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UFV 2015/475

# Uppsala University's Model for Review of Study Programmes

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## Guidelines

Approved by the Vice-Chancellor on 25 October 2016

## Guidelines for Uppsala University's Model for Review of Study Programmes

Uppsala University's education is subject to systematic quality assurance and quality enhancement. According to Uppsala University's rules of procedure, each disciplinary domain/faculty board is responsible for the quality of its educational offerings, since they are best qualified to assess how to ensure and enhance the quality in their respective fields. Consequently, Uppsala University's model for review of study programmes (including freestanding courses), allocates responsibility for the design, implementation and follow-up of reviews of study programmes to the relevant disciplinary domain/faculty board. Uppsala University's model consists of two parts: internal annual systematic follow-up of study programmes, and comprehensive external peer review every six years.

The purpose of Uppsala University's reviews of study programmes is to systematically contribute to ensuring and enhancing the quality of Uppsala University's educational offerings. The aim is to promote education of the highest national and international quality.

- All first-, second- and third-cycle (Bachelor's, Master's and PhD) study programmes<sup>1</sup> will be assessed at least once every six years in a review. The disciplinary domain or faculty board decides how to cluster the study programmes into suitable units for evaluation. As far as possible, the study programmes should be analysed in their entirety.
- The review will proceed from the requirements stipulated in the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) and Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) (Qualifications Ordinance), taking into account the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), Uppsala University's Mission and Core Values, and programme-specific policy documents. (See the summary box below.) Every review will:
  - be designed to generate the knowledge required to ensure and enhance the quality of the study programme;
  - include a comprehensive assessment of the quality of the study programme – its strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement;
  - contain an external review by at least two colleagues from one or several higher education institutions, and by at least one colleague from another faculty/disciplinary domain at Uppsala University, in accordance with recognised principles of peer review;
  - allow relevant teachers and students/doctoral students to participate in the planning, implementation and follow-up of the evaluation;
  - include a self-evaluation and other relevant documents as the basis for the assessment;

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<sup>1</sup> 'All study programmes' refers to all existing study programmes at first-cycle level (courses, degree programmes, main fields, subsidiary fields), second-cycle level (courses, degree programmes, main fields) and third-cycle level (subjects, courses), freestanding courses which are not part of any study programme, access programmes, supplementary teacher training programmes and contract education.

If a specific study programme/degree is subject to the Swedish Higher Education Authority's programme evaluations during the six-year cycle, a review within Uppsala University's model has not to be carried through, *but reporting and follow-up of the results will take place in accordance with these guidelines*. In the event that the Swedish Higher Education Authority's evaluation results in the grading 'questionable quality', Uppsala University's internal procedures should be followed. Joint study programmes with other higher education institutions may be evaluated externally according to the agreement between the higher education institutions and within the framework of national requirements, but reporting and follow-up of the results will take place in accordance with these guidelines.

- result in a concluding reviewer report of the study programme's strengths and weaknesses/areas for improvement, together with recommendations;
- result in a brief evaluation report in which those in charge of the study programme summarise the most important conclusions based on self-evaluation and the reviewer report, and present planned measures/improvement actions; the review method should also be described.

**Disciplinary domain or faculty boards are responsible for:**

- compiling and registering a brief evaluation report in accordance with the above and making it available internally at Uppsala University;
- ensuring the evaluation report also contains the board's conclusion, including whether special follow-up is needed;
- making the planned measures and the concluding reviewer report publically available;
- ensuring that measures and improvement actions are initiated and monitored within the framework of annual follow-up;
- ensuring that necessary measures are followed up within one year, and are subsequently followed up until they are completed or until the programme/course is shut down;
- annually compiling and analysing the results and conclusions of the year's reviews of study programmes, including any need for special follow-ups, and reporting on this to the Vice-Chancellor within the framework of ordinary operational planning and operational follow-ups;
- ensuring the results from the year's completed reviews of study programmes are presented by those in charge of the study programmes in question at the annual conference for reviews of study programmes;
- deciding whether reviews of study programmes in specific subject areas can be replaced by other external accreditation (such as EQUIS) where appropriate. However, reporting and follow-up of results are to take place in accordance with these guidelines.

**Every review will cover the following aspects:**

- that the study programmes achieve the objectives of the Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance (Qualifications Ordinance) and programme-specific objectives, i.e., that actual learning outcomes correspond to expected learning outcomes
- that the content and teaching activities are founded on a scientific basis and proven experience
- that teaching focuses on the learning of students/doctoral students
- that the achievement of intended learning outcomes is assessed using appropriate methods, and complying to rule of law, and that progression is ensured
- that staff involved in the study programme possess relevant and up-to-date expertise in the subject matter, that they have pedagogical and/or subject didactic expertise, and that there is sufficient teaching capacity
- that internationalisation, international perspectives and sustainability are promoted
- that a gender equality perspective is integrated into the study programme
- that the study programme meets individuals' and society's needs for learning and professional knowledge and prepares students for future careers
- that students/doctoral students have influence on the planning, implementation and follow-up of the study programme
- that an appropriate study environment is available to all students/doctoral students
- that continuous follow-up and improvement of the study programme is carried out

For an in-depth description of the objectives of first- and second-cycle education in Uppsala University's Mission and Core Values, see the document *Teaching and Learning at Uppsala University*.

Uppsala University's model for review of study programmes is based on the following principles. The model:

- *is decentralised and based on continuous quality enhancement work;*
- *is based on an exploratory approach to evaluations in which external peer review and collegial work forms are natural components;*
- *promotes quality and includes student/doctoral student participation;*
- *is stringent, i.e. able to identify and remedy deficiencies;*
- *is as simple and cost-efficient as possible.*

External review is a well-established form of academic quality assurance, which in this context ensures that the University's programmes are subject to independent review and can be compared with equivalent programmes at other higher education institutions. Internal review by a colleague from another faculty/discipline helps to call into question matters that may be taken for granted in the subject area and enhances the exchange of knowledge and experiences across the University. The annual conference for reviews of study programmes provides an additional opportunity for constructive criticism from other colleagues and students/doctoral students at the University, and for the dissemination of good practice and lessons learned.

The stringency of the system is achieved via requirements for external and internal reviews of all study programmes, disciplinary domain/faculty boards' conclusions and follow-ups of measures, and transparency regarding the results and planned measures. The conference also contributes to the system's stringency. Results and measures are also reported under the framework of the regular operational planning and follow-up process, in the Vice-Chancellor's annual dialogue with the disciplinary domains, and at the annual conference. A university-wide quality report is compiled annually based on the completed reviews and the conference, and is delivered to the Vice-Chancellor.

The model permits meaningful qualitative comparisons, via external and internal peers and the transparent sharing of results.