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The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has as its aim to promote the sciences and strengthen their influence in society.

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Executive Office of the President of the
United States
Office of Management and Budget
Washington D.C.
United States

Proposed rule of the US Office of Management and Budget, “Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance” (OMB-2026-0034)

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences is an independent organisation, founded in 1739, whose overall objective is to promote the sciences and strengthen their influence in society. Today the Academy consists of about 480 Swedish members, who together represent the country’s foremost expertise in the sciences, and 175 distinguished foreign members.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences expresses serious concerns about the threats to academic freedom and to the quality and independence of public-funded research in the United States, if the recently proposed rule of the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB), published on 29 May 2026 (OMB-2026-0034), entitled “Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance” were to be implemented.

The United States has for a long time been a role model in research and innovation with high-quality achievements in science, technology and medicine and a trusted collaborator in the global scientific ecosystem. Moreover, USA is the country that has been bestowed with the largest number of laureates of scientific distinctions, awarded after thorough selection processes by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, such as the Nobel Prizes in Physics and Chemistry, the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, as well as numerous other prestigious prizes, such as the Crafoord and Sjöberg prizes.

The excellent reputation of US research is pivoting on a robust national funding system that supports researchers’ independent search for knowledge in a wide variety of scientific fields. Research excellence requires long-term funding, independent researcher-initiated ideas, and high-quality, independent scientific peer review processes. Such a process, in which scientists world-wide volunteer their expert competence to critically evaluate the grant proposals of independent colleagues in an unbiased manner, is the best guarantee for a selection of the scientifically most excellent proposals to be funded. Dissemination of research results in open access journals is one of the measures that were implemented to grant the taxpayers free access to the results of public-funded research. In other words, transparency increases when authors instead of readers pay the publication fees.

The regulation proposes drastic changes in the governing of public research funding that risk to send the US back from a leading position in research and innovation to a mediocre one. While



the OMB aims to improve transparency and accountability with the proposed revisions, the Academy sees a serious and unprecedented risk that several of the suggestions will have the opposite effect, and that the quality, credibility and broad variety of US research will be affected negatively under the increased political steering, as is proposed in the regulation.

Academic freedom, i.e. the freedom of researchers to choose the topic of their studies, and to disseminate the results at scientific conferences and journals of choice, is an important pillar of democracy. Democratic countries are more successful in research than countries where research is politically directed or limited. Threats to academic freedom, as have been reported recently in several countries around the world, including the US and Hungary, have repercussions far beyond national borders. It is therefore also in the interest of the international research community in general, and the Academies in particular, to respond to the proposed move towards more political interference in research in the United States.

If implemented, the regulation would also impose significant barriers on international research collaboration, which is essential for scientific achievements and innovation. US researchers are important partners in international collaborations, for instance those that address global challenges and the Global Sustainability Development Goals as formulated by the United Nations. It is equally important for the success of research projects that research infrastructure remains accessible to both US and international researchers.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, founded in 1739, has a long tradition of using thorough international scientific expertise in evaluating research for its renowned prizes and scholarships. This expertise is indispensable for the quality, credibility, and historical soundness of the outcome. The Academy views the proposed regulations and restrictions on public funded research and the increased political steering of US research as a severe risk for its quality and credibility.

As a member of the All European Academy (ALLEA), the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences endorses ALLEA's statement that condemns the proposed US Office of Management and Budget rule "Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance". The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences strongly urges the US administration to withdraw the proposed rule in its entirety.

Yours sincerely,

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