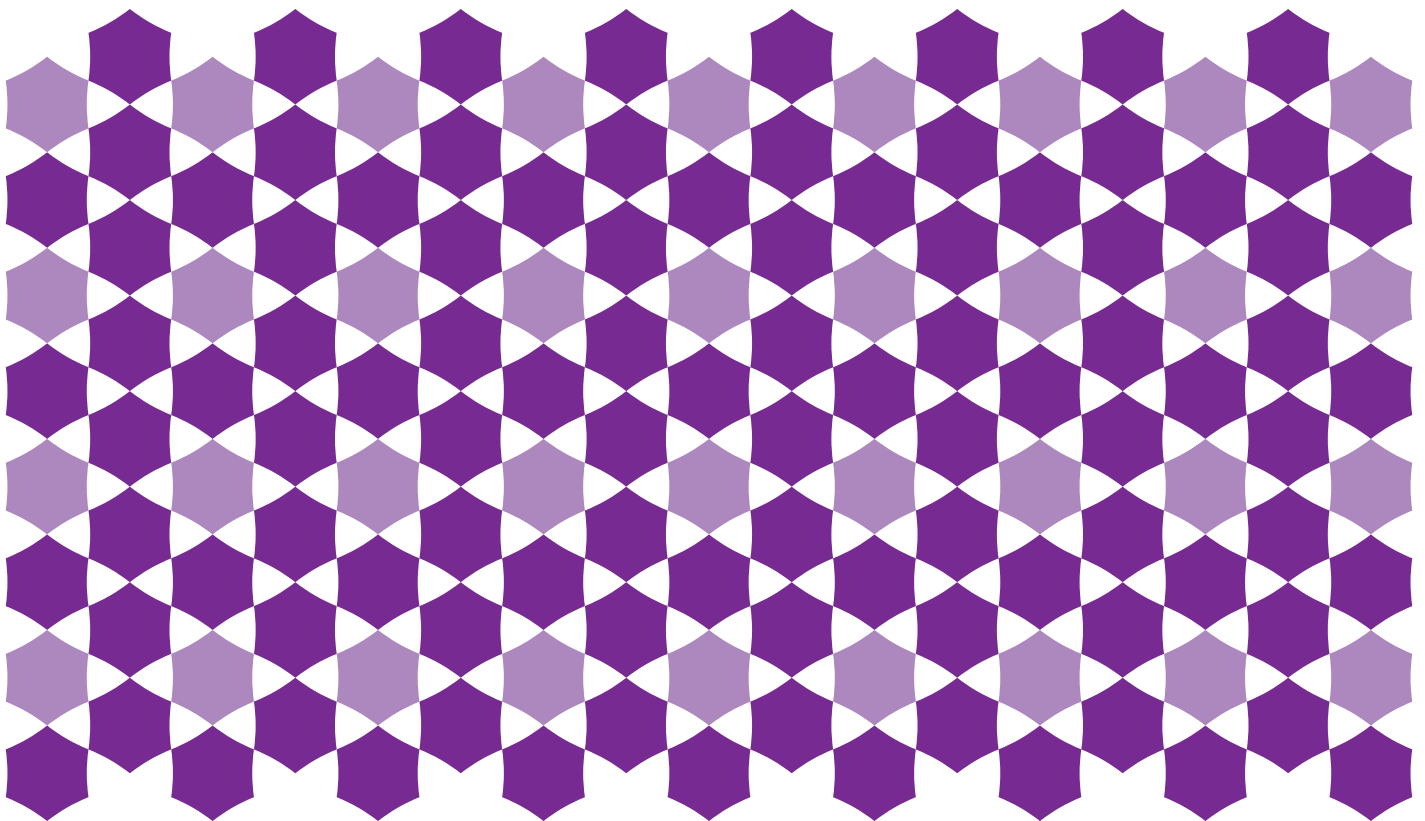




Guidelines for reviewing quality assurance procedures of higher education institutions

Pilot study



Guidelines for reviewing quality assurance procedures of higher education institutions

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Introduction

This guideline applies to the pilot study for reviewing the quality assurance procedures of higher education institutions (HEIs). These guidelines are based on the national system for quality assurance in higher education that the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) has been tasked by the Government to develop and implement. UKÄ has reported on this assignment in the report *National system for quality assurance in higher education – presentation of a Government assignment* (Report 2016:15).

The purpose of this pilot study is to test the method for reviewing HEIs' quality assurance procedures, which is one of four review components within the national system of quality assurance in higher education. When this pilot study is completed, the method will be evaluated and modified if necessary, after which the final guidance document for reviewing the HEIs' quality assurance procedures will be drawn up and approved by UKÄ.

If one or more of the HEIs included in the pilot study are not approved, they will be included in the regular reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures.

National system for quality assurance of higher education

Quality assurance of Swedish higher education presupposes that quality assurance procedures are conducted both by higher education institutions (HEIs) and by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ). This means that the HEIs and UKÄ have a shared responsibility for quality assurance in higher education. This shared responsibility is a core principle for UKÄ in its work with the government assignment to develop a new system for quality assurance in higher education¹. It has been important to create a clear link between UKÄ's reviews and the quality assurance procedures at the HEIs, while also considering how UKÄ's reviews can contribute to further improving this work. This also aligns with international principles for quality assurance in higher education, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*², which deals with HEIs' internal quality processes, the external quality assurance of HEIs' operations and the requirements placed upon quality assurance bodies. To adhere to the requirements specified in ESG, both the HEIs and UKÄ must ensure that these standards are met.

UKÄ's reviews

The objectives of UKÄ's reviews are partly to assess the performance of the courses and programmes and partly to contribute to the HEIs' quality improvement efforts in higher education. The national system for quality assurance in higher education consists of the following four components:

- appraisal of applications for degree-awarding powers
- reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures
- programme evaluations
- thematic evaluations.

UKÄ has strived to develop a model that is useful for all four components but that can also support the internal quality assurance procedures of the HEIs. The model, which is described in Fig. 1, consists of four aspect areas and three perspectives that together are based on both applicable Swedish law and ordinances and the ESG.

1. UKÄ's assignment is described in the public service agreement for the current budget year regarding the Swedish Higher Education Authority (U2016/01132/UH, U2016/01349/UH), in the Government's communication *Quality Assurance of Higher Education* (2015/16:76) and in the report from the Education Committee and the Riksdag communication (report 2015/16:UbU9, Riksdag communication 2015/16:155)

2. *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, 2015. See also UKÄ's Swedish translation, *Standarder och riktlinjer för kvalitetssäkring inom det europeiska området för högre utbildning (ESG)*, 2015.

The aspect areas are:

- governance and organisation
- environment and area
- design, implementation and results
- follow-up, measures and feedback

The three perspectives are:

- student and doctoral student perspective
- employer and labour market
- gender equality

Student influence and participation are regulated in the Higher Education Act, particularly in relation to the HEI's quality assurance procedures (Chapter 1, Section 4). Furthermore, the student and doctoral student perspective is more clearly described in the revised ESG (2015). The employer and labour market perspective is also regulated in the Higher Education Act. For example, first-cycle programmes prepare 'students to deal with changes in working life' (Chapter 1, Section 8). Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are key quality factors to be considered in the reviews and, like many other authorities, including the HEIs, it is an area that UKÄ has been assigned by the Government to develop. This area is also regulated in the Higher Education Act (Chapter 1, Section 5).

UKÄ formulates the requirements to be met when assessing aspects and perspectives, i.e. assessment criteria. It has been important for the Authority's assessment criteria to remain open-ended and not to be excessively controlling in how HEIs choose to organise and conduct their operations. Aspects, perspectives and assessment criteria for reviewing HEIs' quality assurance procedures are set out in detail in Annex 1 to this document.

All reviews are carried out by independent assessment panels put together by UKÄ based on a nomination procedure in which HEIs, student unions and employee/employer organisations suggest assessors. The assessment panels consist of student representatives, representatives of employers and the labour market and experts from the higher education sector, participating in the evaluation process on equal terms. UKÄ's decision is based on the assessment panels' reviews.

For complete information on the national system for quality assurance in higher education, see the report *National system for quality assurance in higher education – presentation of a Government assignment* (Report 2016:15).

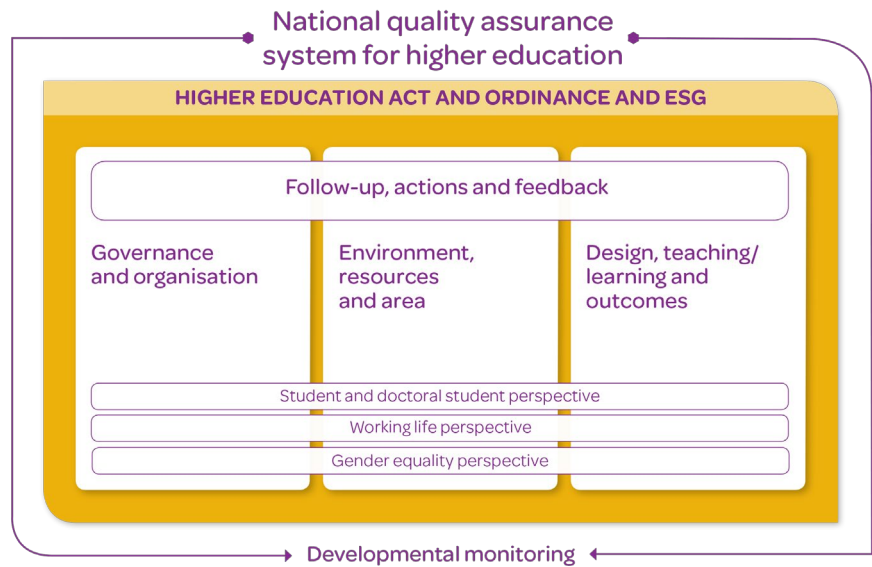


Figure 1. Overview of the model's aspect areas and perspectives. The model is based on the Swedish Higher Education Act, the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance and ESG. Aspects and perspectives are assessed using the assessment criteria. The aspect area 'follow-up, actions and feedback' is influenced by and has repercussions on the other aspects and is thus included in the assessment criteria for other aspects. The HEIs are asked to describe, analyse and evaluate with concrete examples how they systematically ensure and follow up that they fulfil the assessment criteria for the different aspects and perspectives.

Reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures

The reviews verify that the HEIs ensure that courses and programmes at all levels comply with applicable laws, ordinances and the ESG.

The reviews focus on how well the HEIs' quality assurance procedures, including follow-up, actions and feedback procedures, help to systematically enhance and ensure the quality of the courses and programmes at all levels.

The reviews also contribute to improving the HEIs' quality since the assessors provide feedback in their reports on both identified good examples and areas in need of improvement.

Purpose

Reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures are intended to examine whether these processes ensure high quality courses and programmes and to support the HEI's quality improvement efforts.

Main principles for reviewing the HEIs' quality assurance procedures

The method for reviewing HEIs' quality assurance procedures, which is being tested in this pilot study, has been developed in accordance with the Higher Education Act, Higher Education Ordinance and the System of Qualifications³ as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), which was developed within the framework of the Bologna Process.

The ESG specifies that HEIs are to have a quality assurance policy (standard 1.1) and there are processes for approval of courses and programmes (standard 1.2) and monitoring their achievement of objectives (standard 1.9). ESG standard 1.10 states that HEIs will undergo periodic external reviews. UKÄ's position is that this is ensured via the reviews it conducts, but it does not discount the fact that HEIs may initiate external reviews of their own operations.

According to ESG standard 2.1, external quality assurance procedures should review 'the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance procedures described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines'. The standard's guidelines state: "Quality assurance of higher education is based on the HEIs having primary responsibility for the quality of their programmes and other services. It is therefore important that the external quality assurance acknowledges and supports the HEIs' responsibility for quality assurance. To ensure the link

3. The term 'System of Qualifications' refers to Annex 2 of the Higher Education Ordinance and the annex to the Ordinance (1993:221) for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the annex to the Ordinance (2007:1164) for the Swedish Defence University. Henceforth, the term System of Qualifications is used with this meaning.

between internal and external quality assurance, external quality assurance is to consider the standards in Part 1. These may be addressed differently, depending on the type of external quality assurance.”

UKÄ's reviews will therefore focus on reviewing whether the HEIs' quality assurance procedures systematically and effectively contribute to ensuring and improving the quality of courses and programmes at all levels of education. In addition, whether or not the quality assurance procedures are proactive and integrated throughout the HEI's operations will also be reviewed.

The reviews are to contribute to enhancing the HEIs' quality and it is therefore important for the assessment panel's reports to highlight good, educational examples of systematic quality improvement efforts. Providing the reviewed HEI with opportunities to highlight areas for improvement in its quality assurance procedures and planned measures and offering feedback on these subjects within the framework of the review also contributes to improvement.

Aspects, perspectives and assessment criteria

The review of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures focuses on how well these procedures help to ensure and improve the quality of courses and programmes at all education cycles, and covers all aspect areas and perspectives in the model for UKÄ's reviews.

Aspect areas:

- governance and organisation
- environment and area⁴
- design, implementation and results
- follow-up, measures and feedback

Perspectives:

- student and doctoral student perspective
- employer and labour market
- gender equality

Every aspect area is divided into a number of aspects, which as with the three perspectives, are examined on the basis of the associated assessment criteria (Annex 1). *The aspect area follow-up, measures and feedback* has been integrated into the aspect areas for all aspects and perspectives.

Assessment material

The basis for the review consists of a self-evaluation by the HEI, a student report, interviews, site visits, documentation of areas of focus and other information produced by UKÄ. All assessment material for the review is to be weighed together.

4. "Areas" are not considered within the reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures.

UKÄ Direkt

The written documents are uploaded and registered on UKÄ Direkt (<https://ukadirekt.uka.se>), which is the HEIs' portal for UKÄ's online case management system. UKÄ will also upload information to UKÄ Direkt that the HEIs need prior to and during the review, for example the user manual for UKÄ Direkt, guidelines and self-evaluation templates.

There is an HEI administrator for UKÄ Direkt at each HEI, who issues login information to the HEI's other users.

If questions arise pertaining to UKÄ Direkt, contact the HEI administrator at the HEI or the responsible assessor at UKÄ.

The HEI's self-evaluation

The self-evaluation is entered into UKÄ's template and should not exceed 30–50 A4 pages in size 12 font. The self-evaluation template can be downloaded from UKÄ Direkt, and the completed self-evaluation can also be uploaded and registered to the site. To facilitate the evaluation, the HEIs are asked to follow the template structure for their reports.

The self-evaluation should begin with a brief description of the HEI's quality assurance procedures. The description should include how long the current quality assurance model has been in place and the principles upon which it is based. The HEI should also report on how much of the offered courses and programmes have been quality-assured and how much remains, as well as a plan for how all courses and programmes will be quality-assured within a few years.

The self-evaluation is based on the four aspect areas and associated aspects, as well as the three perspectives, which together comprise the framework of UKÄ's review model. The HEIs' self-evaluation should demonstrate that they work systematically and effectively to ensure and improve the quality of the courses and programmes. The HEIs are asked to briefly describe their work process and to subsequently analyse and evaluate how well the HEIs' quality assurance procedures meet the assessment criteria for the aspects and perspectives. The reports should be illustrated with specific examples of results of the systematic quality improvement initiatives and how they have contributed to improvement. Follow-up efforts, planned and implemented measures and feedback, and strengths and identified areas for improvement should also be described. The HEI should consider the outcomes of past reviews, both those they have initiated themselves and evaluations and supervision under the auspices of UKÄ. In addition, the student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective, and gender equality perspective should be described in the reports for the various aspects. The self-evaluation should be based on current conditions. Annex 1 includes guidelines for both the HEIs and assessors.

The HEI's report should focus on the analysis of the results of the quality assurance procedure, that is, that it helps to systematically and effectively ensure and improve the courses and programmes. Furthermore, the HEI is asked to report on how it identifies strengths and ensures they are maintained and developed, as well as how the areas for improvement are

identified, followed up and addressed. The report is also to include how relevant stakeholders are given the results of the quality assurance initiatives. The self-evaluation's main claims should be supported by references to relevant policy documents. To facilitate a fair evaluation, it is important that the HEI's presentation in the self-evaluation be complete.

References to relevant policy documents should therefore only be used as supplementary information to which the assessment panel may refer should it need to verify or delve deeper into some aspect. References should be added as electronic links with page references.

Student report

In the pilot study of the reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures, UKÄ intends to test the possibility of offering local student unions the option to submit written documentation in the form of a student report. The purpose of the student report is to give the unions the ability to state their opinions on student influence in the HEI's quality assurance procedures. In cases in which an HEI has multiple student unions with union status, UKÄ encourages the unions to collaborate and submit a joint student report. However, this is something the unions determine themselves.

It is important to point out that the student report will not affect the fact that the quality assurance procedure is a joint concern for the HEI's staff and students, and that it therefore will not impact students' opportunities to participate in the self-evaluation work.

The student report is entered into a special template and should not exceed five pages. A guide to the student report is in development.

Other assessment material

Prior to reviews, UKÄ produces data for the HEI relevant to the aspects and perspectives to be examined. This could be, for example, data from previous inspections, appraisals of applications for degree-awarding powers, programme evaluations and national statistics showing student completion rates and establishment levels, and illustrating the HEI from a national perspective.

This material provides data for discussion and questions for interviews and site visits, and the HEI will have access to the material when UKÄ uploads these documents to UKÄ Direkt. UKÄ aims to make these documents available in conjunction with the initial meeting, but this may be slightly delayed in the pilot study.

Interviews

Web-based interviews take place approximately five weeks after the final registration deadline for the self-evaluation. The purpose of the interview is to gain an overall picture of the quality assurance procedure, to improve planning for the site visit, and to identify the areas that the panel wants to gain a detailed picture of during the site visit. Together with the documents produced by UKÄ, the HEI's self-evaluation provides data for discussion and the panel's questions for this interview.

Initial interviews involve representatives from the HEI and student representatives, and possibly employer and labour market representatives with which the HEI cooperates.

Student interviewees should first and foremost be appointed by a student organisation that either belongs to a student union or has union status at the HEI. If the student union is unable to carry out the recruitment process, UKÄ, in consultation with the HEI's quality officer or other designated person, will ensure that students are recruited for the interviews.

The HEI and the student unions will be given information about the areas that the assessors want to address during the interview about two weeks before the interview takes place. The HEI and unions are asked to forward the information to the individuals appointed to participate in the interviews. No later than approximately one week prior to the date of the interview, the HEI and unions will notify the project manager at UKÄ about the persons chosen to participate in web interviews.

Areas of focus

To examine how quality assurance procedures work in practice, the assessors examine one or more audit trails. Audit trails are composed of quality assurance procedures, related to the aspects, perspectives and assessment criteria studied in actual environments. These environments can consist of one or more courses and programmes (main field, subject area, programme), faculties, departments or other types of environments, like a library and student health service. Audit trails will be studied during the site visit.

Audit trails are determined by UKÄ based on suggestions from the assessment panel. The HEI will be informed of the selected areas of focus near the time of the online interview. The HEI is asked to upload documentation about audit trails to UKÄ Direkt within three weeks. This documentation should primarily consist of existing documents.

Site visit

At the site visit, the panel studies the audit trails and speaks with the HEI's management, teachers and students, and possibly also with other groups of staff and representatives for employers and the labour market that the HEI cooperates with.

Assessment panels

The assessors are recruited according to the usual nomination procedure in collaboration with HEIs, student unions (via the Swedish National Union of Students, SFS) and employer and labour market organisations. UKÄ, however, appoints the assessment panels. Collectively, the panel is to have sufficiently broad and extensive expertise to assess all aspects and perspectives included in the review. The assessment panel should consist of

- at least one assessor with international experience
- at least one assessor with expertise in the Swedish higher education system
- one assessor who is a student representative
- one assessor who is an employer and labour market representative.

Collectively, the assessment panel should have excellent familiarity with the Swedish higher education system and significant knowledge and experience with quality assurance at different levels within an HEI and within some other organisation forms outside of academia. As a quality assurance measure, the HEI can comment on the assessment panel's composition, for example, to point out conflicts of interest, before the panel is officially appointed by UKÄ.

The assessors will undergo training in UKÄ's evaluation and working methods. Their assignment involves:

- discussing the assessment of aspect areas, aspects, perspectives and assessment criteria
- participating in meetings during the entire evaluation process
- representation at the initial meeting with the HEIs to be included in the evaluation
- reviewing the various assessment criteria, justifying the reviews in writing and specifying what data the reviews are based on
- jointly preparing questions for interviews with HEI, student, and any employer and labour market representatives that the HEI cooperates with
- summarising the assessments in a joint statement including the assessment panel's joint judgement and proposed decision.

Assessments and report

The assessment panel's judgment on whether the HEI meets the assessment criteria for the reviewed aspect areas and perspectives results in a report that serves as the basis for UKÄ's decision. All aspect areas and perspectives must be judged as satisfactory for the overall assessment to be positive.

The assessment should focus on the results of the quality assurance procedure, that is, that it systematically and effectively ensures and improves the courses and programmes. In addition, an assessment will be conducted of how well the HEI's quality assurance procedure systematically identifies strengths and ensures they are maintained and developed, as well as how the areas for improvement are identified, followed up and addressed. In this context, UKÄ would like to emphasise that it is considered positive for the quality assurance procedure to be able to identify and manage deviations and areas for improvement. How relevant stakeholders are given the results of the quality assurance procedure is also to be assessed.

For the reports to contribute to enhancing quality at the HEIs, the assessors should include their own reflections and highlight good learning examples.

During the next six-year cycle, 2017–2022, the HEIs must be able to show that they are working systematically and effectively to ensure the quality

of their courses and programmes and make it probable for all courses and programmes to be quality-assured within a few years' time. The HEIs must also be able to show that a portion of their range of courses and programmes has been quality assured and identify the portion involved.

The assessment panel's judgements and reasoning are to clearly present what is not judged satisfactory should there be a negative judgement.

The assessment panel's draft report will be sent to the HEI for comment before UKÄ makes its final decision. This will give the HEIs the opportunity to correct any factual errors. The HEI is responsible for coordinating this with concerned parties, such as student unions. The review period is three weeks. The final report will then be the basis for UKÄ's decision.

Decision

The overall rating is given on a two-point scale. UKÄ will decide whether to approve or not to approve the HEI's quality assurance procedures. UKÄ bases its position the assessment panel's reports and the considerations of UKÄ.

For the purposes of the pilot study, however, none of the HEIs included will receive the rating not approved. If one or more of the HEIs included in the pilot study are not approved, they will be included in the regular reviews of HEIs' quality assurance procedures instead.

Follow-up

The pilot study will be followed up in order to improve the review method. This will be done partly via UKÄ's ongoing collection of feedback from the HEIs and the assessors throughout the review process, and partly by holding concluding meetings at which the entire process will be discussed with the HEIs and assessors who worked in the pilot study.

For ordinary reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures in the future, the HEIs whose quality assurance procedures do not pass have one year to present the measures they have taken to address the problems.

UKÄ will appoint an assessment panel to review the measures, and web interviews or site visits will be conducted when necessary. If the follow-up review leads to a positive assessment from the assessment panel, UKÄ will approve the HEI's quality assurance procedures. If the HEI's quality assurance procedures still do not meet the assessment criteria in the follow-up review, this means that an additional follow-up review will be conducted after a period agreed upon by UKÄ and the HEI jointly. This also means that an increased number of the HEI's programmes can be evaluated by the HEI.

UKÄ believes it is important that even HEIs that receive approval for their quality assurance work have follow-ups, which is also consistent with ESG standard 2.3, which mentions monitoring as part of the external quality assurance procedure. The forms for this type of follow-up are being drafted and may include dialogue meetings, surveys and conferences.

Review process

The reviews begin with initial meetings for the HEIs included in the round of reviews and with the student unions at these HEIs. The review process then begins, as illustrated in Fig. 2. The total time required to review an HEI's quality assurance procedure is estimated to be about one year.

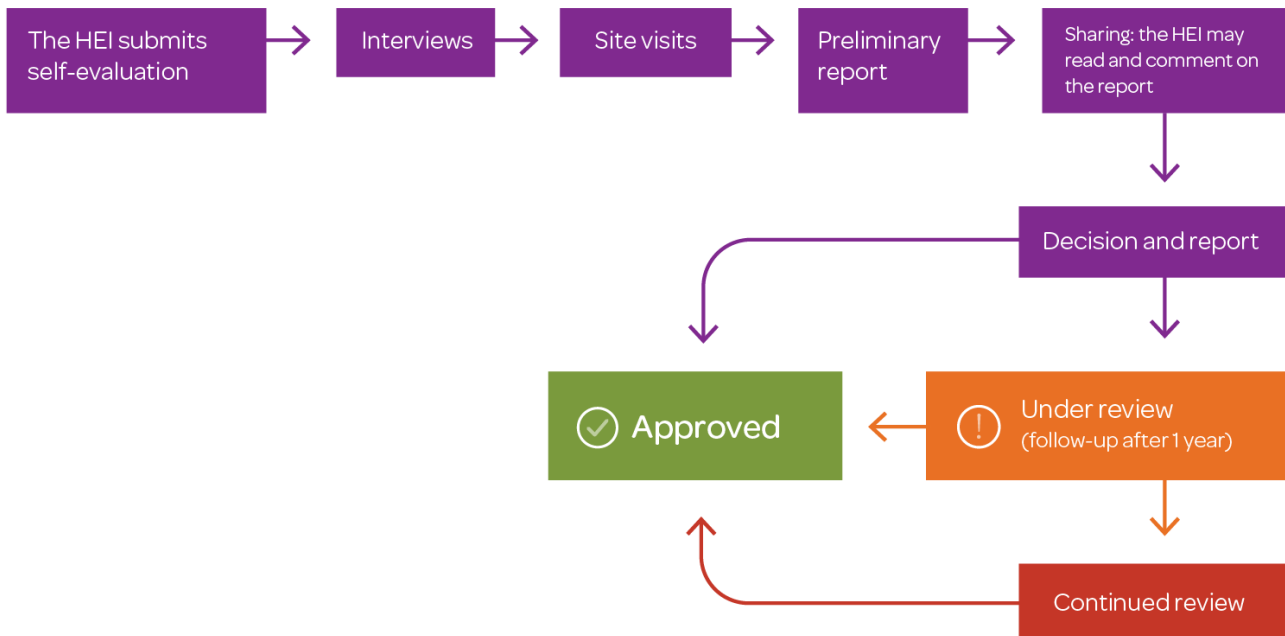


Figure 2. Diagram showing the process for reviewing HEIs' quality assurance procedures. For the purposes of the pilot study, however, none of the HEIs included will receive the rating not approved. If one or more of the HEIs included in the pilot study are not approved, they will be included in the regular reviews of HEIs' quality assurance procedures instead.

Annex 1. Aspect areas, aspects, perspectives and assessment criteria

1. Aspect area: Governance and organisation

1.1 Aspect: Policy for quality assurance and information management

Assessment criteria	<p>A. The HEI's quality assurance procedures are systematic and connected to comprehensive goals and strategies which the HEI has established for its operation.</p> <p>B. The HEI has appropriate and clearly defined allocation of responsibilities for quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>C. The HEI's quality assurance procedure is based on systematic procedures which encourage participation, engagement and responsibility among teachers, other staff and students.</p> <p>D. The HEI works systematically to follow up, evaluate and improve its quality assurance procedures. The HEI ensures that the information generated is communicated systematically to the relevant stakeholders.</p>
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Guidelines for HEIs Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criteria and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. Preferably, illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation. In addition, include the student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective, and gender equality perspective when relevant.

The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criteria are met.

- How is the quality assurance procedure related to the HEI's overarching goals and the strategies for achieving them? How are the HEI's overarching processes and procedures for quality assurance documented? Also explain the self - evaluation work.
- What type of information (such as key figures, student surveys, alumni surveys, evaluation results or other information) is generated by the quality assurance procedures and how does this information help the HEI ensure and improve the quality of the courses and programmes?
- How is it ensured that the allocation of responsibilities for the quality assurance procedures is appropriate?
- How does the HEI generate a quality culture that encourages involvement and creates engagement and accountability for quality assurance work among students, teachers and other staff?
- How are the overarching and documented quality assurance processes and procedures followed up?
- How are planned or implemented measures following a review of the overarching processes of the quality assurance procedures communicated to the relevant stakeholders? Which groups has HEI identified as relevant stakeholders in this context?

cont. 1.1 Aspect: Policy for quality assurance and information management

Guidelines for assessors	<p>Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self-evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criteria.</p> <p>The assessment should include whether the quality assurance work is effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the quality assurance procedures are connected to clear goals and relevant strategies for achieving them• the information generated is suited to the purpose and used systematically to ensure and improve the quality of courses and programmes• allocation of responsibilities is appropriate• a quality culture is in place that ensures the quality assurance procedures encourage involvement and engage students, teachers and other staff.• quality assurance processes and procedures are documented and followed up• planned or implemented measures following a review of the overarching processes of the quality assurance procedures are systematically communicated to the relevant stakeholders and the definition of "relevant stakeholders" is reasonable. <p>When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement. The student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective, and gender equality perspective are given consideration in the summarising assessment of these perspectives.</p>
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Overall assessment of the aspect area governance and organisation

Guidelines for assessors	<p>Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the aspect area <i>governance and organisation</i> based on the collected data and assessment of the evaluated aspects, based on all the assessment criteria. Explain whether or not the quality assurance procedures are effective, systematic, proactive and integrated throughout the HEI's operations. If the aspect area is not deemed to be satisfactory, then clearly state what aspects or criteria are not satisfactory and should therefore be addressed.</p>
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2. Aspect area: Environment, resources and area⁵

2.1 Aspect: Staff

Assessment criteria	<p>A. The HEI provides a supportive environment that gives all staff opportunities to improve their expertise and conditions to do their jobs effectively.</p> <p>B. The HEI works systematically to follow up, evaluate and improve the collective expertise of the staff to fulfil operational needs and foster high - quality courses and programmes.</p>
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Guidelines for HEIs Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criteria and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. Preferably, illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation. In addition, include the student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective and gender equality perspective when relevant.

The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criteria are met.

- How is it ensured that all staff are given opportunities to improve their expertise and to do their jobs effectively?
- How is the collective expertise of the staff followed up, evaluated and improved to fulfil the operational needs and foster high - quality courses and programmes?

Guidelines for assessors Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self - evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criteria.

The assessment should include whether the quality assurance work is effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that

- all staff are given opportunities to improve their expertise and have the conditions to do their jobs effectively
- the staff's collective expertise fulfils the operational needs and fosters high - quality courses and programmes.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement. The student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective, and gender equality perspective are given consideration in the summarising assessment of these perspectives.

⁵ "Areas" are not considered within the reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance procedures.

2.2 Aspect: Research and education

Assessment criteria

A. The HEI makes sure there is a clear connection between education and research in the learning environment.

B. The HEI applies transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of teaching staff, in which academic or artistic expertise and educational or other expertise are given equal consideration.

C. The HEI works systematically to follow up, evaluate and improve the connection between education and research in the learning environment.

Guidelines for HEIs

Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criteria and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. Preferably, illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation. In addition, include the student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective and gender equality perspective when relevant.

The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criteria are met.

- How is it ensured that the teaching staff contributes to a learning environment with a clear connection between education and national and international research?
- What is the process for the assessment and evaluation of academic and artistic expertise and educational and other expertise during recruitment of teaching staff?
- How is the work to ensure and improve the connection between education and research followed up?

Guidelines for assessors

Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self-evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criteria.

The assessment should include whether the quality assurance work is effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that

- the teaching staff contributes to a learning environment with a clear connection between education and both national and international research
- experts in recruitment processes are given clear guidelines for how academic, artistic, educational and other expertise are to be assessed and evaluated so they are given equal consideration
- the connection between education and research is followed up and improved.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement. The student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective, and gender equality perspective are given consideration in the summarising assessment of these perspectives.

2.3 Aspect: Infrastructure

Assessment criteria	<p>A. The HEI ensures that infrastructure and student support are appropriate and that there are sufficient teaching resources which are used effectively.</p> <p>B. The HEI works systematically to follow up, evaluate and improve the infrastructure, student support and teaching resources so that these foster high quality courses and programmes.</p>
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Guidelines for HEIs	<p>Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criteria and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. It is good to illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation. In addition, include the student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective and gender equality perspective when relevant.</p>
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The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criteria are met.

- How are the following ensured:
 - appropriate infrastructure (such as technical support and premises)
 - appropriate student support (such as student health, education and career guidance, and natural meeting places)
 - sufficient teaching resources in addition to ordinary staff (such as student-centred teaching forms, language workshops, guest teachers and teachers present at internship sites) and that these are used effectively?
- What is the process for following up and evaluating whether the infrastructure, student support and teaching resources promote high quality courses and programmes?

Guidelines for assessors	<p>Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self-evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criteria.</p>
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The assessment should include whether the quality assurance procedures are effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that

- there is an appropriate infrastructure that promotes high quality courses and programmes
- there is appropriate student support that promotes high quality courses and programmes
- there are sufficient teaching resources that promote high quality courses and programmes and they are used effectively.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement. The student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective, and gender equality perspective are given consideration in the summarising assessment of these perspectives.

Overall assessment of the aspect area environment, resources and area

Guidelines for assessors	Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the aspect area <i>environment, resource and area</i> based on the collected material and assessment of the evaluated aspects, based on all the assessment criteria. Explain whether or not the work to ensure and improve the environment and resources is effective, systematic, proactive and integrated throughout the HEI's operations. If the aspect area is not deemed to be satisfactory, then clearly state what aspects or criteria are not satisfactory and should therefore be addressed.
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3.1 Aspect: Design and implementation

Assessment criteria

A. The HEI has a clear allocation of responsibilities and appropriate processes and procedures for the development, design, establishment and closure of courses and programmes.

B. The HEI ensures that its courses and programmes are designed, developed and implemented in such a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process, which is reflected in the examinations.

C. The HEI works systematically to follow up, evaluate and improve the design and implementation of courses and programmes. Planned or implemented measures following a review are communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

In addition, the following is applicable to independent higher education providers:

D. The HEI has and uses good routines for admitting students, recognition of degrees for higher education, study periods and prior learning (credit transfers), and also for issuing degree certificates. The HEI also has an established procedure for student appeals.

cont. 3.1 Aspect: Design and implementation

Guidelines for HEIs

Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criteria and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. It is good to illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation. In addition, include the student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective and gender equality perspective when relevant.

The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criteria are met.

- What are the processes and procedures, including allocation of responsibilities, for:
 - development and design of courses and programmes
 - establishment of courses and programmes
 - closure of courses and programmes?
- How is it ensured that courses and programmes are designed, developed and implemented in such a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process, and how is it ensured that this is also reflected in the examination forms?
- In what ways are experiences, opinions and expertise from teachers, other staff, students, the employer and labour market and other external stakeholders considered when planning and designing courses and programmes?
- How is it ensured that the courses and programmes offered are up-to-date in relation to national and international research?
- What is the process for following up, evaluating and improving the design and implementation of courses and programmes?
- How does the HEI ensure that planned or implemented measures following a review pertaining to the design and implementation of courses and programmes are communicated to the relevant stakeholders? Which groups has the HEI identified as relevant stakeholders in this context?

In addition, the following is applicable to independent higher education providers. Describe procedures and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement with regard to

- admission of students
- credit transfer
- issuing of degree certificates
- student appeals.

cont. 3.1 Aspect: Design and implementation

**Guidelines
for assessors**

Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self-evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criteria.

The assessment should include whether the quality assurance procedures are effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that

- development, design, establishment and closure of courses and programmes functions satisfactorily
- courses and programmes are designed and implemented in such a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process, which is reflected in the examination forms
- experiences, opinions and expertise from teachers, other staff, students, the employer and labour market and other external stakeholders are considered when planning and designing courses and programmes
- the courses and programmes offered are up-to-date in relation to national and international research
- the design and implementation of courses and programmes are followed up, evaluated and improved
- planned or implemented measures following a review are communicated to the relevant stakeholders and the definition of "relevant stakeholders" is reasonable.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement. The student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective, and gender equality perspective are considered in the summarising assessment of these perspectives.

For independent higher education providers, include in the assessment whether or not procedures function well for

- admission of students
- credit transfer
- issuing of degree certificates
- student appeals.

3.2 Aspect: Goal attainment

Assessment criteria	<p>A. The HEI ensures that its courses and programmes are designed, developed and implemented with a clear connection between national and local goals, teaching activities and examinations. The HEI ensures that all students have good potential for achieving their established goals within the planned time.</p> <p>B. The HEI works systematically to follow up and evaluate whether students' actual learning outcomes correspond with the expected learning outcomes. Planned or implemented measures following such a review are communicated to the relevant stakeholders.</p>
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Guidelines for HEIs	<p>Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criteria and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. It is good to illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation. In addition, include the student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective and gender equality perspective when relevant.</p>
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The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criteria are met.

- How does the HEI ensure that each department or equivalent has quality assurance procedures in place which ensure the courses and programmes are designed, enhanced and implemented with a clear connection between students' expected learning outcomes, teaching activities and forms of examination?
- How does the HEI ensure that each department or equivalent has quality assurance procedures in place which ensure the courses and programmes are designed and implemented in such a way that all students, including international students and distance students, are provided with good potential for achieving the established goals within the planned time?
- How does the HEI ensure that the departments or equivalent work systematically to follow up and evaluate whether students' actual learning outcomes correspond with the expected learning outcomes?
- How is it ensured that planned or implemented measures following a review of goal attainment or the processes to ensure goal attainment are communicated to the relevant stakeholders? Which groups has the HEI identified as relevant stakeholders in this context?

cont. 3.2 Aspect: Goal attainment

Guidelines for assessors Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self-evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criteria.

The assessment should include whether the quality assurance procedures are effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that

- each department or equivalent has quality assurance procedures in place that help ensure courses and programmes are designed, developed and implemented with a clear connection between students' expected learning outcomes, teaching activities and forms of examination
- each department or equivalent has quality assurance procedures in place that help ensure that all students, including international students and distance students, have good potential for achieving their established goals within the planned time
- the departments or equivalent follow up and evaluate whether students' actual learning outcomes correspond with the expected learning outcomes
- planned or implemented measures following a review are communicated to the relevant stakeholders and the definition of "relevant stakeholders" is reasonable.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement. The student and doctoral student perspective, employer and labour market perspective, and gender equality perspective are considered in the summarising assessment of these perspectives.

Overall assessment of the aspect area design, teaching/learning and outcomes

Guidelines for assessors Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the aspect area *design, implementation and results* based on the collected data and assessment of the evaluated aspects and on all the assessment criteria. Explain whether or not the work to ensure and improve the design, implementation and results of courses and programmes is effective, systematic, proactive and integrated throughout the HEI's operations. If the aspect area is not deemed to be satisfactory, then clearly state what aspects or criteria are not satisfactory and should therefore be addressed.

Employer and labour market perspective

Assessment criteria

The HEI works systematically to improve, follow up and evaluate courses and programmes to ensure that they are useful and improve students' preparedness to deal with changes in working life. Planned or implemented measures following a review are communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

Guidelines for HEIs

Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criterion and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. It is good to illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation.

Describe and explain how collaboration takes place to ensure that courses and programmes are useful and improve the preparedness of students to deal with changes in working life.

The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criterion is met.

- How does the HEI ensure that courses and programmes are "useful"? How is useful defined?
- How does the HEI ensure that courses and programmes improve the preparedness of students to deal with changes in working life?
- How does the HEI follow up that courses and programmes are useful and that they improve the preparedness of students to deal with changes in working life?
- How does the HEI ensure that planned or implemented measures following a review of the usefulness of courses and programmes are communicated to the relevant stakeholders? Which groups has the HEI identified as relevant stakeholders in this context?

Guidelines for assessors

Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self-evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criterion. Assess whether or not the collaboration that takes place helps to ensure that courses and programmes are useful and improve the preparedness of students to deal with changes in working life.

The assessment should also include whether the quality assurance work is effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that

- the courses and programmes are useful
- the courses and programmes improve the preparedness of students to deal with changes in working life
- the usefulness of the courses and programmes is followed up and systematically evaluated
- planned or implemented measures following a review of the usefulness of courses and programmes are communicated to the relevant stakeholders and the definition of "relevant stakeholders" is reasonable.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement.

Overall assessment of the employer and labour market perspective

**Guidelines
for assessors**

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the employer and labour market perspective based on the collective documentation and on the assessment of the assessment criteria. When the HEI has included the employer and labour market perspective in its discussion of the different aspect areas, consider this in this overall assessment. Explain whether or not the work to ensure and improve the employer and labour market perspective is effective, systematic, proactive and integrated throughout the HEI's operations. If the employer and labour market perspective is not deemed to be satisfactory, then clearly state what the HEI is not fulfilling and should therefore address.

Student and doctoral student perspective

Assessment criteria

- A. The HEI works systematically to ensure the rights of students to exert influence over courses and programmes and their situation.
- B. The HEI works systematically to follow up, evaluate and improve student influence. Planned or implemented measures following a review are communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

Guidelines for HEIs

Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criteria and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. It is good to illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation.

The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criteria are met.

- How does the HEI ensure that students have good conditions to exert influence over courses and programmes and their situation?
- How does the HEI ensure students are engaged and motivated to play an active role in efforts to improve courses and programmes?
- How does the HEI work to follow up, evaluate and improve student influence? How is it ensured that the gender equality perspective is considered in these improvement efforts?
- How does the HEI ensure that planned or implemented measures following a review of student influence are communicated to the relevant stakeholders? Which groups has the HEI identified as relevant stakeholders in this context?

Guidelines for assessors

Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self-evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criteria.

The assessment should include whether the quality assurance procedures are effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that

- students have good potential for exerting influence over courses and programmes and their situation
- students are encouraged and motivated to play an active role in efforts to improve courses and programmes
- student influence is followed up, evaluated and improved and the gender equality perspective is present in these improvement efforts
- planned or implemented measures following a review of student influence are communicated to the relevant stakeholders and the definition of "relevant stakeholders" is reasonable.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement.

Overall assessment of the student and doctoral student perspective

**Guidelines
for assessors**

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the student and doctoral student perspective based on the collective documentation and judgement of the included assessment criteria. When the HEI has included this perspective in its discussion of the different aspect areas, consider this in this overall assessment. Explain whether or not the work to ensure and improve the student and doctoral student perspective is effective, systematic, proactive and integrated throughout the HEI's operations. If this perspective is not deemed to be satisfactory, then clearly state what criteria are not satisfactory and should therefore be addressed.

Gender equality perspective

Assessment criteria

A. The HEI ensures there is active work to integrate the gender equality perspective at all levels of the operation.

B. The HEI works systematically to follow up, evaluate and improve the gender equality perspective. Planned or implemented measures following a review are communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

Guidelines for HEIs

Briefly describe and then evaluate the selected work methods for meeting the assessment criteria and analyse the strengths and areas for improvement. It is good to illustrate the report with specific examples of how the systematic quality assurance procedures are evident in and contribute to improving the operation.

The questions below may be used as support for the report of how well the assessment criteria are met.

- How does the HEI ensure integration of the gender equality perspective at all levels of the operation?
- What does the HEI do to actively follow up, evaluate and improve integration of the gender equality perspective at all levels of the operation?
- How does the HEI ensure that planned or implemented measures following a review of the gender equality perspective are communicated to the relevant stakeholders? How are relevant stakeholders defined in this context?

Guidelines for assessors

Conduct an assessment based on the collective documentation (self-evaluation, student report, interviews, site visits, audit trails and other information produced by UKÄ) of how well the HEI meets the assessment criteria.

The assessment should include whether the quality assurance procedures are effectively, systematically and proactively integrated into the HEI's operation; and ensure that

- the gender equality perspective is integrated at all levels of the operation
- the gender equality perspective is followed up, evaluated and improved
- planned or implemented measures following a review of the gender equality perspective are communicated to the relevant stakeholders and the definition of "relevant stakeholders" is reasonable.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement.

Overall assessment of the gender equality perspective

**Guidelines
for assessors**

Conduct an overall assessment of the HEI's integration of the gender equality perspective in the operation based on the collective documentation and judgement of the included assessment criteria. When the HEI has included this perspective in its discussion of the different aspect areas, consider this in this overall assessment. Explain whether or not the work to ensure and improve integration of the gender equality perspective in the operation at all levels is effective, systematic and proactive. If the gender equality perspective is not deemed to be satisfactory, then clearly state what criteria are not satisfactory and should be addressed.

Aspect area: Follow-up, measures and feedback

Overall assessment of the aspect area follow-up, measures and feedback

Guidelines for assessors Conduct an overall assessment of the aspect area *follow-up, measures and feedback* based on the collective documentation and assessment of the relevant criteria for the other aspect areas and perspectives. Justify whether or not quality assurance work is integrated at various levels of the HEI's operation so that follow-up, measures and feedback are effective, systematic and proactive.

When possible, emphasise good, educational examples that show that the HEI's systematic quality assurance efforts lead to improvement measures. Assess how the HEI handles identified areas for improvement.

If the aspect area is not deemed to be satisfactory, then clearly state what aspects or criteria are not satisfactory and should therefore be addressed.

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (Universitetskanslersämbetet – UKÄ) is to contribute to strengthening Swedish higher education and Sweden as a knowledge society. We review the quality of higher education programmes; we analyse and follow-up trends within higher education and we monitor the rights of students.

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