



Guidelines for the evaluation of first- and second-cycle programmes



Guidelines for programme evaluations at the first- and second-cycle levels

Published by the Swedish Higher Education Authority 2016, revised 2018.

Project Manager: Ulrika Thafvelin

Swedish Higher Education Authority • Löjtnantsgatan 21 • Box 7703, 103 95 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46-(0)8-563 085 00 • Fax: +46-(0)8-563 085 50 • email registrator@uka.se • www.uka.se

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
National system for quality assurance in higher education	5
UKÄ's reviews	5
First - and second - cycle programme evaluations	7
Purpose	7
Main principles for programme evaluations	7
Selection criteria	8
Assessment areas and assessment criteria	9
Assessment area: Preconditions	9
Assessment area: Design, implementation and outcomes	10
Assessment area: Student perspective	12
Assessment area: Working life and collaboration	13
Assessment material	14
The HEI's self - evaluation	14
Degree projects	15
Interviews	15
Other data	16
Assessment panels	16
Initial meeting	18
Report and decision	18
Assessment panel's report	18
Sharing of assessment panel's report	18
Decision	19
Follow - up	20

Introduction

This guideline applies to the programme evaluations at the first- and second-cycle levels. It is based on the national system for quality assurance in higher education, 2016–2022 presented by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) in the report *National system for quality assurance in higher education – review of a government assignment* (Report 2016:15). Evaluation of first- and second-cycle education is included in the programme evaluation component, which is one of four components within the national system of quality assurance in higher education. UKÄ conducted a pilot study for the evaluation of first- and second-cycle education between 2016–2017.

National system for quality assurance in higher education

Quality assurance in Swedish higher education presupposes that quality assurance is conducted by higher education institutions (HEIs) as well as by UKÄ. This means that the HEIs and UKÄ have a shared responsibility for quality assurance in higher education.¹ Valuing this shared responsibility has been a core principle of UKÄ in its work with the government assignment to develop a new system for quality assurance in higher education. It has been important to create a clear link between UKÄ's reviews and the quality assurance processes at the HEIs, while also considering how UKÄ's reviews can contribute to further improving this work. It is also in line 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 work, the external quality assurance of HEIs' educational activities and the requirements that the quality assurance bodies must meet. To adhere to the agreements in ESG, both the HEIs and UKÄ must ensure compliance with these international principals for quality assurance.

UKÄ's reviews

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

- appraisals of degree-awarding power
- institutional reviews of the HEIs' quality assurance processes
- programme evaluations
- thematic evaluations.

UKÄ has strived to develop a model which is useful in various aspects for all four components but that can also support the HEIs' internal

¹ UKÄ's task is described in the public service agreement for the 2016 financial year pertaining to the Swedish Higher Education Authority (U2016/01132/UH, U2016/01349/UH), in the government communication *Assuring the quality of higher education* (2015/16:76) and in the report from the Education Committee and 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.

quality assurance processes. The model consists of the following six assessment areas.

- governance and organisation
- preconditions
- design, implementation and outcomes
- student perspective
- working life and collaboration
- gender equality.

The assessment areas governance and organisation; preconditions; and design, implementation and outcomes are based on both applicable Swedish law and ordinances as well as the ESG. Student influence and participation are regulated in the Higher Education Act, particularly in relation to the HEI's quality assurance processes (Chapter 1, section 4). The student perspective is more clearly described in the revised ESG (2015). Working life and collaboration are 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 for consideration in the reviews. Like many other agencies and public HEIs, UKÄ is tasked with working with gender mainstreaming. Gender equality is also regulated in the Higher Education Act (Chapter 1, section 5).

UKÄ's reviews are based on the assessment criteria included in an assessment area. It has been important to keep the assessment criteria open-ended and to avoid micromanagement of how the HEIs choose to organise and conduct their educational activities. Assessment areas and the bases for assessment for evaluations of first- and second-cycle programmes are defined in detail in this document.

All reviews will be carried out by independent assessment panels put together by UKÄ based on a nomination procedure in which HEIs, student unions and employee/employer organisations propose assessors. The assessment panels consist of student representatives, employer and working life representatives, and experts from the higher education sector, who are all on an equal footing. UKÄ then makes a decision 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 – review of a Government assignment* (Report 2016:15).

First- and second-cycle programme evaluations

The programme evaluations check the actual conditions and results, e.g. that the programme meets the requirements in applicable laws and ordinances.

The programme evaluations assess how well the follow-up, measures and feedback processes systematically contribute to ensuring and improving quality in the reviewed programmes.

They 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

The purpose of the programme evaluations is to monitor the programmes' outcomes and to contribute to the higher education institution's own quality improvements for the reviewed programmes.

Main principles for programme evaluations

All programme evaluations are based on the requirements of the applicable Swedish laws and ordinances; the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG); and the Government's communication Assuring the quality of higher education (2015/16:76, report 2015/16:UbU9, Riksdag communication 2015/16:155). The method is based on a general basic structure which applies to all programme levels.

The programme evaluations emphasise the actual conditions and results, i.e., how the programme meets the requirements of applicable laws and ordinances. The programme evaluations focus on how the programme ensures that students are given good opportunities to achieve the objectives of the System of Qualifications, and how the HEI ensures that the students have achieved the qualitative targets upon graduation. The assessment criteria can be adapted to some extent to different degrees to allow the fairest review possible. The HEIs are also to describe and evaluate how well their follow-up, measures, and feedback routines contribute to systematically ensuring and developing the reviewed programmes.

In addition to monitoring the programmes' outcomes, the reviews are also to help the HEIs improve quality. In the report, the HEI may therefore be informed of both good examples and areas in need of development identified by the assessment panel.

Selection criteria

All higher education programmes are to be subject to quality review. This is done partly through the HEIs having responsibility for the quality assurance of their own programmes and partly by UKÄ evaluating a selection of first- and second-cycle programmes. The selection of programmes to be included in UKÄ's first- and second-cycle programme evaluations in the upcoming six-year cycle is based on the following primary criteria:

- A selection of the programmes that were not covered by the 2011–2014 evaluation system should be evaluated.
- A national overview of the quality of some professional qualifications is needed. This applies primarily to regulated professional qualifications.
- If an HEI's quality assurance processes do not meet the criteria in UKÄ's review, additional programmes at the HEI may be selected for evaluation.
- UKÄ can initiate an evaluation if information emerges about individual programmes indicating a risk that the quality requirements for other programmes are also unmet.

To be excluded from an evaluation, the HEI must decide to terminate the relevant programme before the evaluation begins. A programme may also be excluded from an evaluation if the HEI has not accepted any new students in the past two years. In this case, the HEI is to submit an account of why the programme has not accepted any new students during this period.

A plan for the programmes to be evaluated within the framework of the six-year cycle of 2017–2022 is available on UKÄ's website.

Assessment areas and assessment criteria

First- and second-cycle programme evaluations include four assessment areas:

- preconditions
- design, implementation and outcomes (including gender equality and follow-up, measures and feedback)
- student perspective
- working life and collaboration.

The assessment areas contain one or more assessment criteria. An overall assessment will be given for each assessment area. For the evaluations to be legally correct, predictable and transparent, the assessment criteria are to be made known in advance and be common to all programmes within the same evaluation.

Below is an account of the assessment criteria included in first- and second-cycle programme evaluations. Each assessment criterion is followed by instructions aimed at clarify what is being requested. In the self-evaluation, the HEI is to describe, analyse and assess how the assessment criteria have been met within the framework of the evaluated programme. Because the programme evaluations are results-focused, it is essential that the HEI uses specific examples to illuminate how the assessment criteria are met.

Assessment area: Preconditions

The assessment area *Preconditions* includes assessment criteria pertaining to *staff* and the *education environment*.

Staff

Assessment criterion:

The number of teachers and their combined expertise (scientific/artistic/professional and pedagogical) are sufficient and proportional to the volume, content and implementation of the programme in the short term and long term.

Students are to receive high-quality instruction in their programme, which presupposes that as a group the teachers have the scientific/artistic/professional expertise required. However, teachers also need pedagogical expertise for students to acquire knowledge, expertise and preparedness. Furthermore, it is important that teacher capacity is proportional to the programme's scope, teaching and examination. High-quality teaching as a resource is characterised by stability and availability. The HEI should therefore work with a long-term approach regarding both continuity and skills development among teachers in the relevant

programme. At the programme level, the HEI should create conditions for teachers to take responsibility for maintaining and continuously improving scientific/artistic/professional and pedagogical competence at both the individual and collegial levels. Strategies should also be in place for handling staff turnover, for example in cases of retirement. For programmes leading to a professional qualification, it is important that students have access to supervisors with sufficient expertise during their placement training to give students high-quality education.

A description and analysis of teacher expertise and teacher capacity should be complemented with a presentation in the form of a table as defined in the template attached to the self-evaluation.

Education environment

Assessment criterion:

The programme has a scientific/artistic and professionally oriented environment and is run in such a way that includes a close connection between research and education.

The education environment refers to the environment in which the programme takes place and in which students and teachers are active. A good education environment is characterised by creativity and the conditions for development as well as a close connection between research and education. In a good education environment, students have access to the relevant research that is pursued in relation to the programme and also have the opportunity to participate in a research context and engage in a research approach. The environment also promotes scientific/artistic and professional work among teachers.

Assessment area: Design, implementation and outcomes

The assessment area Design, implementation and outcomes includes the components of the qualitative targets that have been selected for the evaluation under the forms of proficiency: *knowledge and understanding*; *competence and skills* and *judgment and approach*. This assessment area also includes *gender equality* and *follow-up, measures and feedback*.

Qualitative targets

Each qualification has a number of formulated qualitative targets in the System of Qualifications (annex 2 to the Higher Education Act). To delimit the scope of the evaluation, in consultation with the sector and based on experience from previous evaluations, UKÄ has made a selection of qualitative targets for each programme evaluation at the first and second cycles. The principal for the selection is that at least one target per form

of proficiency is included in the selection. Collectively there should be no more than six selected targets. Based on the selection, an additional selection is made of qualitative targets/components of targets that should be reviewed in the degree projects.

Goal attainment

Assessment criteria:

The programme facilitates through its design and implementation and ensures through examination that when the degree is issued, the student is able to achieve the selected targets within the form of proficiency knowledge and understanding in the System of Qualifications.

The programme facilitates through its design and implementation and ensures through examination that when the degree is issued, the student is able to achieve the selected targets within the form of proficiency competence and skills in the System of Qualifications.

The programme facilitates through its design and implementation and ensures through examination that when the degree is issued, the student is able to achieve the selected targets within the form of proficiency judgment and approach in the System of Qualifications.

The qualitative targets define what students are to have achieved upon receiving a degree.

In the self-evaluation, the HEI should provide an account of how it ensures that students are given the opportunity to achieve the targets upon receiving a degree. This account could include, for example, how progression takes place; the connection between the qualitative targets, intended learning outcomes, learning activities and examination; grading criteria and how they are used; appropriate forms of teaching and activities; how student learning is supported, and how student conditions and needs are taken into consideration.

Gender equality

Assessment criterion:

A gender-equality perspective is taken into account, communicated and supported by the content, design and implementation of the programme.

Gender equality refers to equality between the sexes and that all people, regardless of gender, have the opportunity to shape society and their own lives. This means that within the programme, there should be an awareness of gender equality and this awareness be expressed concretely in both qualitative and quantitative measures. For example, this could involve an intentional dialogue about gender equality in conjunction

with planning the programme's structure and teaching. This could mean that the gender-equality perspective is included in the selection of course literature and in selecting teachers, supervisors and external lecturers.

For programmes leading to a professional qualification, the System of Qualifications includes targets dealing with gender equality. In these cases, the HEI is to report on how it ensures that students have achieved this target upon receiving the degree.

Follow-up, measures and feedback

Assessment criteria:

The content, design, implementation and examinations are systematically followed up. The outcomes of the follow-up are translated, when necessary, into measures for quality improvement, and feedback is given to relevant stakeholders.

The HEI works for students to complete the programme within the planned programme length.

Ensuring that a programme is high quality in both the short and long term requires follow-up of the programme's design, implementation and outcomes. Accordingly, this deals with how the HEI's follow-up, measures and feedback processes for the education level systematically contribute to ensuring and enhancing quality in the reviewed programmes. The HEI is to report how the programme's various components are continuously followed up and how the results are addressed. A key component in the processing of follow-up results is notifying the affected parties, such as teachers, supervisors and students, of any actions or changes to strengthen the quality work and continuous learning.

The assessment criteria follow-up, measures and feedback also include of the HEI's work with student completion. As such, the HEI is to describe the analysis process of student completion of the programme and dropouts that occur. The HEI is to also report what measures are taken and what support is given, when necessary, to create the conditions for students to finish the programme within the established programme length.

Assessment area: Student perspective

Assessment criterion:

Students are given the opportunity to take an active role in the work to improve the content and implementation of the programme.

The student perspective is about the actual student influence in the programme, both formally and informally. Formal influence entails,

among other things, the representation of students in various bodies and platforms. The way in which students participate in decision processes is relevant, including the preparation of questions affecting the programme and how the information channels look for reaching students so that they may take an active role in efforts to develop the programme.

Student influence also involves individual influence, which is more informal and pertains to individual students, for example, what it looks like for a student to be able to take an active role in improving the programme and the learning processes. The HEI is to report the opportunities students have to participate in the programme's quality work and on the development of the programme, and is also describe the information existing channels for obtaining the viewpoints of the students.

Assessment area: Working life and collaboration

Assessment criterion:

The programme is designed and implemented in such a way that it is useful and develops students' preparedness to meet changes in working life. Relevant collaboration occurs with the surrounding society.

Working life and collaboration involve whether the programme is useful with regard to the working life and how the programme prepares students for an ever-changing working life. This means that after graduating, students are to be able to use the knowledge and skills they obtained through their studies and further build upon these during their entire professional lives and in different working life contexts. This requires students, during their studies, to obtain both subject-specific knowledge and general proficiency and abilities. In this assessment area, the HEI is to report how the programme is updated and adapted to working life, and how information is collected that is relevant for the quality assurance and improvement of the programme with regard to its usefulness and preparation for working life. The HEI is also to report how collaboration with the community takes place as a way of ensuring high-quality education. This assessment area also includes how the HEI works to take advantage of alumni experiences when developing the programme.

Within the framework of programmes leading to a professional qualification, the HEI is to also provide an account of how collaboration takes place with regard to placement training.

Assessment material

Assessment material consists of the HEI's self-evaluation with annexes, randomly selected degree projects and interviews with representatives of the reviewed programme and with students. All assessment materials for the review are to be weighed together. The evaluation also factors in other data which UKÄ produces, see the section 'Other data'.

UKÄ Direkt

All written documents are uploaded and registered by the HEI on UKÄ Direkt, 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 an evaluation, such as guidance documents and the self-evaluation template, as well as the user manual for UKÄ Direkt. Each HEI has an administrator for UKÄ Direkt.

The HEI's self-evaluation

The self-evaluation aims to give the HEI the opportunity to show that the evaluated programme meets the assessment criteria for the assessment areas. Using specific examples, the HEI is to describe, analyse and evaluate how its preconditions and processes ensure that students have achieved the qualitative targets when the degree is issued and that the programme is of high quality. The emphasis of the self-evaluation is more on evaluation than on a description. The HEI is to provide examples in the self-evaluation that describe both strengths and identified areas in need of improvement, including planned and implemented actions to further improve the programme and ensure high quality. This is intended to give the assessors an understanding of the programme as a whole and how the internal processes work to drive quality improvements.

The self-evaluation is entered into UKÄ's template and should not exceed 30 pages. To facilitate the evaluation, the HEIs are asked to follow the template structure for their reports. The self-evaluation template can be downloaded from UKÄ Direkt, and the completed self-evaluation including annexes is to be uploaded and registered to the site 10 weeks after the initial meeting.

Background description

The background description aimed at positioning the programme in a larger context. The background description is to include background factors important for the assessment panel to be aware of and that cannot be directly related to the assessment criteria.

In the background description, the HEI should report on how long the programme has existed, on its organisation and structure, and whether the programme has a specialisation or profile area.

Annex to the self-evaluation

To facilitate a fair evaluation, it is important that the HEI's presentation in the self-evaluation is complete and can be understood without any additional information. The self-evaluation annexes consist of tables with information about teachers connected to the programme.

Programme curricula and course syllabi

If the HEI feels that curricula and syllabi are necessary to strengthen the content of the self-evaluation, they can be uploaded to UKÄ Direkt. Curricula and syllabi should only be used as supplementary information which the assessment panel can access if it needs to verify or understand anything in greater detail. No other documents are to be attached and uploaded to UKÄ Direkt.

Degree projects

Degree projects are important documentation for assessing the targets to be achieved for meeting the requirements of each degree. Degree projects thus serve as material for assessing the programme's outcome. Degree projects, passing final projects, from the past academic year are included. If no degree projects are available for the past academic year, UKÄ may request degree projects that received a passing grade from the past three years. In the case that no degree projects are available from the past three years, the assessment panel may base the evaluation on other documentation. The HEI uploads lists to UKÄ Direkt containing all anonymised degree projects that are relevant within the framework of the evaluation. Based on these lists, a random selection is made according to UKÄ's occurrence model,³ in which a maximum of 16 degree projects per academic year are included. The HEI uploads the selected degree projects about five weeks after the initial meeting. Goal attainment of a selection of qualitative targets or parts of targets is evaluated in the degree project. For certain programmes leading to a professional qualification, students complete two degree projects of 15 higher education credits each. The most recently completed degree project is to be included in the evaluation.

Interviews

Interviews are conducted with representatives of the reviewed programme and students enrolled in the programme.

HEI interviews are to supplement the overview the assessors have obtained from the self-evaluation, degree projects and other documentation. The assessors are also given an opportunity to confirm that existing information has been properly interpreted. Interviews are

³ This model was used for the quality assurance system from 2011–2016. The size of a given selection depends on the size of the population, certainty level (90%), and in which division of the population that both the categories are represented in the selection (the model uses 10% and 20%).

also an opportunity for the HEI to meet the assessors and submit any supplementary verbal information that clarifies the self-evaluation. The HEI determines who will participate in the interview.

The purpose of the student interview is to supplement other documentation with student experiences of how well the programme creates sufficient conditions for students to achieve the qualitative targets. The student interviews may also bring to light areas that the assessors need to pay particular attention to when assessing the quality of the programme. Students taking part in the interviews should be near the end of their programme and 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 recruit the students, UKÄ, in consultation with the HEI's quality officer or other designated person, will ensure that students are recruited for the interviews.

Interviews with both representatives of the HEI and students are carried out in the form of web meetings. The assessors interview students first, followed by teacher representatives, and finally management representatives. The interviews may vary in length depending on how many questions the assessment panel wishes to ask. Both the HEI and the students will be given instructions for the interview about two weeks before it takes place. The students will also receive the HEI's self-evaluation well before the interview. The project manager at UKÄ will be informed about the persons chosen for participation in web interviews approximately one week prior to the date of the interview.

Other data

Prior to the evaluations, UKÄ produces data about the programme that is relevant for the assessment areas to be evaluated. Where relevant, these documents are to be considered by both the HEI and the assessment panel. For example, this could be official statistics showing the student completion rate and establishment level, previous inspection cases, appraisals of degree-awarding powers and previous programme evaluations.

The material serves as a basis for discussions and questions during the interview. The HEI may also comment on the material in the self-evaluation. The material will be available for the HEI in UKÄ Direkt in conjunction with the initial meeting.

Assessment panels

The assessors are recruited according to the usual nomination procedure in collaboration with the HEIs, student unions (via the Swedish National Union of Students, SFS) and working life organisations. UKÄ, however, appoints the assessment panels. Collectively, the panel is to have

sufficiently broad and extensive expertise to assess all assessment areas included in the evaluation.

The assessment panels usually consist of:

- external experts
- student representatives
- employer and working life representatives.

The collective knowledge and experience of the experts and employer, working life and student representatives allow the assessment panel to make joint assessments of the assessment criteria and assessment areas included in the evaluation. The experts should have solid expertise and experience with the design of the programme and the subject area under evaluation. The role of student representatives is to strengthen the student perspective and to participate in the assessment panel's assessment all assessment areas of the evaluation. The role of the employer and working life representative is primarily, based on the working life perspective together with the other employer and working life representatives and the assessment panel, to assess the usefulness and preparedness for the working life that results from the evaluated programmes.

As a quality assurance measure, the HEIs 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 a training programme in UKÄ's evaluation and working methods. The training programme aims to clarify the assignment and expectations and is usually done together with several evaluation projects within the same component and review round. The training includes an orientation about the laws, ordinances and ESG which the assessors must consider, a review of UKÄ's quality assurance system, and the assessment areas and assessment criteria that are connected to the relevant evaluation. The training programme also covers interview techniques and addresses gender equality issues.

The assessors' assignment is to:

- discuss the assessment areas and assessment criteria
- participate in meetings during the entire evaluation process
- as a group, be represented at the initial meeting with the HEIs to be included in the evaluation
- review the different assessment material and explain their assessments in writing
- jointly prepare questions for interviews with students and the HEI's representatives
- summarise the assessments in a joint statement including the assessment panel's proposed overall assessment and proposed decision.

A special assessor handbook⁴ describes, among other things, the assessment panel's role in the review process and the primary steps in the implementation of the reviews. Together with the guidelines for each individual component, this handbook aims to serve as support for the assignment as an assessor and in the assessment work.

Initial meeting

As a first step in the evaluation process, UKÄ requests an introductory, initial meeting for representatives from each HEI, a representative for the assessment panels (usually the chairperson) and staff from UKÄ.

The overall objective of this introductory meeting is to provide the HEIs with a solid understanding of the evaluation and its content, focus and implementation. The meeting gives the HEIs a chance to ask UKÄ and assessment panel representatives questions about the assessment criteria and the evaluation process.

During the meeting, UKÄ also presents other assessment material included in the evaluation, the assessment panel's composition and a schedule for the evaluation.

Report and decision

Assessment panel's report

All material will be considered in the assessment panel's assessment of how well the programme fulfils the assessment criteria for the reviewed assessment areas. All included assessment areas must be judged as satisfactory for the programme to be assessed as maintaining high quality.

The assessment panel's determinations and reasoning are to be clearly presented in a report. This report will serve as feedback to the HEI on areas needing development and good examples identified by the assessors. Furthermore, anything judged to have insufficient quality should be clearly stated.

Sharing of assessment panel's report

The assessment panel's draft report will be sent to the HEI for comment before UKÄ makes its final decision. The purpose of this is to give HEIs the opportunity to check the contents and comment on any factual mistakes in the report. The period for comment is three weeks. The

⁴ This handbook is available on UKÄ's website, www.uka.se

assessors read the HEI's responses and make changes to the report where relevant. The HEI's written response will be attached to the report.

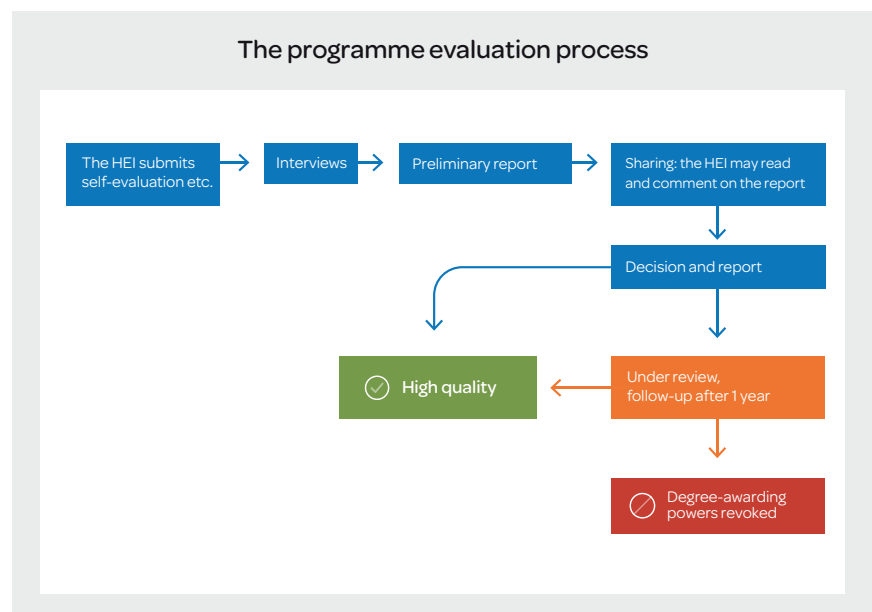
Decision

The final report from the assessment group forms the basis for UKÄ's decision.

The overall assessment is given on a two-point scale. Supported by the assessor panel's report, UKÄ will decide if the programme maintains high quality or if the programme is under review. If a programme is under review, this means that UKÄ is also questioning the degree-awarding powers of the HEI when it comes to the qualification and subject field in question.

Information on decisions is published at www.uka.se.

The following diagram illustrates the process of the programme evaluations.



Follow-up

As with previous evaluation systems, HEIs with programmes under review will have one year to address deficiencies and submit an action report to UKÄ. To review the HEI's report of measures taken, UKÄ will appoint a panel of assessors which, if necessary, can request additional documentation and require an interview if they consider that the material is not sufficient to make an assessment. When the panel considers that it has adequate documentation, the taken actions are evaluated and a report is then submitted to UKÄ.

Supported by the panel's report, UKÄ will decide if the programme maintains high quality or if the degree-awarding powers are to be revoked. UKÄ makes decisions for state HEIs, except for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the Swedish Defence University. For independent higher education providers, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the Swedish Defence University, the assessment panel's report and UKÄ's position are submitted to the Government for decision.

In cases where a state HEI has its degree-awarding powers revoked, enrolled students who have already begun their studies have a right to complete the programme (Chapter 1, section 14, Higher Education Act).

The HEIs may also terminate the programme under review. In such cases, the HEI is to notify UKÄ of its decision to terminate the programme under review no later than the last day for submitting the report of taken actions. The case will then be closed. If the decision to terminate the programme comes in after the last day to submit an action report, the case will then not be closed. In these cases, UKÄ will conduct a follow-up and examine the question of degree-awarding powers for the relevant programme.

UKÄ believes that it is also important to follow up those programmes that have been judged high quality. This also corresponds with ESG standard 2.3, which notes follow-up as a part of the external quality assurance process. The forms for this type of follow-up may vary and could range from surveys and telephone interviews to feedback conferences and other types of follow-up activities.

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (Universitetskanslersämbetet – UKÄ) contributes 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.

uka.se

