very popular as it is easy to carry out but the researcher has to keep in mind that it is more difficult to enhance a survey to a good quality. "In a good survey, the sample selected is representative of the population" (Robson 2007, p. 41).

The following advantages support the decision of conducting a survey. First of all the widespread distribution to many participants (in case of Karlstad University there are 200 current exchange students, state from spring term 2013), especially in the case of an online survey, which will be conducted in this research project, is a highly important aspect and it should be kept in mind that online surveys are supposed to deliver high respondent rates, as
even respondents who are currently not in the country can be reached. This will deliver and enable revealing evaluation results of the research and give answers to the hypothesis (Bryman 2012).

Furthermore the high respondent rate leads to a generalization of the results, which enables one to transfer and associate the situation to the major attitude of the population (Robson 2007).

Defined frameworks and the standardization of surveys allows the participants to answer just the prescribed questions and therefore is an optimal approach for academic research studies as it will carry out a high objectivity and exact results (Bryman 2012). Additionally the time and resources needed for completing data collection and analysing the results can be predicted relatively exactly if a fixed design approach is used (Robson 2007).

Certainly disadvantages also exist of the survey approach and should be taken into account while selecting the most suitable research strategy for the existing issue. Whereas fixed design is an advantage of the survey, it is at the same time a disadvantage as the survey can’t be changed or adjusted once it has been designed and applied. During the process of gathering the data, it is not possible to change anything, which might lead to a problem for the researcher. Additionally the standardization of the questionnaire, for enabling the participation of the general public, can also lead to the issue that the questioning is misleading. Subjective insights into certain kinds of information such as feelings and emotions have to be excluded from the survey, which might be one of the biggest problems (Bryman 2012).

It is difficult to find out how seriously or honestly the participants took the survey. Complex surveys would have a negative effect and consequences on the response rate, that’s why they are not designed in a detailed way with deep insight. Therefore a low response rate should be studiously avoided, as it is difficult to generate reasonable findings out of it (Robson 2007).

3.5.1. Development of online survey questions

The questions of the online survey are based on the goal of the thesis and the research questions. The aspects and issues discussed in the theory part of this paper, which are based on the audience of a website, as well as the content, navigation, design and structure of websites are also included in the development of the online survey. The online survey is an online self-administered questionnaire with close-ended question (Bryman 2012). Closed
questions were used to be able to compare the answers (Bryman 2012). Furthermore they are easier to complete (Bryman 2012). It was created with force-choiced answers as the user can just answer to the questions that were offered (Bryman 2012). Moreover questions with an ordinal scale with seven scales for possible answers were used as well as a few questions with a nominal scale of possible answer. A balanced scale, where the number of positive responses is similar to negative of responses, was used to avoid bias. Neutral statements were used as well, in case that the respondent is not able to decide for one of them, positive or negative (Bryman 2012).

The online survey was developed with the web-based survey tool "Survey & Report" which is offered by the Karlstad University for research projects. This tool is automatically holding the data that was collected. A pre-test of survey by sending it to an unlimited number of people was conducted before the link was officially posted and spread by offering the link of the survey to the respondents. The questions were developed in accordance and with focus on the limitation of this research and due to that the respondents were exchange students at the Karlstad University.

3.5.2. Selection of respondents

Exchange students of the Karlstad University play an important role, as they are one of the target groups when it comes to communication recipients of Karlstad University. Furthermore exchange students are of primary importance when it comes to aspects of internationalization at the Karlstad University. Additionally exchange students are a specific target group regarding the English version of the KAU.SE website, as they come from all over the world and are dependent on the provision of information in English. Therefore the online survey was developed with focus on exchange students who study at Karlstad University as this paper is considered with the usability and information provision of the English version of the KAU.SE website. In the spring term 2013 there were around 200 exchange students at Karlstad University and all of them were selected for the online survey as they are in the target group of the investigation.

3.5.3. Sampling

The survey was distributed through the social media channel facebook. On facebook was a special group just for current exchange at Karlstad University founded where the official link to the online survey was published. The 200
current exchange students are members of this facebook group. This allowed randomly selected respondents. The link to the online survey was published again a few days after the first distribution, to be able to reach a higher respond rate. At the closing moment of the online survey 66 respondents in total were reached.

3.6. Interview with an expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website

Possible issues regarding the website usability of the English version of the KAU.SE website as well as the provision of information in English on the English version of the KAU.SE Website were found out in the empirical part of this thesis. Through the inspection of the English version of the KAU.SE website and the conduction of an online survey with current exchange students of Karlstad University these possible issues were detected. The conduction of an interview with an expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website was made to be able to show another point of view regarding the possible issues that were found in the empirical part of this thesis.

The selection of the interviewee was made in a meeting with a member of the web development team, Claes Asker. He suggested an appointment with the coordinator of the web development team, Kina Nilsson. Therefore Kina Nilsson was contacted via E-Mails and later on an appointment for the interview was set on the 30th of May 2012 in her office.

The questions for the interview were formulated during and after the inspection of the English version of the KAU.SE website and conduction of the online survey with current exchange students of the Karlstad University. This procedure was made on purpose. The results that were delivered through the inspection and the conduction of the online survey included important findings regarding the website usability of the English version of the KAU.SE website as well as the provision of English information on the English version of the KAU.SE website. After the evaluation of the online survey questions trends could be identified and conclusion could be made that could have an impact on the provision of English information on the English version of the KAU.SE website. Based on this results relevant questions could be formulated by the author of this thesis. These questions were asked during the interview with the expert of the web development team from the KAU.SE website.
3.7. Literature studies

The study was mainly based on current journals concerning website usability and website design of academic websites or websites in general. The purpose of reading through the Theory was to gain an advanced level of knowledge in the field of website usability, website design of academic websites and the provision and management of information for students on academic websites. The following databases and service providers of online journals: EBSCO Host, Science Direct, Springer Link, and Google Scholar were reviewed as well.

The distinction of quantitative and qualitative research in the methodology part is based on books. The books were searched with Libris, which is a database of all books that are available in libraries in Sweden and it was mainly used to search for books available at Karlstad University.

Moreover the database ebrary was used as well for accessing books that were relevant and had interesting contents about website usability and website design.

4. Empirical studies

This section of the thesis will contain the results of the used research methods, the inspection of the KAU.SE website as well as the online survey that was send to exchange students of the Karlstad University.

4.1. Inspection of the KAU.SE website

The first part of the research of this paper is based on the inspection of the KAU.SE website. It was important to identify possible issues and mistakes that could affect the usability of the website. Therefore every section of the KAU.SE website was explored by a detailed inspection of the different design elements and website structures as well as the navigation.

4.1.1. Navigation structure

The main navigation of the KAU.SE website is presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Main navigation of the KAU.SE website](image-url)
The main navigation of the Karlstad University website (KAU.SE) is composed of five navigation points: "KAU.SE", "EDUCATION", "FUTURE STUDENT", "CURRENT STUDENTS" and the "LIBRARY".

In figure 2 you can see how the visual design of the KAU.SE website really looks like.

![KAU.SE navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website](image)

**Figure 2:**"KAU.SE" navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website

The secondary menu of the navigation consists of navigation sections that are related to the main navigation. Every secondary navigation starts with the navigation point called "start page" which directs the user back to the Start page of the selected main menu navigation point.

Figure 3 shows how the navigation point "Education" in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website looks like.

![KAU.SE navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website](image)

**Figure 3:**"Education" navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website

The secondary navigation of the main navigation point "KAU.SE" involves the elements "Start page", "Research", "External relations", "About the University" and "Contact us". The navigation point "Education" constituted of the elements "Start page", "Explore Student life", "Courses", "Application & Admission" and "Study guidance" in the secondary navigation.

In figure 4 you can see how the navigation point "Future Students" in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website looks like.

![KAU.SE navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website](image)

**Figure 4:**"Future Students" navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website
The "Future Students" secondary navigation points are the following: "Start page", "Explore student life", "Practical information", "Fees & Scholarships", "Swedish academic system" and "Contact us".

In figure 5 it is illustrated how the navigation point "Current Students" in the secondary menu on the KAU.SE website looks like.

Figure 5: "Current students" navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website

The navigation point "Current students" on the main navigation level is separated into the navigation points: "Start page", "New students", "My studies", "Student life", "After completing my studies", "Services" and "IT support" on the secondary navigation.

Figure 6 presents the navigation point "Library" in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website.

Figure 6: "Library" navigation point in the secondary menu of the KAU.SE website

Following navigation points are available on the secondary navigation of the main navigation point "Library": "Start page", "Search", "Borrow", "Write", "Publish", "Researcher Service", "Contact" and "About the library".

In figure 7 it is visualized how the breadcrumbs of the KAU.SE website look like.

Figure 7: Breadcrumbs of the KAU.SE website

Breadcrumbs on the KAU.SE website are directly under the main navigation located and clickable to ensure that the user is able to go backwards in the navigation of the previous pages of the websites hierarchy. The breadcrumb of
the current webpage is designed in bold for a better orientation of the user.

In figure 8 you can see how the navigation sidebar "About the Library" of the KAU.SE website looks like.

![About the library](image)

Figure 8: Navigation sidebar "About the Library" of the KAU.SE website

The static navigation sidebar on the KAU.SE website is located on the left side of the screen. Its navigation points differ depending on which section of the secondary navigation the user is located. It is possible to enlarge the navigation in three levels. The levels differentiate in their colour transparency of grey is visualized in figure 8 above.

The first level "About the Library" is in dark grey, the second one "Library facts and figures" is in medium grey and the last one "The library in figures" is designed in light grey.
In figure 9 illustrates how the sidebar of the start page of KAU.SE of the KAU.SE website looks like.

![Sidebar of KAU.SE website](image.png)

**Figure 9: Sidebar of the KAU.SE start page of the KAU.SE website**

By clicking the search field, a dropdown menu appears with the possibility to choose between different categories offered. These categories are illustrated with screen shots in the Figure 9-11 below.
Figure 10 is presenting how the drop down menu "Organisation" on the sidebar of the KAUSE start page looks like.

Figure 10: Dropdown menu "Organisation" on the sidebar of the KAUSE start page

Figure 11 illustrates how the drop down menu "Organisation" on the sidebar of the KAUSE start page looks like.

Figure 11: Dropdown menu "Search for" on the sidebar of the KAUSE start page

Figure 12 is presenting how the drop down menu "Organisation" on the sidebar of the KAUSE start page looks like.

Figure 12: Dropdown menu "Go to" on the sidebar of the KAUSE start page

Additionally important links of the whole KAUSE website are provided, which are the academic calendar, application and admission, diploma supplement, ECTS information package, fees & scholarships, International office, Karlstad Business School.
In figure 13 you can see how the sidebar of the EDUCATION start page of the KAU.SE website looks like.

Figure 13: Sidebar of the EDUCATION start page of the KAU.SE website

The sidebar on the "EDUCATION" start page of the main navigations offers the same search fields as the sidebar on the start page of KAU.SE with "Undergraduate programmes", "Graduate programmes" and "Select course inv. The logo of the ECTS Label is added below to show the user that the Education of the Karlstad University was twice certified from the European Commission. "Doctoral studies", "How to apply", "Fees and scholarships", "Language requirements", and "Swedish academic system" are important links that are provided on the Start page below the search fields.

Figure 14 is presenting how the sidebar of the FUTURE STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website looks like.
The sidebar of "FUTURE STUDENTS" is adapted to information and links that may be interesting for prospective students. Therefore links regarding the Education are offered by providing search fields "Undergraduate programmes", "Master's programmes" and "Select course in", where students who are interested in studying at Karlstad University can search for different faculties. All the search fields provide drop down menus with selection function.

By clicking the link "Advanced search" the user is linked to a page where more detailed data can be selected for searching for suitable and attractive courses or programmes. Figure 15 is presenting how the "Advanced search" that is linked on the FUTURE STUDENTS sidebar of the KAUSE website looks like.
Figure 15: "Advanced search" linked page of "FUTURE STUDENTS" sidebar link of the KAU.SE website

By clicking the link "Plan your course of study" the user is linked to another advanced search that is illustrated in figure 16.

Figure 16: "Plan your course of study" linked page of "FUTURE STUDENTS" sidebar of the KAU.SE website

The prospective student can select between many different alternatives such as "Discipline", "Term", "Period of study", "Level", "Day/evening", "Mode of study", "Pace of study", "Language of instruction". Results according to the selected preferences and alternatives are listed below the search fields in a table that is sorted in an alphabetical order with the additional information of Credits in the last column on the right side.

In figure 17 you can see how the sidebar of the CURRENT STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website looks like.
In the sidebar of the "CURRENT STUDENTS" Start page of the main navigation a search box is included. By using the search box, the user is able to enter a course or application code and is directly linked to the course portal of the entered code of the course. Additionally search fields "Search course portal" and "Search program" with a dropdown menu of all courses and programmes offered at Karlstad University are positioned. By clicking a course or a program the user is linked to the selected course or rather program portal. Furthermore direct links to "MyPage", a web portal that is individually adapted for students of the Karlstad University. A direct link to "Itslearning", a web-based system for the support of efficient teaching and learning, is offered as well. Moreover the user is provided with a link to "Adobe Connect", a tool that can be used for online meetings and lectures to big audiences, as well as tutorials and workshops. The links "Academic calendar", "Campus map", "Course registration", "Degree certificate" and "Sign up for exam" are provided for current students.
In figure 18 the sidebar of the LIBRARY start page of the KAU.SE website is presented.

Figure 18: Sidebar of the LIBRARY start page of the KAU.SE website

The sidebar on the start page of the "LIBRARY" main navigation level contains under the title "Search for information" the search box "One Search" upon where the user can search the library catalogue for special or requested terms. In the search field "Databases" that can be accessed through the Karlstad University linked and are shown in a list in an alphabetical order. Furthermore a selection of subject guides is possible.

Figure 19 shows the search field "Go to" in the sidebar of the LIBRARY start page of the KAU.SE website.
Additionally the search field "Go to" provides the user with links to "E-books", "Search Engines", "RefWorks", "Student theses", "Newspaper", "English language support" and "Books and Library catalogs".

Moreover links to "Journals A-Z" as well as "LIBRIS", the search catalogue of available books in Libraries in Sweden, and "Dictionaries" are provided to the user. The link "Search assistance" offers contact information of the library staff. Furthermore a "Map of the Library" is external linked to "Wagner Guide" and offers the user information about how the Karlstad University library is organized and even a animated map that shows the user where the requested book is located. The possibility that the user if directly linked to the Facebook page "Karlstad Universitetsbibliotek" of the Karlstad Universities’ Library is offered.
4.1.2. KAU.SE website structure and design

The website structure of the KAU.SE website differs depending on which level of the website the user is located. Therefore the different start pages of every navigation level were examined in a detailed way. The website design is implemented and based on a defined grid structure. First of all the structure of every start page of the different main navigation points were inspected. The design grid of the KAU.SE Website is illustrated in figure 20.

![Design grid of the KAU.SE start page](image)

**Figure 20: Design grid of the KAU.SE start page**

It was detected that the grid is based on six subdivisions that are portioned in a large image on the top left side and below the image are on the left side a smaller picture, followed by a text box with link with two pictures and one text link implemented. On the right side is a sidebar located which allows the user to navigate through the whole website as it includes several search boxes, search fields and links that can normally be found on different pages on the secondary level of the navigation but are unified at this place. The grid of the KAU.SE is illustrated with red boxes in the figure 20. This was made for a better visualization of the grid.
Figure 21 presents the look of the KAU.SE start page.

![KAU.SE Start Page](image)

**Figure 21: KAU.SE start page of the KAU.SE website**

The KAU.SE start page is designed with a large image illustrated of two students with the text "Welcome to Karlstad University" and two smaller pictures showing the study environment. Moreover links to "Courses and Programmes" as well as "Tuition fees and scholarships" are offered. The sidebar and its functions were already explained earlier in this paper in the website navigation section.

In figure 22 it is presented how the EDUCATION start page of the KAU.SE website looks like.
Figure 22: EDUCATION start page of the KAU.SE website

The KAU.SE start page and the EDUCATION start page have some specific elements in common. Especially the lower part of the screen includes exactly the same pictures and links as the start page of "KAU.SE". The sidebar on the right side is already explained earlier in the paper in the website navigation section.

Figure 23 illustrates the FUTURE STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website.

Figure 23: FUTURE STUDENT start page of the KAU.SE website
The design of the "FUTURE STUDENT" content page consists of a large image of students in the upper section and two smaller pictures in the lower one. Furthermore, links about "Application and admission" as well as "Campus pictures" are available. The sidebar on the right side of the content page was already explained earlier in this paper in the website navigation section.

There are also sidebars included on every start page of the main navigation levels. They are located on the right side of the screen. They mainly include important search functions or links of the respective webpage section. The sidebar belongs to both, website navigation, as it is a navigation element by which the user is able to navigate by clicking the links or search fields and search boxes throughout the website, and website design, as the sidebar is a design element as well. As the functionality is of primary importance due to the topic website usability of this paper, the detailed explanation will follow in this website navigation section.

In the sidebar of the KAU.SE start page has the user the opportunity to search in the search fields below the Headline "Find Education" for Information about Undergraduate and Graduate Programmes and Courses. Furthermore, beneath the title "Find on the Website" the search fields "Organisation", "Search for" and "Go to" are added which are mainly connected to all search fields available on the whole KAU.SE website.

In figure 24 the CURRENT STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website is presented.

![Figure 24: CURRENT STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website](image)
The start page of CURRENT STUDENTS presented in figure 24 contains a large image of the library in the upper part and two smaller pictures in the lower part of the page. Additionally links to the "IT Support" and the "Course portal" are available. The navigation bar on the right side of the page was already explained earlier in this paper in the section website navigation.

Figure 25 shows how the LIBRARY start page of the KAUSE website is designed.

![Figure 25: LIBRARY start page of the KAUSE website](image)

The "LIBRARY" start page presented in figure 25 is designed with a large image of the library in the upper part of the page and an illustrated link designed in a yellow box with direct link to the "Researcher service" as well as links to "Bibliometrics" and "Students with disabilities" as well as "Talking books". The sidebar is placed on the right side of the page and was already explained earlier in this paper in the section of website navigation. In the bottom part of the page current links are offered which are interesting for students titled with "News", "FAQS", and "Links".
The content page of "External relations" on the "KAU.SE" navigation level of the KAU.SE website is represented in figure 26.

Figure 26: Content page "External relations" on the "KAU.SE" navigation level of the KAU.SE website

The content pages of the second level navigation are designed in another grid than the start pages and the structure of them differs therefore as well. For reasons of illustration, random content pages of the different second navigation level of each main navigation point were selected to show how the content design looks like throughout the KAU.SE website. The grid is of the content pages is based on three subdivisions that are portioned in the navigation sidebar on the left side of the page, the content text in the middle and a picture as well as either a search box or links or both below the image on the right side of the page.

"External relations" is the title of the content page on the KAU.SE main navigation level has in the middle content area just text as an input and no further links. On the right side a picture is placed and below is a search field located where the user can search for information about the staff.
In figure 27 the content page "Programmes" on the EDUCATION navigation level of the KAU.SE website is illustrated.

![Programmes screenshot](image)

**Figure 27:** Content page "Programmes" on the "EDUCATION" navigation level of the KAU.SE website

The EDUCATION main navigation level presented in figure 27 offers the content page "Programmes". In the middle context area it differs from pure text content pages as a list with direct links is added under the title "Interest areas of degree programmes". Furthermore the search fields "Undergraduate programmes", "Master’s programmes" and "Select course in" with dropdown menu are added to enable the user to find information about Education. On the right side a picture is places as well as direct links "Programmes in English" and "Study programmes 2013-2014" illustrated in colour. Below these direct links shortcuts, which are direct links as well, "Application and tuition fees" and "Plan your course of study" are located and offer the user a faster way to get the information about this topics.
Figure 28 represents the content page "Courses offered in English" on "EDUCATION" navigation level of the KAU.SE website.

Figure 28: Content page "Courses in English" on the "EDUCATION" navigation level of the KAU.SE website

"Courses offered in English" is the title of the content page in the EDUCATION main navigation level presented in figure 28. It is designed in a different way than other content pages as all the courses offered in English at the undergraduate and Master's level are listed by the discipline in an alphabetical order in the content area. On the right side is a picture and direct links to "Programmes taught in English" and "Plan your course of study" located. Furthermore a search box is added below where the user can enter search terms for getting result in Education. Additionally a link to the "Advanced search" and again "Plan your course of study" are offered.
The content page "Explore student life" in the FUTURE STUDENTS section presented in figure 29.

Figure 29: Content page "Explore student life" on the "FUTURE STUDENTS" navigation level of the KAUSE website

The content page "Explore student life" in the FUTURE STUDENTS section presented in figure 29 is composed of pure text in the content area and a picture on the right side of the page with a direct link "Click here for campus pictures" added below.
The main navigation CURRENT STUDENTS offers the content page "Services", illustrated in figure 30.

![Figure 30: Content page "Services" on the "FUTURE STUDENTS" navigation level of the KAU.SE website](image)

In the content page "Services" presented in figure 30 is a movie about Fire protection is linked in the content area and on the right side of the page a picture is placed as well as a direct link to the "IT support".
"Search" is one of the content pages that is offered by the LIBRARY main navigation. How it looks like is presented in figure 31.

![Search](image.jpg)

**Figure 31: Content page "Search" on the "LIBRARY" navigation level of the KAU.SE website**

The content of the page "Search" contains a search field "One Search", where the user can search the whole Karlstad University library catalogue for search terms, as well as direct links to "Books", "E-books", "Databases" and "Journals" which are resources that are offered by the Karlstad University for research studies.

The background colour of the whole KAU.SE website is hold in a colour gradient from the corporate colour yellow on top of the website till white on the bottom. The logo of the Karlstad University is placed on the left side on top of the website in the header area and is clickable and directly links the user to the start page of the website. Furthermore different transparent background pictures, which are selected depending on which navigation section of the main navigation was selected, are showed in the header of the KAU.SE website. The background picture is partly clickable as well (until the quick links) and is linking the user directly to the start page of the website.
Figure 32: Background picture header of "KAUSE" of the KAUSE website

In the background picture of "KAUSE" presented in figure 32 shows an image of the study environment at Karlstad University. The KAUSE page contains mainly information about the Karlstad University and therefore it is recommended to present the user parts of the University environment.

Figure 33: Background picture header of "EDUCATION" of the KAUSE website

The background picture of the "EDUCATION" illustrated in figure 33 shows a student. The section EDUCATION is an informative source for all kind of information about the education at Karlstad University for students and it is good to connect this section with an image of a student.

Figure 34: Background picture header of "FUTURE STUDENT" of the KAUSE website

The background picture of the "FUTURE STUDENTS" presented in figure 34 shows two students who seem to plan their studies. As the FUTURE STUDENTS section is an informative source for all kind of information that is useful for students who want to start their studies at Karlstad University, the connection in this section with an image of students in a planning process makes sense.

Figure 35: Background picture header of "CURRENT STUDENTS" of the KAUSE website
The background picture of the "CURRENT STUDENTS" presented in figure 35 shows two students in the Karlstad University library. As the CURRENT STUDENTS normally spend a lot of time in the library to study either on their own or in groups with course mates, it makes sense to connect this section with an image of students in the library.

Figure 36: Background picture header of "LIBRARY" of the KAU.SE website

The background picture of the "LIBRARY" presented in figure 36 shows the same image as the "KAU.SE section" in figure 32, the study environment of the Karlstad University. It is not logical why this connection was made as an image of the Karlstad University library would make more sense than another building.

4.1.3. Quick links

The quick links "Search staff", "Customize" and "På svenska" are located on the header of the KAU.SE website and are clickable, illustrated in figure 37.

Figure 37: Quick links in the Header of the KAU.SE website

"Search staff" links to a catalogue of the Karlstad University staff, "Customize" allow an adjustment of the website interface in the font size and "På svenska" is connected to a function to switch the language to Swedish.

4.1.4. Search box in the main navigation

The search box is located on the right side of the main navigation of the KAU.SE website. Figure 38 presents how the search box in the main navigation of the KAU.SE website looks like.

Figure 38: Search box in the main navigation of the KAU.SE website
The search box is blank without any textual instructions or suggested search term. A button designed in red with a loupe indicates the go for the start of the search. It is clickable, but the user can also just press his enter button on the keyboard, which has the same effect as clicking the button.

4.1.5. Footer

The footer of the KAU.SE website is located on the bottom of the website and has a stable and defined design that does not change during the whole interaction of users with the website. Figure 39 illustrates how the Footer of the KAU.SE website looks like.

Figure 39: Footer of the KAU.SE website

As illustrated in figure 39, on the left side of the Footer the contact information of the Karlstad University in general with details of the address, phone number and e-mail address. Furthermore clickable links named "Contact us", "Maps and communication", "About the website" and "Contact webmaster" is presented. The footer shows a template "Contact us" that can be filled out by the user for getting into contact, are placed in the middle of the Footer. On the right side of the footer the social media logos of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are placed and link the user by clicking directly to the particular Karlstad University profile on these social media channels.

The inspection of the KAU.SE website was contributed to get an advanced knowledge of the different navigation sections of the main and second level navigation with their linked content pages and images. It allowed the author of this thesis to get to know the structure, design and information provision of the KAU.SE website as well as proving if the website usability of the KAU.SE website is appropriate.
4.2. The results of the online survey of exchange students at Karlstad University

The online survey was distributed to 200 current exchange students at Karlstad University, the freemovers and students from other universities abroad were included as respondents of this online survey. In total, 66 respondents were received. This part of the thesis will include excerpts of the results that were usable, as not all respondents answered all questions.

Starting with the gender characteristics, the questionnaire was completed by 30 females (45.5%) and 36 males (54.5%).

Respondents were also required to define the length of their studies in Karlstad University. Over one half of them have been enrolled for only 1 semester. The rest has either stayed for 2 semester (30.8%) or participate in full Bachelor or Master program (15.4%).

Furthermore, results showed that the design of the university website is considered 'important' or 'very important' by 51.5% of the respondents when selecting an University for their abroad semester. In contrast, 24.2% disclaimed the importance of this factor for their decision making (see Appendix B).

The students could also define which of five design characteristics of the university webpage they like. This multi-response questions obtained a total of 170 entries. In general, no significant differences were found between the elements. However, the "Possibility to switch language" gained the highest share of 45 responses.

By using a 5 rank scale, respondents could value the importance of a number of factors for the choice of university during their semester abroad. Overall, the distribution graphs of the variables are positively skewed e.g. most of the responses are spread in the high end of the scale. The ratings of the "courses offered in English" were rather unified and therefore they were regarded as very important by 78.8% of the students (see Appendix C).

Another important aspect is the quality of education and the accommodation. In comparison, the ranking of the university does not seem to be as considered when choosing between different options.
The students were given a higher number of possible answers regarding the comparison of the information provided on the KAU.SE website with other university websites. The positive replies surpass significantly the negative ones (77.4% compared to 9.1%) the rest have decided on the suggested neutral response and indicated that the available information neither exceeds nor falls behind their expectation.

52 of the respondents could find fast the information they need on the website during their first visit on the webpage or think the time they needed was appropriate.

The reasons for visiting the KAU website are various. Students could indicate several of them when asked what kind of information they obtain from the KAU website. Their results show that most often students look for information about their courses or log in "My Page" or "It’s Learning". Additionally, a significant number of respondents use the webpage to check exam dates or access the course portal.

Results show that 71.2% of the students are able to find the information they need in the first trial most of the time. No one of them indicated that they have to use the search field or they can never find the information at first.

Students were asked how often they come across results in Swedish when using the English version of the website. The most common answer contributing to 42.2% of the responses was "sometimes". Together with the other replies showing higher frequency of such cases they amount to 73.4%. (see Appendix D).

Regarding the different sections of the website, respondents admitted of visiting most often KAU.SE, Current student and Library with Current student showing slightly higher results.

Respondents could also express their opinion about the contents of multiple subsections of the KAU website. On the whole, they find that enough information is provided in most of them. The exceptions in this case are "Student life" and "External relation" links where higher amount of respondents consider that improvement by increasing the amount of information could be done. Some of the students think that "Study guidance", and "Academic calendar" also do not provide sufficient information.
Respondents were asked to evaluate a number of statements regarding the content and functionality of the website. The results demonstrated that their opinions unify in several of the aspects. First, a significant number of students (45 out of 63) pointed out that they would be willing to attend events if the information about that was not only provided in Swedish but also in English. Furthermore, 45 of them chose the "strongly agree" or "agree" option as a response to the statement that the information in Swedish is more comprehensive and detailed than the one in English. Another language aspect that gained high results of positive answers was the problem that the language setting that was selected in English automatically switch to Swedish whenever the user is linked to another page or logged in on MyPage. This circumstance find students annoying as they have to adjust the language setting again in English to get information provided in English and not in Swedish. In addition, 85.7% of the respondents expressed their agreement with the statement referring to the value of providing the option to save the language settings at the first visit of the website for future visits. Nevertheless, over the half of the respondents did not agree that the webpage structure is illogical and they are not able to locate what they are looking for. On the contrary, over half of them actually supported another statement showing that they do not experience difficulties finding information.

However, (46.8 % of the respondents) 9 respondents strongly agreed and 20 agreed that they find the issue of returning to the homepage while performing a search for information annoying as that causes them to start from the beginning again.

In the following paragraph a short summary of the most important results of the survey will be listed.

1. The possibility to switch the language is highly appreciated by current exchange students. For gaining a higher satisfaction the language setting need to be fixed as at the moment it is not stable selected for future visits or log-in action on the KAU.SE website.

2. The issue of returning to the homepage while searching for specific information is annoying for the users and need to be fixed.

3. Information about current events at Karlstad University should be announced not only in Swedish but also in English. This will give exchange
students the chance to get information about events as well and the opportunity to attend these events.

4. The navigation title "External relations" is irritating for the users. It could help to re-name the title to "Collaborations" to make it more clear what kind of information is connected with that title.

4.3. The results of the interview with the web development expert

This part will include some excerpts of the interview questions and answers with the KAU.SE web development team coordinator Kina Nilsson. The results of the interview are referred to the transcript of the interview. The transcript of the interview includes a detailed version of the questions asked in the interview with the answers stated and is available in Appendix E.

As Kina Nilsson is daily working among other tasks with the structure of the KAU.SE website, she is an expert of the KAU.SE website who will show another point of view regarding website usability of the KAU.SE website and provision of information in English on the KAU.SE Website.

Kina explained that the structure of the KAU.SE Website was built up 5 years ago by an external source, when the new website was launched. Regarding the different levels, "Education", "Future Student", "Current Student" and "Library" in the main navigation, Kina\(^1\) stated that: "We [the web development team] tried to have it in one place that the KAU.SE website is good for different students. The library was not on the site from the beginning – for about a year ago the library was moved to the main navigation. A lot of students complained that the library should be in the main navigation as they are using it often and also the library staff persisted that the library section should be more present."

This paragraph contains statements about the structure and website design of the KAU.SE website. Kina stated that "The structure [on the content start pages] is like a grid with a main picture as an eye catcher as we learned that people like to see pictures as they want to know how it looks like. The pictures have a high quality and a nice atmosphere. We haven’t been photographing by our own here. We had a person outside the house who has been taking all the pictures for us. All of the people you can see on the photos are students from

\(^1\) Kina Nilsson KAU.SE web development team, interview on the 30\(^{th}\) of May 2013.
the university." Regarding the question, how the decision was made where to put which picture, Kina stated that "we don't buy so many photos, only 10 till 15 a year. So they have to fit everywhere somehow. It is more like it is supposed to have a warm and nice atmosphere. The pictures are sometimes related to the content, but it is really difficult to have pictures that are related to the content all the time. So mostly it is the students from here we have on all the pictures or the surroundings here. Additionally Kina stated that "the header includes fixed pictures and we can't change it. The photos in the content can be changed as we want. The sidebar on the right side with it search fields is fixed and we need help from outside to change it as it is possible but more difficult.

Kina stated "the main target group of the website is mainly Swedish. As you can see that there is a lot of more information offered in Swedish than in English. The English version is more compressed, the most important things are available in English."

Kina stated "we [the web development team] think that the quality of the English version of the KAUSE it is okay. But we really know that we need to be better and we need more persons who are working with this. We are too few persons and there are so many other things that we are supposed to do. But it is very important to hear this [complaints] from you and other current exchange students so that I can go to my boss again and tell him that we have to work on this. Of course, we need to be better. We think it is okay but not more. But it is a matter of time and money. Yes, we are interested in doing it, but we didn't really get the persons to do it."

The question, if already some complaints regarding the English version of the KAUSE website of exchange students reached the web development team, was pointed out. Kina stated that "there have been some complaints from exchange students as sometimes it is difficult to find things and we haven't really have so much stuff that have been working on the English version of the KAUSE website. So the information is very general, but we will try to make it better." The content of the English version is not identical with the amount of information available in Swedish. It would be interesting to get to know how the decision was made which pages will be built up in English. Kina stated that "we [the web development team] used the most frequent questions. For the international students they had the International Office they could help them. But we need to build this pages better. The focus was mostly exchange students as a target group of the English website. General
information about fees and scholar ships and those kinds of questions that were mostly asked to the International Office were put on the English website. The International Office did the English version of the website in cooperation with the web development team. It is the international office and it's about two persons of the web development team, me and two of my colleagues, who can help them sometimes working on the English version of the website. But we are very few and we haven't got time to work with it. But the international office employed new staff who will be working on it. They are just updating the information we have there today and if there is something that is missing they ask us to builds more sites as there is just very general information available in English." The main calendar, news and events is available in Swedish but not in English. The international students didn’t know when some events were happening at the Karlstad University as they didn’t get the information in English. Kina stated "we have a person who is translating everything we have. The web development team is willing to put more information in English but it is really all a matter of money and time."

The author of this thesis pointed the question if the web development team had a look at the accessibility of the website when the KAU.SE website was built. Kina stated that "we had people outside the university that did everything for us. And the person who made this was the person who made the website 5 years ago. She had been doing all this together. In the Swedish version is the function "talande Web" available, in the English version it is not offered. Is it possible to offer it in English, too? Kina stated that "it is possible to offer but even this function is a matter of money as it is another system and we have other programs that translate it. So we just have it in Swedish, unfortunately."

This paragraph contains statements about the website usability of the KAU.SE website. The problem of disorientation of users due could be based on the missing indication of the current location of the user. In the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website it is indicated in a red colour on which second navigation level the user currently is located. This indication was not implemented on the English version of the KAU.SE website. Kina stated that "it is actually a mistake that no indication is made. This is not supposed to be like that and need to be changed."

There are eight fields on the site where the user has many options to select. Regarding to my online survey this was for almost all of the students too much
information on one site and the users were irritated what to choose. Kina stated that "the purpose of the advanced search was that everything is on one site, to show that the university has to offer many different educational options. But it is true that if everything is on one site it might be irritating that the user does not know where to start."

The author of this thesis pointed the question if usability tests have been conducted with the English version of the website or just with the Swedish version. Kina stated "I think when they did all the tests five years ago they also tested the English version. So they did it at the beginning before it was launched as they wanted to know how it works. We haven’t had any test since that to check how it works. This [web development] department is responsible for usability test and we did a lot of testing in the beginning on the Swedish site but we haven’t done it lately."

Possible issues of the search systems on the KAU.SE website are mentioned in this paragraph. The quicklink of an index titled "A till Ö" in the header of the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website allow the users to search in an easier way for specific terms on the website. This quicklink is not available in the header of the English version of the KAU.SE website. Kina stated that "It is made in purpose as the English sites were very few in the beginning, but we should have it in English, too as it is easier to find specific search terms directly in the index. Yes it would make sense to put it there as well". Normally a predefined search term is already set in search boxes or search fields to illustrate the users what kind of information could be searched for. There is no predefined search term in the search field on the main navigation. Kina stated that "the search box in the main navigation is supposed to be empty as you can search for everything on this page as it is a Google Search field. The other search fields are just on the website." In the LIBRARY section there are search fields placed on both places, the sidebar navigation and in the content. Kina stated that "The library is a bit different from the rest of the website as it is a lot of more searching, such as the literature. The library has built up their site on their own with the help of Claes Askar, another person here in the web development department. So they are following their own structure quite well."

This interview with the expert Kina Nilsson of the web development team of the KAU.SE website summed up that the main target group of the KAU.SE website are the Swedish students. The English version of the KAU.SE website is a compressed version with general and the most important information that
were selected from frequently asked question the International Office of the Karlstad University. The web development team is interested in improvements of the English version of the KAUSE website and welcome complaints regarding the English version of the KAUSE pointed out from current exchange students. At the moment there were not enough people working on the English version of the website. It is a matter of time and money to increase the quality and content of the English version of the KAUSE website.
5. Discussion

This part of the thesis will discuss the results of the empirical studies of part of this thesis. The empirical part included the inspection of the KAU.SE website, an online survey that was conducted with current exchange students at Karlstad University, and an interview with an expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website.

Possible issues regarding the website usability of the KAU.SE website were detected in the empirical part of this thesis. Particularly the inspection of the English version of the KAU.SE website and the interview with the expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website enabled a perceptiveness of possible issues that could have an influence on the website usability of the KAU.SE website.

The usability of the website could be increased with a well-designed interface that enables the users to perform in a better way whereas the eased behaviour of usage will generate a satisfaction of the users information needs (Huang 2003). This quality can be achieved by the web development team of the KAU.SE website within the accomplishment of few changes in the interface. The general structure of the KAU.SE website was examined within the inspection of the KAU.SE website as well as during the interview with the expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website.

The start pages of every main navigation level: "KAU.SE", "EDUCATION", "FUTURE STUDENT" and "CURRENT STUDENT" have the same structure. The start pages of the whole KAU.SE website are based on a defined grid structure. The grid is based on six subdivisions that are portioned in a large image on the top left side and below the image are on the left side a smaller picture, followed by a text box with link with two pictures and one text link implemented. Due to the fact that just around 10 to 15 new images per year are bought by the web development team to illustrate the KAU.SE website, it is difficult to choose pictures that really fit to the content of the KAU.SE website in all cases.

On the right side of the start pages is a sidebar located which allows the user to navigate through the whole website as the sidebar includes a drop down menu with several search boxes, search fields and links. Kina Nilsson, the expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website explained that the links used in the sidebar are the mainly used sites of the specific navigation
section. For example on the "CURRENT STUDENT" navigation level, the sidebar includes the mainly sites used which are "My Page", ItsLearning", "Adobe Connect" and "Student email". The sidebar links are not fixed and could partly be adjusted by the web development team on their own.

The user is not aware of the fact that the search box in the main navigation is an integrated Google Search. This fact was discovered during the interview with an expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website. The additional adding of a predefined search term in the search box in the main navigation is recommended as there is currently no predefined search term placed. The adding of a predefined search term could help to avoid that the user gets irritated or unsure whether the search term is formulated in the right way or it is even possible to search for this specific kind of with this search box in the main navigation.

The placement of an index in the header on top of the KAU.SE website would simplify the search for information on the KAU.SE website for the user as well. This index in the header is already implemented as a quick link named "A till Ö" in the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website. This quick link is not implemented in the English version of the KAU.SE website. Therefore it should be added as the user of the English version of the KAU.SE website should have the same opportunities to search for information as a student who is able to use the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website. For this reason an "index from A to Z" should be added in the English version of the KAU.SE website as well. This also refers to Robertson (2006) who pointed out that every user should be provided with a search system that includes a list from A-Z to enable a more efficient search and discovering of information.

Due to the statement of Alkindi & Bouazza (2010, p. 53) that "Academic websites serve students and researchers and, therefore, need search systems to make their sites more accessible and to support users in retrieving information", the search field in the main navigation of the KAU.SE website should contain a predefined search term to simply the user which part of the website can be used and what kind of information needs to be entered in the search field to get the results that are requested.

The web development team should provide an option whereby the language settings can be saved at the first visit of the website and is maintained for future visits. This is at the moment not possible and the especially users such
as international exchange students who are not able to read information in Swedish are dependent on the English information of the KAU.SE website. In general the possibility to switch the language to English was considered by 45 respondents of the current exchange students as a very important part of the website design which need to be improved.

The issue is that the language setting is not stable. If the user selected English, the setting is not saved for future visits.

Furthermore the problem appears that if the user selected English and logged into "My Page" the language is automatically set to Swedish and has to be changed to English again. The dissatisfaction of current exchange students due to an unstable language setting should be avoided and could be decreased by a stable language setting. The option to save language settings on the KAU.SE website for future visits was agreed by 85.7% of the 66 respondents of the current exchange students in the online survey. Especially when the language was set in English it should not be the case that Swedish content is appearing, as was stated by exchange students in the online survey. Five of the respondents stated Swedish pages are appearing as very often, 15 often and 27 sometimes, which will lead up to 73.4 % of the 64 respondents who answered this question.

The navigation structure of the KAU.SE website is implemented in a hierarchical website navigation. This allows the user to get an overview which sections are available on the website by putting them in the main navigation. The secondary navigation should include subsections that are subordinated from the main navigation sections. This is implemented like that on the KAU.SE website. It has to be mentioned that the usability of the website could be improved by indicating the current location of the user in the secondary navigation level. This has been implemented in the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website but not in the English version. Otherwise it might happen that the user feels lost it is not indicated on which section of the secondary navigation level he currently is located.

One of the principles of Web Design according to Sklar (2009) is based on the circumstance that the user recognizes what choices he is able to make at the first glance. This effect is totally fulfilled on the KAU.SE website due to the fact that the main navigation provides different sections that are adapted to the main purpose of the Karlstad University, which is the education of students. As Sklar (2009) points out that it is important that the navigation
structure is consistent throughout the whole website by putting the navigation elements on each page on the same position. This was fulfilled by the Karlstad University website. An effective navigation does not only provide links to other pages in the website, but also gives information about the user’s location (Sklar 2009). For that reason the current location of the user on the KAUSE website should be indicated with an indication of a coloured visualization in the second level navigation as this is not implemented, yet.

The students mentioned in their comments that they got lost during their first visit of the KAUSE website in the Advanced search of "Plan your studies". The reason is that there were too many variables in search boxes offered that can be selected which was irritating for the users.

The website design should include colours and images which address the target groups. Colours and images are esteemed as an attractive appearance due to the fact that the content of the website should be illustrated by graphical images. Furthermore the images should be related to the content of the web page and are aesthetically pleasing (Groneman Hite & Railsback 2010). The design of the KAUSE website was by more than half of the respondents considered as an important factor. The respondents replied that the design had an effect on their decision making of choosing a suitable University for their stay abroad. Therefore the original and interesting website design and sufficient content are the crucial elements in order to attract the potential students’ interest.

The lacks of provision of information in English for current exchange students on the English version of the KAUSE website were identified in the empirical part of this thesis as well. Especially the results of the online survey that was conducted with current exchange students of the Karlstad University, gave insights which sections on the English version of the KAUSE website could be improved, as there is a lack of information provided in English.

Websites are an important method for communication (Esrock & Liechty 2000) and this is also the case for the Karlstad University as user all over the world can be reached through the website, it is assumed to be an effective way of information provision (Huang 2003) which has an effect on the image of the university through the appearance of the website.

Regarding the content of a website, it has to be kept into consideration which parts of the website are important and relevant for the audience (Groneman
Hite & Railsback 2010). The main purpose of a university is the proposition of education. Therefore the provision of information regarding the selection of courses offered in English, need to be kept in a current status and possible variations in the offering of courses in English need to be conducted. This update of educational information is necessary as it was indicated as the most important aspect in the decision making process of a suitable University for the future exchange students stay abroad.

All information in English should be the same as the one provided in Swedish. This applies mainly to the event information and also to the news feed in the course portals. It considers as well all menus with their much more limited provision sidebar links in the English version of the website. Therefore the goal of the KAU.SE web development team should be a mirror-inverted academic website that offers for every page that is provided in Swedish an equivalent page in English.

Karlstad University emphasizes Internationalization as one of the most important aspects of its strategy to evoke interest of potential exchange students should have the same value.

Please have a look at chapter "7. Recommendations" for more explicit illustrations and problem solving suggestions as it will illustrate in a more precise way solutions for the research questions. It will mention which specific elements of the English version of the KAU.SE website need to be adjusted to increase the website usability of the English version of the KAU.SE website. Furthermore it will be explained which information need to be provided in English on the English version of the KAU.SE website.
6. Conclusion

The research questions: "Which elements on the English version of the KAU.SE website could be adjusted and improved to ensure a better website usability?" and "How could the provision of information for current exchange students of the Karlstad University be extended?" could be answered especially within the empirical part of the thesis.

The empirical part included an inspection of the English version of the KAU.SE website regarding the website usability and website design. Furthermore an online survey with current exchange students of the Karlstad University was conducted. Additionally an interview with an expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE website was performed to be able to show another point of view regarding the website usability and the provision of information on the English version of the KAU.SE website.

Following elements could be adjusted an improved to ensure a better usability of the English version of the KAU.SE website. It should be a predefined search term in the search box in the main navigation implemented to avoid that the user does not know what kind of search term should be entered to get results or correct information delivered. Furthermore the index in the header should be offered as a quick link, as it is already implemented in the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website. This will enable a better quality of search on the whole KAU.SE website as well, as the user is able to choose from a list of A till Z the requested section.

Compared to the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website there a few news and information about events provided, especially in the start pages of the KAU.SE main navigation level sections. This information should be provided as current exchange students do not feel informed in the same way as students who are able to use the Swedish version of the website.

The contact information for university staff is not offered in English. The job titles are announced in Swedish and therefore it is hard for current exchange students to find out if they selected the right contact person.

The table "exams in the next 7 days" is not provided in English. The course names as well as the location of the examination are announced in Swedish. This information is important from educational point of view of the current exchange students as they have to proof their academic knowledge in the examination and therefore have to know where the exam takes place.
The main navigation section named "External relations" is irritating for the user as it is not clear what kind of information is provided in this section. The name in the main navigation could be changed to "Collaborations" on the English version of the KAU.SE website.

The research that was also conducted about the provision of information in the English version of the KAU.SE website delivered many results. The main message obtained is that KAU.SE does not provide the same amount of information in both languages, Swedish and English. This thesis identified the problem and answered the purpose that mainly general information is offered in the English version of the KAU.SE website. That issue was affirmed during the interview with Kina Nilsson, an expert of the web development team of the KAU.SE Website. It was stated that mainly general information or information the International Office of the Karlstad University was mainly asked my exchange students is offered in English. The information provided in English in comparison of the information offered in Swedish on the KAU.SE website is very compressed (see Appendix F and G, where a site map of the English and Swedish Version of the KAU.SE website is attached). This circumstance lead to a feeling of inequity of current exchange students at Karlstad University, as they do not feel treated in the same way. The international students who are not able to read Swedish do not get the same information provided as native students from Sweden. The present state can influence foreign students' experience and opinion at KAU.SE and consequently decrease the image and reputation of the Karlstad University abroad. This evidence is worth to be discussed and findings should be taken into consideration when refining the web content and web design. On one hand it is necessary to keep in mind that students coming for exchange semester might not have sufficient experiences with other university websites outside their home university websites. Thus the outcome of the survey can be influence by their perception about appropriate university website based on their subjective limited experiences.

In conclusion, website usability is a factor that affects the website design of academic websites and have not insignificant influence on all user. In the case of the KAU.SE website has website usability a huge influence especially for the exchange students as a target group. Furthermore the provision of information in English on the English version of the KAU.SE website has to be improved, as mentioned previously in this thesis.
Websites offer the advantage of being accessed all over the world. Therefore it has to be taken in to consideration that the university needs to be presented at her best to enhance the image of the KAU and enable thus stable or even increasing reputation among past, current and especially future exchange students. This can be simply reached through offering balanced information on the website in English.

In the future perspective many issues remain opened and need to be examined within a further research. In this place a website usability test in the usability laboratory equipped with Ozlab, eyetracker, etc., at Karlstad University (www.kau.se/en/ozlab) can be mentioned. The conduction of a website usability test will deliver scientific results about the behaviour of the user with the interface.
7. Recommendations

This part of the thesis will give some explicit recommendations to solve the problems and issues that were found out in the empirical part and added in the discussion and conclusion part of the thesis.

The orientation of the user on the KAU.SE website and that he does not get lost on the website is an issue that has to be kept into mind while dealing with the usability of the KAU.SE website.

Therefore some recommendations of the author of this thesis will be pointed out to the web development team of the KAU.SE website. First of all the secondary navigation is not indicated in any way, except the KAU.SE start page that is illustrated in the figure 40. This can lead to disorientation, followed by dissatisfaction of users, as they do not know on which navigation section they are actually is located. This indication should be adapted all over the KAU.SE website navigation.

![KAU.SE navigation](image)

**Figure 40: Indication of the users current location on the navigation level of the KAU.SE website**

The Swedish version of the website offers the user a list of Index of the whole website by clicking the quick link "A till Ö" in the header see figure 41.

![Swedish website navigation](image)

**Figure 41: Quick links in the header on the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website**

In the English version this quick link is not offered at all and the user has to go a much more difficult way to get the same result: an Index in English about all contents of the KAU.SE website. First the user has to click the link "About this Webpage" in the Footer of the website, and then on the second navigation level the Index "A to Z" is available as a link.

A better way to implement this would be the creation of a quick link in the header of the English version of the KAU.SE website. This can have a positive effect on the search behaviour of the user as it can be seen in the first glance. Otherwise the user might not even know that this Index exists.
The figure 42 is a suggestion where and how the quick link could be implemented.

Figure 42: Quick link "A to Z" suggestion in the header of the KAU.SE website

One big issue that was pointed out by exchange students was the fact that they feel uninformed compared to the information provided in Swedish regarding news and events. In the figure 43 the information offered on the Swedish version of current students is illustrated.

Figure 43: Information on the CURRENT STUDENTS start page on the Swedish version of the KAU.SE website

The issue that exchange students feel not informed enough or in the same way as Swedish students, could be solved by adding important events and news on the English version of the CURRENT STUDENTS navigation level of the KAU.SE website. The figure 44 illustrates how this could be achieved by adding the same structure as the Swedish version and put some important news, a calendar and shortcuts in the lower part of the CURRENT STUDENTS start page. The suggestions are based on changed headlines and
still the links in Swedish below need to be changed in English and information added as well that there is content available in English.

Figure 44: Suggestion of elements on the CURRENT STUDENTS start page of the KAU.SE website

It is of primary importance to offer current exchange students information about their exam dates as this is one of the most important information in the EDUCATION section, due to the fact that the student has to prove his or her knowledge in an examination and the result will influence the educational future of them. The figure 45 shows that at the moment on the CURRENT STUDENTS navigation level in the secondary navigation "My Studies" a content page "Examination" exists that offers on the right side of the page a direct link "Exams next 7 days (in Swedish)". This could be improved by offering a table that is available in English to ensure that the exchange students get the information offered in the right way and language.
Examination

As a way of assessing students' knowledge, most courses conclude with a written exam. There are also other examination formats such as take-home exams, laboratory assignments, seminars and hand-in assignments. You must always sign up for a written exam in advance.

Signing up is done via "My Page" on the web. When you have logged in, you can view your upcoming exam dates. The list is based on your course registrations.

You must sign up for the exam at least 7 days prior to the exam date.

If you have forgotten to sign up, there is a chance for you to sit the exam anyway if registered students fail to turn up within 40 minutes of the scheduled time. Any vacant places will be allocated to unregistered students by a draw of lots the day before 40 minutes are up.

Don't forget to bring a valid photo ID to the examination hall. Students without ID will not be permitted to sit the exam.

If you can't make it

The Department is charged for every pre-booked place in the examination hall. It is very important that you withdraw your registration for the exam if you are prevented from sitting it. Withdrawal can be made via "My Page" up to the signing-up deadline. After this date, you must notify the department secretary of your withdrawal.

Figure 45: Links "Exams next 7 days (in Swedish)" on the KAUSE website

The same problem exists when it comes to the contact information by clicking "Search for Staff" as the job titles of the person is just offered in Swedish and the user may not understand if it is the right person to contact or not. Therefore the job titles should be changed from Swedish into English on the English Version of the KAUSE website.

Additionally the search box in the main navigation should not stay blank as the user is irritated and does not know what to enter or search for. Therefore a predefined term such as "Search the whole site" should be set in the search box to offer information about the purpose of this search box. In the figure 46 shows how the predefined search term in the search box in the main navigation could be implemented.

Figure 46: Suggested predefined search term of the search box in the main navigation of the KAUSE website

Additionally the title "External Relations" in the second navigation is irritating for the current exchange students, as the user might not be able to assume what is meant by this term or totally different assumptions could be made. Therefore the title should be changed to "Collaboration" as it is more clear
defined what can be included in this section, which is illustrated in figure 47.

**Figure 47: Adjustment of the second navigation "External Relations" to "Collaborations" on the KAU.SE website**

Some recommendations were made by the author of this thesis that may are worth changing it, to increase the usability and information provision on the English version of the KAU.SE website which could have effect on the current exchange students of the Karlstad University.

Finally it has to be mentioned that for the achievement of changes on the English version of the KAU.SE website the International Office should be contacted, as they are responsible for providing information about the education and the Karlstad University for future as well as exchange students.
References


Appendices

A. Online Survey Exchange Students Karlstad University

This survey is part of my research about the quality of the Karlstad University website, especially for Exchange students, and will be included in my Bachelor Thesis. Thank you for taking a few minutes of your time to participate in it!

1. Gender
   ○ female
   ○ male

2. How long do you stay at Karlstad University?
   ○ 1 semester
   ○ 2 semester (1 year)
   ○ Full program (Bachelor/Master)

3. How did you get to know about Karlstad University?
   □ Internet
   □ Ranking
   □ Partner University
   □ Study colleagues
   □ International Office
   □ Friends
   Other:

4. How important was the website design for your decision of a suitable university for your stay abroad?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Neither important nor unimportant</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What did you like of the website design of the KAU website?
   □ Structure
   □ Colours
   □ Pictures
   □ Possibility to switch language

6. Please mark the importance of the information that was crucial for your decision of choosing a suitable university for your studies abroad
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses offered in English</th>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Neither important nor unimportant</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs of Living</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports of Experience from previous students</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study fees</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of the University</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study environment</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking of the University</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Education</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. How satisfied were you with the information offered on the Karlstad University website in comparison with other universities’ websites?

- [ ] Very satisfied
- [ ] Satisfied
- [ ] Better than expected
- [ ] As I expected
- [ ] Worse than I expected
- [ ] Unsatisfied
- [ ] Totally unsatisfied

8. How fast could you find the information you were searching during your first visit on the Karlstad University website?

- [ ] Immediately
- [ ] Fast
- [ ] Appropriate time
- [ ] It took me longer than expected

9. How often do you use the Karlstad University website?

- [ ] Several times per day
- [ ] Once per day
- [ ] Several times per week
- [ ] Once per week
- [ ] Several times per month

10. Which information are you searching when you visit the Karlstad University website?

- [ ] Information about my Courses
- [ ] Events
- [ ] News
11. How much time does it approximately take for you to find information you are looking for on the Karlstad University website?

- 2-5 sec
- 10-15 sec
- 20-30 sec
- 40-60 sec

12. Can you find the information you are searching for in the first trial?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all
- I have to use the search field

13. How satisfied are you with the information provided on the Karlstad University website?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totally unsatisfied</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
<th>Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Totally satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. How often did results in Swedish appear when you were searching for specific information on the KAU website?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. How often do you use a translation tool such as Google translator to get the information
provided on the Karlstad University website translated from Swedish into English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Please mark which sections of the Karlstad University you are using regularly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Every day</th>
<th>Almost every day</th>
<th>Several times per week</th>
<th>Once per week</th>
<th>Several times per month</th>
<th>Once per month</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KAU:SE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Please mark if enough information is provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Provided</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
<th>Not provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application &amp; Admission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees &amp; Scholarships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the university</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic calendar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I feel not treated the same way as Swedish students when it comes to information provided&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"I would go to events etc. if the information about it would be provided and announced also in English instead of just Swedish"

"I can find the information I am searching for immediately on the Karlstad University website without any problems"

"The structure of the Karlstad University website should be improved to be more logical"

"I am annoyed when the start page appears during I am searching for information and I have to start again"

"I have the impression that the information in Swedish is more comprehensive and detailed than in English"

"Several times I got lost on the homepage and used the search field to get results"

"I am too lazy to search the whole page for information and just enter what I am looking for in the search field"

"It is annoying that the language switches automatically to Swedish and I have to adapt it again and again"

"I would appreciate if the website would save the language I selected the first time and keep this option for every time I enter the page later on"

"The structure of the Karlstad University website is not logical and I am searching on trial and error for information"

18. Do you have any suggestions for the English version of the Karlstad University website?
B. Online survey question 4:

"How important was the website design for your decision of a suitable university for your stay abroad?"

![Bar chart showing responses](chart.png)

C. Online survey question 6:

"Please mark the importance of the information that was cruel for you decision of choosing a suitable university for your studies abroad"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses offered in English</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
<td>3 (4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither important nor unimportant</td>
<td>2 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>9 (13.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>52 (78.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66 (100.0%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Education</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
<td>5 (7.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>3 (4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither important nor unimportant</td>
<td>5 (7.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>31 (47.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>22 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66 (100.0%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D: Online survey question 14:

"How often did results in Swedish appear when you were searching for specific information on the KAU.SE website?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>5 (7.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>15 (23.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>27 (42.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>9 (14.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Never</td>
<td>6 (9.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2 (3.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64 (100.0%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Bar chart showing response frequencies.](image)
E. Transcript of the interview with KAU.SE web development expert

Transcript excerpts of the qualitative interview with Kina Nilsson, Web development team KAU.SE website:

**What is your role in the web team?**

I work as a coordinator. I am the one who looks at the site, how we built the website that is mostly my work. I talk with the other directors and we are trying to work in the same way.

**You also decide how the structure should look like?**

I did not build up the structure of this website, is one but I know that the person who built it asked many students what they wanted to have.

This is our main site (KAU.SE). We also have different ways: Education, future students, current students. We tried to have it in one place that it is good for different students.

The library was not on the site from the beginning – for about a year ago the library was moved there. A lot of students complained that the library should be in the main navigation. Also the library staff persisted that the library section should be more present.

If it is possible we try to adjust improvement suggestions of students but it is always a matter of money and costs but we try to do as the students want.

There have been some complaints from exchange students as sometimes it is difficult to find things and we haven't really have so much stuff that have been working so it is very general but we will try to make it better.

**In the beginning of every section there is a start page in the second navigation.**

Facebook takes a lot of information for students nowadays. Then we needed to have start sites for every different section.

**The Facebook is just in Swedish. Do you want to do posts in English?**

We would like to do that but we don't have enough staff to do it. But we really want to have it in English.

In the Swedish version it is marked or indicated where the user is located. In the English version it is not. Just on the Start page KAU.SE.

→ It is a mistake that need to be changed!

In the Swedish version there is in the header an index ”A till Ö” but in the English version this is not implemented.

It is made in purpose as the English sites were very few in the beginning, but we should have it in English, too as it is easier to find specific search terms directly in the index.
Transcript excerpts of the qualitative interview with Kina Nilsson, Web development team KAU SE website:

How was it decided which pages will be built up in English?

We used the most frequent questions. For the international students they had the International Office they could help them. But we need to build this pages better. The focus was mostly exchange students as a target group of the English website. General information about fees and scholar ships and those kinds of questions that were mostly asked to the International Office were put on the English website.

The International Office did the English version of the website in cooperation with the web development team.

In the footer is normally a sitemap linked. Is on the KAU SE Website a sitemap for the user somewhere available?

We do have a sitemap but as I did not built the suit it is not easy to find it.

Normally a specific search term is predefined in the search boxes or search fields such as “enter a search term”.

→ The search box in the main navigation is supposed to be empty as you can search for everything on this page as it is a Google Search field. The other search fields are just on the website.

FUTURE STUDENTS website there are posters offered for students on the navigation section “Enjoy student life”. What for is it published there?

→ It is for students who want to bring this to their home universities. The print material we have in English is available for everybody.

LIBRARY

Search fields are on both places, the sidebar navigation and in the content. The library has built up their site on their own with the help of Claes Askar, another person here in the web development department. So they are following their structure quite well.

The library is a bit different from the rest of the website as it is a lot of more searching, such as the literature.

KAU SE EXTERNAL RELATIONS it is not really clear what is meant to describe. External relations is the name for the department. It is people who are working with students so that they can get in contact with students and other workers.

Maybe it would better to use Collaborations instead? (author)

You also have alumni networks and international corporations. More things that are outside the university so it is a little bit mixed.

CURRENT STUDENTS – My studies - Examination

Examinations rules – quick links at the beginning on top of the same site. Why was it implemented like that?
Transcript excerpts of the qualitative interview with Kina Nilsson, Web development team KAU.SE website:

It is a very long document so it was implemented to avoid that the user has to scroll the whole page down to get to the information.

Examination is an important part of the education. There is a list available in Swedish with the examination dates of the next 7 days, but not in English. When was the link on the sidebar made?

This is another system of a database that is built in another way. But the web development team will try to fix that.

In the second navigation level SERVICES there is on the start page the fire protection video. The user is thinking more about the international office or other departments when the term service is mentioned.

It should be put in a present place. The web development team is working with the crisis information for the moment so maybe it will change the place. Some of my colleagues is working on that so it might have a separate navigation on the start page (go to crisis information). In the Swedish version it will be located at About the university in the left side bar.

Search for staff in the header.

The titles of the professors are also in Swedish in the English version of the website. It need to be in English also here as the students who are searching for a specific professor they don’t know if they choose the right one as the job title is in Swedish.

It is possible to search for different sections on the side bar at Organization on the start page of KAU.SE.

It is a mistake to be able to click the whole header area. It is meant to be just the logo clickable which directly links to the home page.

*How many people are working on the English version of the website?*

It is the international office and it’s about 2 persons, me and two of my colleagues can help them sometimes. But we are very few we haven’t got time in our work really to work with it. But the international office employed new staff who will be working on it.

They are just updating the information we have there today and if there is something that is missing they will build more sites as there is just very general information available in English.

The main calendar, news and events is available in Swedish but not in English. We have a person who is translating everything we have. The web development team is willing to put more information in English but it is really all a matter of money and time.

But we want to have more international students and want to be better so we must provide everything to be better in this area.
Transcript excerpts of the qualitative interview with Kina Nilsson, Web development team KAU.SE website:

The international students didn’t know when some events were happening at University as they didn’t get the information in English.

The library website has information and news in English as they are doing it on their own.

*Is the website adapted to mobile phones as well?*

Yes it was developed some months ago in spring in a responsible design.

*How long did it take time to do it?*

Consultant outside the house – four months as it was started in December till March.

A lot of universities start to develop a website that could be viewed on smaller devices so KAU.SE wanted to be on this track, too.

Did you have a look at the accessibility of the website?

We had people outside the university that did everything for us. And the person who made this was the person who made the website 5 years ago. She had been doing all this together.

In the Swedish version is the function "talanke Web" available, in the English version it is not offered.

*Is it possible to offer it in English, too?*

It is possible to offer but even this function is a matter of money as it is another system and we have other programs that translate it. So we just have it in Swedish, unfortunately.

*The main target group of the website is mainly Swedish students?*

Yes, mainly it is Swedish students. There is a lot of more information offered in Swedish than in English.

The English version is more compromised, the most important things that we think is most important are available in English.

*Do you increase the content in English?*

The new girl at the international office will work more with the English content. They will have more time to work on it and will update and upgrade it and fix it so that it will be better.

How did you think the quality of the English version of the website is?

Well we think it is okay. But we really know that we need to be better and we need more persons who are working with this. We are too few persons and there are so
many other things that we are supposed to do. But it is very important to hear this
from you and other current exchange students so that I can go to my boss again and
tell him that we have to work on this. Of course, we need to be better. We think it is
okay but not more.

So you are not satisfied with the quality of the English website?

Some stuff is okay but we understand that you need more information, of course.

It is more a matter of money and staff?

Yes, we are interested in doing it, but we didn’t really get the persons to do it. So we
hope we hope that the new person at the International Office will have more time.

The pictures have a high quality and a nice atmosphere. Who took the pictures?
Yes, we haven’t been photographing by our own here. We had a person outside the
house who has been taking all the pictures for us.
Everything is students from the university.

How did you decide which photos to put where?
We don’t buy so many photos, only 10 till 15 a year. So they have to fit everywhere
somehow. It is more like it is supposed to have a warm and nice atmosphere.

Are the pictures not related to the content?

Sometimes, but it is really difficult to have pictures that are related to the content all
the time. So mostly it is the students from here we have on all the pictures or the
surroundings here.

The header includes fixed pictures and we can’t change it. The photos in the content
can be changed as we want.

The structure is like a grid with a main picture as an eye catcher as we learned that
people like to see pictures as they want to know how it looks like.

The sidebar on the right side with it search fields is fixed and we need help from
outside to change it as it is possible but more difficult.

Plan your course of study – Advanced search

There are eight fields on the site where the user has many options to select. It is too
much information on one site and the user is irritated what to choose.

The purpose of the advanced search was that everything is on one site, to show that
the university has to offer many different educational options. But it is true that if
everything is on one site it might be irritating that the user does not know where to
start.

The courses are linked to a database.
The customization is just depending on the web browser to adjust the font size?
It seems that is depending on which browser you were choosing.
Do you think the English version has a good usability?
We hope it is.

Were usability tests conducted with the English version of the website or just with the Swedish version?
I think when they did all the tests five years ago they also tested the English version. So they did it at the beginning before it was launched as they wanted to know how it works. We haven’t had any test since that to check how it works.

This department is responsible for usability test and we did a lot of testing in the beginning on the Swedish site but we haven’t done it lately.

Is there a style guide with font sizes and colours behind the website?
No. We have for people who are working with the site we have study material.

The international office does not have a brochure to explain how to use the website as they show in the beginning (orientation week) where you can find certain information.

In the beginning you can see in the side bar just the sections title of the départements and organizations on the website.

EDUCATION and FUTURE STUDENT sidebar:
programmes and courses

It is almost the same about Education.

CURRENT STUDENTS sidebar you will find the information you are mostly using daily when you are here such as its Learning, Mypage, student mail, etc.

In KAU.SE sidebar it is more general information about the organizations. The sidebars include what we think are the most visited pages.
F. Website Structure (Sitemap) of the KAU.SE website - English Version

KAU.SE
  Start page
  Research
    Doctoral studies
      Application and admission
    Research Centres
    Collaboration with researchers
    Faculties and disciplines
    Contacts
  External relations
    Collaboration with students
    Collaboration with researchers
    Commissioned education
    International cooperation
    Alumni network
    Contact us
  About the University
    General description
      Rector's address
      Facts
      History
      The city of Karlstad
      About Värmland
  Organization
    Staff
    Faculties and departments
    Faculty Board for Teacher Education
    Karlstad University Professional Services
    Karlstad University Library
    University Administration and Central Services
  Main university regulations
    Recognition procedures
    Vision 2015
    Environment
    Equality
    Quality assurance
  Staff vacancies
  Media and press
  International profile
    ECTS Label
    International cooperation
  Ceremonies
  Contact us
Academic authorities
ECTS and DS co-ordinates
Opening hours
Campus map
Directions to campus
Travelling to Karlstad

EDUCATION
Start page
Programmes
Programmes in English
All programmes (area of interest)
All programmes (A-Z)
Undergraduate programmes
Master's programmes
Distance programmes
Places available
Courses
Courses in English
Swedish language courses
All courses (by discipline)
Undergraduate level courses
Master's level courses
Courses for university entrants
Distance courses
Part-time courses
Evening courses
Summer courses
Places available
Application & admission
Exchange students
Admission requirements
Letter of admission
Non-exchange students
Admission requirements
Letter of admission
Language requirements
Recognition procedures
Diploma Supplement
ECTS System

Academic calendar
The academic year
Study guidance

FUTURE STUDENT
Start page
Explore student life
Students' stories
Student's guide
Photos
Videos
Posters
Activities during the year
Practical information
   How to apply
   Residence permit
   Accomodation
   Cost of living
   Health and insurance
   Checklist
Fees & scholarships
   Tuition fees
   Scholarships
Swedish academic system
   Course or programme?
   Credits and workload
   Levels and degrees
      Level of courses
   Teaching methods and examination
   Grading system
Contact us
   Karlstad and Sweden
CURRENT STUDENT
   Start page
   New students
      Introduction programme
         Welcome party
      Access your student account
      Roll call and web registration
      Apply for cards
      Buy or borrow course literature
      Student union and associations
      Checklist
My studies
   My Page
   Course Portal
   Programme Portal
   ItsLearning
   Enrolment and course registration
      Drop out procedure
   Examination
      Examination rules
   Academic calender
Student life
   Sporting and leisure
   Student union and associations
   Medical facilities
   Restaurants and meals
   International host blog
After completing your studies
   Degree certificate
      Contact degree officials
   Further studies
   Before leaving Karlstad
Alumni network

Services
  International Office
  Student Centre
  IT support
    Your student account
  Library services
  Student Health Services
  Students with special needs
  Student union and associations

Printing Office
Print and Papercut
Anonymous exams

IT support
  Student account
  Itlearning
  Adobe Connect
  Survey & Report
  Telebild
  KauTube
  UR access
  Study center
  Copyright
  MSDN AA
  WLAN/Wifi
  Manuals
  FAQ
  Support contact information
  Wordlist

LIBRARY
Start page
Search
  Onsearch
  Books
  E-books
    E-book reader
  Databases
    Remote access to databases
    Trial resources
  Journals
    Trial resources
  Encyclopedias & dictionaries
  Subject guides
  Student theses
  Search Engines
  Newspapers
  Help with searching
    Subject librarians
    FAQ

What is an academic/scholarly article?
Mobile access

Borrow
Borrowing periods and reservations
Library card and borrowing regulations
Interlibrary loans
Library fees and charges
Course reference books
Films on DVD

Acquisition
Book purchasing agreements for staff members
New books

Write
RefWorks
Installing Write-N-Cite
EndNote

Copyright
Copyright in teaching
Film, images and presentations
Licensing terms for electronic resources
English language support

Publish
Research publications/DIVA
Register publications in DIVA
E-publishing
E-publishing for students
Reports, dissertations, licentiate
Laws and Dissertations
Publish research report

Find KAU publications
Open Access
Publish in OA journal

Researcher services
Publishing
Register/publish in DIVA
Doctoral and Licentiate thesis

Contact
Opening hours

About the library
Organisation
Management team
User contacts and teaching
Media Supply
Library Ingesund college of Music

Collaboration
Library facts and figures
The library in figures
The library in pictures
Växjö - the Library building

Study environment
Copyright and printing
Group rooms

89
Library rules
The Reading Room
Using computers in the library
The collections of Karlstad university library
RFID in the library
Guide for New visitors
G. Website Structure (Sitemap) of the KAU.SE website – Swedish Version

Karlstad University Homepage Structure (Swedish Version)

KAU.SE
Startsida
Forskning
Utbildning på forskarnivå
Forskningscentra
Publikationer och avhandlingar
Aktuella disputationer
Tidskrifter
Konferenser och evenemang
Akademisk högtid
Forskarfredag
Progress in Electromagnetics Research Symposium PIERS 2013
Workshop on Large-Scale Modeling
Abstract Guidelines
Bus transfer
Cultural program, excursion
Invited Speakers
Publication of Workshop
Satellite workshop
Scientific program
Timetable - Outline
Timetable - Program
Selma Spa+
Workshop Committees
Workshop publications
Samarbete med forskare
Forskningsorganisation
Forskningsetik kommitté
Forskarens ansvar
Lag om etikprövning
Ledamöter
Sammanträdesstider
Samarbetsmiljöer
Samverkan
För företag och organisationer
För skolor och lärare
Kungskapscentrum
Rektorsutbildningen
RUC
PBS
Samarbete med studenter
Examensarbete
Arbetsmarknadsdagar
Mentorprogram
Interesseanmälan till Mentorprogram - Mentorer
Interesseanmälan till Mentorprogram - Studenter
Kontakt Karriärkontoret
Samarbete med forskare
Industridoktorander
Framgångsrikt samarbete
Samverkan med IT-branschen
SNITS - Samverkan Näringsliv och IT-studenter
IT-middag med SNITS
SNITS-vägen till jobbet
Compare - Nätverk för IT-branschen
Snits-lunch
Regionalt samarbete
Uppdragsutbildning
Alumnätverket
Hotspot
För utställare
Kontakta oss
Samarbetspartners
Karriärveckan
Uppdragssörsen
Om universitetet
Nyheter och aktuellt
Nyheter
Pressmeddelanden
Kalendaret
Aktuella disputationer
Universitets i medierna
Magasinet
Prenumerera
Nyheter som RSS
Sociala medier
Detta är universitetet
Visioner och strategier
Vision 2015
Kvalitetsarbete
Jämställdhet och mångfald
Miljö och hållbar utveckling
Universitet i siffor
Histoira i kortform
Karlstad och Värmland
Organisation
Allt personal
Ämnen A-Ö
Fakulteter och institutioner
Lärarutbildningsnämnden
Uppdragssutbildning
Universitetsbiblioteket
Universitetsledningen
Universitetssstyrelsen
Centrala stödfunktioner
Nämnder, råd och kommittéer
Kompetensutveckling
Enhetschefen har ordet
Lediga anställningar
Styrdokument
Strategi 2012-2015
Övriga dokument
Pressinformation
Pressmeddelanden
Presskontakter
Pressbilder
Ladda hem logotyp
Internationellt arbete
ECTS Label
Bolognaprocessen
Internationellt samarbete
Akademiska högskolor
Traditioner
Examenshögtid
Akademisk högtid 2012
Årets professorer
Årets doktorer
Hedersdoktorer
Akademisk högtid 2011
Installationsföreläsningar
Bilder och bildspel
Årets professorer
Årets doktorer
Akademisk högtid 2010
Installationsföreläsningar
Bilder och bildspel
Akademisk högtid 2009
Installationsföreläsningar
Bildspel och bilder
Hedersdoktorer
Marskalk på aAkademisk högtid
Information till leverantörer
Kontakt
Besöks- och postadresser
E-postadresser
Hitta till oss
Campuskartor
Öppetider
UTBILDNINGAR
Startsida
Program
Alla program (interessområde)
Alla program (A-Ö)
Program på grundnivå
Program på avancerad nivå
Distansprogram
Högskoleförberedande program
Engelskspråkiga program
Lediga platser
Kurser
Alla kurser (lämnesvis)
Kurser på grundnivå
Kurser på avancerad nivå
Kurser för nybörjare
Högskoleförberedande kurser
Distanskurser
Deltidskurser
Kvällskurser
Sommarkurser
Engelskspråkiga kurser
Lediga platser
Anmälan & atagning
Så anmäler du dig
Antagningen steg för steg
Behörighet
Vilka får platserna?
Högskoleprovet
Bläcketter och ansökningshandlingar
Termintider och datum
Kontakta antagningen
Distansstudier
Lärcentrum
Lärstöd och teknik
Biblioteket på distans
Filmer om distansstudier
Kodade tentor
Utländsstudier
Ubytesstudier
Studier på egen hand
Studier i utvecklingsländer
Praktik utomlands
Tillgodoräknande
Studenter berättar
Viktiga datum
Kontakta oss
Studie- & karriärvägledning
Vad vill du bli?
Hur vill du studera?
Skapa din egen utbildning
Studievägledning
Karriärvägledning
Beställ katalog
BLI STUDENT
Startsidan
Läsa på universitet
Varför högskolestudier?
Så anmäler du dig
Så fungerar studierna
Funktionsnedsättning och studier
Ordlista
Termintider och datum
Studiemiljö
Vårt moderna campus
Hus Vänern
Universitetsbiblioteket
Studenter berättar
Video klipp om universitetet

Bo & leva
Boende & bostads garanti
Ekonomi & studiemedel
Studentkåre & föreningar
Studentstaden Karlstad

Jobb & framtid
Välja yrke
Var finns framtidens jobb?
Arbetslivskontakter
Starte eget
Studera vidare eller forska

Vill du veta mer?
Fråga en studievigledare
Fråga en student
Informationslågar
Oppet hus
Mössor, festivaler och turnéer
Kontakta oss

ÄR STUDENT
Startsida
Aktuellt
Nyheter från Studentkåren
Nyheter från universitetet
Viktiga bud
Kalendern
Anslagsstavlan
Studentbloggar
Facebook och Twitter

Ny student
 Första veckan som student
Kurstorget
Välkomst Stevenernang
Bo och leva
Studentkåren och föreningar
Stöd i början av studierna
Checklista

Mina studier
Min sida och Ladok
Kurstorget
Programtorget
Itslearning
Anmälan och kursregistriering
Tentamen
Examen
Termintider och datum
Studentliv
Ekonomi och försäkring
Restauranger och caféer
Sport, frisid och uteliv
Rättigheter och skyldigheter
Studenterkåren och föreningar
Bli studentambassadör
Bli fulder
Stu Dents artiklar

Arbetsliv & karriär
Kontakter med arbetslivet
Söka jobb
Starta eget
Studera vidare eller forska
Alumniätverket

Service
Studentcentrum
Studie- och karriärvägledning
Universitetsbiblioteket
Funktionsnedsättning och studier
Studenthälsan & Universitetskyrkan
Omslagsmallar och logtyper
Universitetstryckeriet
Utskrift och kopiering
Säkerhetsinformation för studenter

IT-stöd
Studentkonto
Iuslearning
Adobe Connect
Survey & Report
Telebild
KauTube
UR access
Lärcentrum
Upphovsrätt
Programvaruwebb
Nerladdningstjänst
Trådlös nät - WLAN/WiFi
MSDN AA
Manualer
FAQ
Support
Ordnlista

BIBLIOTEK
Startsida
Sök
OneSearch
Böcker
E-böcker
Databaser
Amnesguider
Tidskrifter
Uppslagsverk & ordböcker
Uppsatser & examensarbeten
Sökmotorer
Dagstidningar
TV- & radioprogram
Sökhjälp och guider
Kurser och utbildningar

Låna
Lånkort och låneregler
Lånetider och reservationer
Förryta lån
Kurs referens
Filmer
Fjärrlån - lån från andra bibliotek
Inköp av media
Avgifter
Vanliga frågor - Låna/beställa

Skriva
Skriva
Skrifsa referenser
Referenshanteringsprogram
Plagiering
Upphavsriätt
Vanliga frågor - skriva/referera

Publicera
Forskningspublikationer/DJVA
Publivera rapporter, licar och doktorsavhandlingar
Publivering för studenter
Open Access
Manualer
Sök publikationer från Kau

Forskarservice
Bibliometri
Håll dig uppdaterad
Kurser för forskare
Publicering
Referenshantering
Upphavsstätt

Distansservice
Lånkortssökning
Lån böcker
Tidskrifter och artiklar
Sök i databaser, tidskrifter m.m
E-publicering av uppsats
RefWorks skapa konto
Studentkonto
IT-konto för studenter
Kontakta universitetsbiblioteket

Kontakt
Öppetider
Om biblioteket
Organisation
Samarbete
Bibliotekets samlingar
Fakta om biblioteket
Aktiveter på biblioteket
Biblioteket för nya besökare

KAU.SE
Start page
Research
Doctoral studies
Application and admission
Research Centres
Collaboration with researchers
Faculties and disciplines
Contacts
External relations
Collaboration with students
Collaboration with researchers
Commissioned education
International cooperation
Alumni network
Contact us

About the University
General description
Rector's address
Facts
History
The city of Karlstad
About Värmland
Organization
Staff
Faculties and departments
Faculty Board for Teacher Education
Karlstad University Professional Services
Karlstad University Library
University Administration and Central Services

Main university regulations
Recognition procedures
Vision 2015
Environment
Equality
Quality assurance

Staff vacancies
Media and press
International profile
ECTS Label
International cooperation

Ceremonies

Contact us