

Quality evaluation of third-cycle programmes



Quality evaluation of third-cycle programmes
Registration number, 412-221-14
Published by Swedish Higher Education Authority 2015
Jeanette Johansen

Universitetskanslersämbetet, Box 7703, 103 95 Stockholm
Tfn: 08-563 085 00. Fax: 08-563 085 00
E-post: [registrator\(at\)uka.se](mailto:registrator@uka.se), www.uka.se

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Summary | 4 |
| Preconditions and points of departure | 5 |
| Main principles of the evaluation model | 6 |
| External dialogue..... | 7 |
| Evaluation rounds..... | 8 |
| Units to be evaluated..... | 8 |
| Delimitations | 9 |
| Assessment material | 10 |
| Self-evaluations..... | 10 |
| General syllabuses and individual study plans | 12 |
| Interviews | 13 |
| Assessment..... | 13 |
| Panel report and decision..... | 14 |
| Follow-up..... | 15 |

Summary

Evaluation of third-cycle programmes forms part of the proposed national quality assurance system for higher education that is currently being circulated for consultation by the Government Offices (U2015/1626/UH). The evaluation of third-cycle programmes will begin during the spring of 2015 with a pilot round in which a small number of programmes will be evaluated as part of the methodological development process. The autumn of 2016 will see the start of evaluations of all third-cycle programmes in all subject areas.

The method will evaluate both levels of third-cycle programmes, licentiate programmes and doctoral programmes, as a unit. The main reason for this is that both levels are subject to equal requirements in the qualitative descriptors. An additional reason is that the existing system for granting degree-awarding powers does not distinguish between the two levels. This argument applies to third-cycle programmes in the fine, applied and performing arts as well as to those leading to the award of general third-cycle qualifications. Although the qualification descriptors for doctoral degrees in the fine, applied and performing arts differ from those applying to general doctoral degrees, the programmes will be evaluated using the same methodology but in terms of the appropriate qualification descriptors.

Evaluation will be based on the subject areas and specialisations in which the HEIs offer third-cycle programmes according to the general syllabuses they have adopted. All third-cycle programmes/ subject areas that a HEI has established that lead to the award of a doctoral degree, and that are not decided to be discontinued at the start of the evaluation, will be included.

The method described in this document will be tested in the pilot round. After the pilot round the method may be adjusted. The assessment is based on peer-review evaluation using panels composed of subject experts, representatives of the professional life and doctoral student representatives. The focus of the evaluation methodology is on what a HEI does to ensure that doctoral students attain the qualitative targets laid down in the Qualifications Ordinance. In addition, the evaluation will also cover the HEI's internal quality assurance processes as well as the extent and quality of the third-cycle programmes' settings, including the research environment from which the doctoral students benefit.

Theses will not be included in the assessment material on which the evaluations are based, instead this material will comprise 1) self-evaluation reports, 2) general syllabuses and individual study plans as well as 3) interviews. All of the material will be taken into consideration in every assessment so that they will offer a coherent view of the quality of the programmes. It is also important that the assessors give the reasons for their judgements and feed-back to the HEIs. The results of the evaluations will be expressed using a binary scale and will determine whether or not the programme evaluated attains a high standard.

Preconditions and points of departure

The development work for this methodology has been based on the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) (HEA), the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) (HEO) and the Government Bills *Fokus på kunskap – kvalitet i den högre utbildningen [Focus on knowledge – quality in higher education]* (2009/10:139) and *Forskarutbildning med profilering och kvalitet [Third-cycle programmes with profiles and quality]* (2008/09:134).

The points of departure have been that the model shall:

- Contribute to ensuring that all higher education in Sweden is of a high quality
- Contribute to the quality enhancement of higher education.

Some of the guiding principles for the development of the model have been:

- Focus on achievement of learning outcomes
- The perspective of the doctoral students must play a central role (cf. Govt. Bill 2008/09:134)
- Internal quality assurance processes are to be included
- Labour market perspectives are to be taken into account (cf. Govt. Bill 2009/10:139)
- The evaluation system must be compatible with the autonomy of the HEIs (HEA and HEO).

Section 9a of Chapter 1 of the HEA lays down that third-cycle courses and study programmes shall be based fundamentally on the knowledge acquired by students in first and second-cycle courses and study programmes, or its equivalent. In addition to the requirements for first and second-cycle courses and study programmes, third-cycle courses and study programmes shall develop the knowledge and skills required to be able to undertake autonomous research.

Evaluation of third-cycle courses is referred to in the Government Bill *Focus on knowledge – quality in higher education*, The wording in this bill is concise but explicit in at least two respects. The first is that the allocation of resources will not be based on evaluation and the second is that evaluations must take into consideration the special provision that applies to third-cycle programmes which stipulates that the courses and programmes and research at a HEI shall be of such a standard and extent that third-cycle courses and programmes can be offered at an advanced academic or artistic level (Sections 5c – d of Chapter 6 of the HEO).

Two conclusions have been drawn from this.

- 1) We can restrict ourselves to a binary scale for the results of the evaluations as the allocation of resources will not be based on them.
- 2) The extent and quality of research must be considered in the evaluation of third-cycle programmes.

The Government Bill *Third-cycle programmes with profiles and quality* stresses that the fundamental point of departure is that “the quality of the setting, its breadth and long-term sustainability is to be assessed from the perspective of the third-cycle students” (p. 37). Thus, appraisal of applications for degree-awarding powers must be based on the extent and quality of the research and the courses and programmes to which doctoral students have access, in other words the third-cycle programme’s setting. This means that the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) has chosen to define “extent and quality of the research” as those aspects of the research environment that are included in the third-cycle programme’s setting and from which the doctoral students benefit.

The bill also provides guidance on what characterises a third-cycle programme setting of high quality and sufficient extent. There has to be a *high quality research environment*, for which the following reason is given: “The quality of the research undertaken in the subject area, its depth, is important in enabling the doctoral students to make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge in the subject area”. In addition, the setting has to be of adequate *breadth and extent*, the reason being “the extent and breadth of the environment – in the form of the number of individuals and the disciplinary breadth they represent – is at the same time important to provide access to several different perspectives and specialisations and the conditions for long-term development of the research as well as for the stability and continuity of supervision etc.” Extent also includes the number of doctoral students, which should be large enough to create interactions. This does not necessarily mean only the number of doctoral students in the programme evaluated but can also include the networks within the programme setting to which the doctoral students have access. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the importance of taking into account the doctoral students’ possibilities of interaction with the national and international research community as well as society at large. The stability of the setting is also stressed in several places in the bill. Resources for supervision and teaching should therefore be sizeable and stable.

Main principles of the evaluation model

Evaluation of third-cycle programmes forms part of the proposed national quality assurance system for higher education that is currently being circulated for consultation by the Government Offices (U2015/1626/UH). The method described will be tested in a pilot round. After the pilot round the model may be adjusted. The assessment is based on peer-review evaluation using panels composed of subject experts, representatives of the professional life and doctoral student representatives. The focus of the evaluation methodology is on what a HEI does to ensure that the doctoral students attain the qualitative targets laid down in the Qualifications Ordinance (achievement of learning outcomes). In addition, the evaluation will also cover the internal quality assurance processes in alignment with the assessment of applications for third-cycle degree-awarding powers (internal quality assurance processes). Another component will be the extent and quality of the third-cycle programme’s setting, including the research and learning environment from which the doctoral students benefit. The evaluation will therefore comprise three main components: achievement of learning outcomes, the extent and quality of the third-cycle programme’s setting as well as the internal quality assurance procedures.

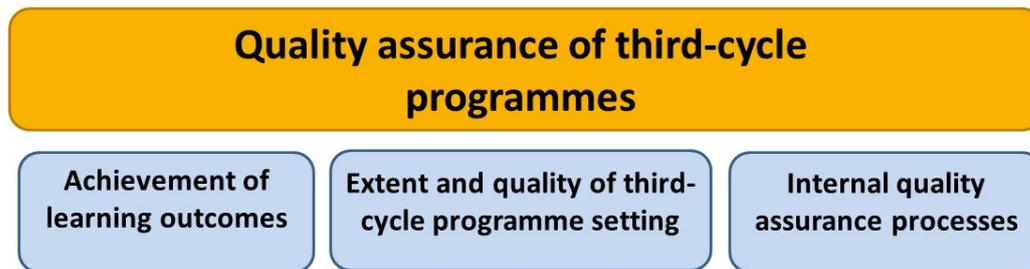


Fig. 1. The three main components of the evaluation system for third-cycle programmes.

External dialogue

A number of individuals representing HEIs, doctoral students, the professional life and other agencies have been of support and assistance in the work on the methodology.

Advisory group

In order to take advantage of experiences from appraisals of applications for third-cycle degree-awarding powers the group includes experts from the reference group that produced the aspects and criteria for this process as well as members from panels that have made appraisals of applications for third-cycle degree-awarding powers. In appointing the group UKÅ has also endeavoured to attain a favourable mix in terms of disciplinary orientation, geography and gender.

Professor Kjersti Bale, University of Oslo, literature

Professor Christina Cliffordson, University of Gothenburg and University West, education

Professor Lars Ekedahl, former Vice-Chancellor of University West, technology

Professor Love Ekenberg, Stockholm University, computer and systems sciences

Professor Stina Johansson, Umeå University, social work

Professor Maritta Soininen, Stockholm University, political science

Professor Roger Säljö, University of Gothenburg, education

Professor Christina Ullenius, former Vice-Chancellor of Karlstad University, technology

Reference groups

Two reference groups have been consulted during the methodological development process, one representing the HEIs and the third-cycle students' perspective. This group consisted of representatives from The Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF), The Swedish National Union of Students (SFS) and the Swedish Association of University Teachers (SULF).

The other reference group represents the professional life and consists of representatives from the following organisations:

Almega (employer and trade organisation for the Swedish service sector)

Civilekonomerna (trade union for graduates in economics and business administration)

ST (trade union for Government employees)

The Swedish Association of University Teachers (SULF)

The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO)

Teknikföretagen (association of engineering companies)

Expert panel – question formulation

This panel has made comments on the evaluation questions and the guidelines for the HEIs and comprised:

Professor Eva Forsberg, Uppsala University, education

Professor Robert Harris, Karolinska Institutet, medicine

Charlotta Forss, doctoral student at Stockholm University, history

Karin Jonsson, doctoral student at Södertörn University, history and social studies

Pilot group – scope of self-evaluation

The University of Gothenburg, Mälardalen University and Stockholm University were members of a pilot group that was intended to estimate how comprehensive the responses to the evaluation questions on learning outcomes achievement need to be. They have also provided comments on the guidelines and formulation of questions in the self-evaluation.

The Swedish Research Council and VINNOVA

While developing the methodology UKÄ has also had contact with both the Swedish Research Council (VR) and VINNOVA, which are developing systems for evaluating the scientific quality of research (VR) and the HEIs cooperation with the society (VINNOVA).

Evaluation rounds

The evaluations of third-cycle programmes will start during the spring of 2015 with a pilot round in which a small number of programmes will be evaluated as part of the methodological development process. The aim of the pilot round is to test how well the method works for both small and large programmes in the fields of natural sciences, technology, medicine, the social sciences, humanities and the fine, applied and performing arts. In addition UKÄ will include a few interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary programmes. The programmes to be included in the pilot round will also be selected to ensure that HEIs of different sizes spread over Sweden are represented. UKÄ will not, however, include enough programmes to enable every HEI in Sweden to take part.

The autumn of 2016 will see the start of evaluations of all third-cycle programmes in every subject area. Both internal discussions in the working group and the dialogue with the advisory group and representatives of the HEIs have enabled UKÄ to conclude that there is no sufficiently strong argument for only evaluating a selection of third-cycle programmes, rather the contrary. The main argument for is that no systematic evaluation of third-cycle programmes has been undertaken for many years.

Units to be evaluated

Our point of departure has been that both levels of third-cycle programmes, licentiate and doctoral programmes, are to be evaluated as a unit. The main reason for this is that both levels are subject to equal requirements in the qualitative descriptors. An additional reason is that the existing system for granting degree-awarding powers does not distinguish between the two levels. This argument applies to all third-cycle programmes, including those in the fine, applied and performing arts. The qualification descriptors for

doctoral degrees in the fine, applied and performing arts differ from those for general doctoral degrees. The same method will be used to evaluate all programmes but in relation to the relevant qualification descriptors. During the pilot round UKÄ will test whether the evaluation method needs further adaptation for the programmes in the fine, applied and performing arts.

An important starting point is that the units evaluated should match the way in which third-cycle programmes are structured and organised at the HEIs. The main reason for this is that if evaluations are to enable quality enhancement the unit evaluated must correspond to the activities to be developed. The ways in which third-cycle programmes are organised differ both within and between HEIs. Third-cycle programmes are also highly individual and the programme for each individual doctoral student is laid down in an individual study plan. The provisions of the HEO also make it clear that HEIs granted the power to award third-cycle qualifications must determine the subject areas in which third-cycle programmes are to be offered. A general syllabus has to be adopted for every third-cycle subject area. The qualification descriptors for third-cycle degrees state that the qualification is awarded after completion of a programme in a subject area for which a third-cycle programme is offered. The subject area is therefore central at third-cycle level. The qualification descriptors also state that the requirements that apply to the award of a third-cycle degree in a certain specialisation are determined by each HEI within the parameters of the qualification descriptors. The evaluation will therefore be based on the third-cycle subject areas and specialisations in which an HEI offers third-cycle programmes and which are laid down in the general syllabuses adopted at the HEI.

All third-cycle programmes/ subject areas that a HEI has established that lead to the award of a doctoral degree, and that are not decided to be discontinued at the start of the evaluation, will be included.

Delimitations

In order to avoid that evaluation of third-cycle programmes will become too extensive and labour-intensive UKÄ has set a number of limits. The main principle in doing so has been primarily to exclude aspects that are or will be evaluated within the framework of UKÄ's other undertakings as well as reviews and evaluations made by other agencies such as VR and VINNOVA.

UKÄ monitors public sector HEIs with regard to students' legal rights. This supervision is based on the laws and regulations that apply to the HEIs, mainly the Higher Education Act, Higher Education Ordinance and the Administrative Procedures Act. HEIs can also decide on their own local regulations. UKÄ monitors compliance with the laws and regulations and that the local regulations are not in conflict with laws and statutes. This supervision also entails monitoring the compliance of the HEIs with their own regulations. Questions that directly concern the legal compliance of third-cycle programmes have therefore not been included in the evaluation.

Evaluation of third-cycle programmes forms part of the proposed national quality assurance system for higher education that is currently being circulated for consultation by the Government Offices (U2015/1626/UH). In this proposal evaluation of the HEIs' internal quality assurance procedures provides an important basis for the overall appraisal of the HEIs. UKÄ has therefore chosen to include only a few questions that touch on quality assurance processes in evaluations of third-cycle programmes, as it considers that better responses can often be provided in connection with the overall evaluation of the quality assurance procedures at the HEIs.

Given that VR is working on the development of a model for evaluating the scientific quality of research (FOKUS), UKÄ has chosen not to undertake any more probing appraisal of the quality of the content of research. The evaluation is intended to show whether doctoral students are given chances to involve themselves in research that is broad and advanced enough to enable them to attain the qualitative targets. UKÄ has, in addition, explored the possibility of using results from FOKUS in its assessment of the extent and quality of research in third-cycle programmes. However the research fields defined by VR do not match the third-cycle programmes that are to be evaluated. In its current proposal UKÄ will therefore not include results from FOKUS in evaluations of third-cycle programmes. UKÄ does not, however, exclude the possibility that there may be points of contact between the two evaluations and that collaboration may be possible in the future.

VINNOVA is developing a model for evaluation of the cooperation of the HEIs. This model is intended to be useful for the operational development of the HEIs and will focus on strategies for cooperation and their implementation as well as cooperative activities and their outcomes. UKÄ has therefore chosen to restrict the number of questions dealing with cooperation to those that apply to the networks that doctoral students belong to, how the HEIs go about preparing doctoral students for their future careers and whether or how they work with alumni.

Assessment material

We have decided not to include theses or documentation of artistic projects (also included below in the concept of theses) in the assessment material for the evaluations as UKÄ considers that the external review to which they are subjected through the public examination and the external members of the examining committee, as laid down in Sections 33–34 of Chapter 6 of the Higher Education Ordinance, is in itself adequate. Instead the assessment material to be used will comprise 1) self-evaluation reports, 2) general syllabuses and individual study plans and 3) interviews.

Self-evaluations

One development of the self-evaluations used for evaluating first and second-cycle programmes between 2011 and 2014 involves the use of self-evaluation questions. The evaluation questions for third-cycle programmes focus on the three main components of the evaluation system, i.e. how the HEIs work to ensure that the doctoral students achieve the learning outcomes, the extent and quality of the third-cycle programme's setting and

internal quality assurance processes. In addition questions are included that are intended to shed light on various professional life perspectives as well as the perspectives of doctoral students.

The self-evaluation reports are comprehensive and there is some degree of overlap between the different sections. During the pilot round it will be tested what information is necessary as well as what sections and/or questions need to be added, reworded or can be removed. The sections that will be included and tested in the pilot round are:

1. Description of background
2. Evaluation questions
3. Overall analysis of the programmes
4. Annexes with tables

Section 1: Description of background

The self-evaluations begin with a description of the background to the programme. This will explain, for instance, how the programme is structured, how long it has been in existence, how the doctoral students' are funded and also to what extent the doctoral students pursue their studies at another location than the HEI where they are admitted. The description will place the programme in a broader context, which will help the assessors in their evaluation as the organisation of third-cycle programmes can differ between HEIs as well as between different educational settings within an HEI.

Section 2: Evaluation questions

Section two of the self-evaluation poses specific questions about, for instance, the way in which the HEIs work to ensure that doctoral students attain the qualitative targets. These questions are based on a selection of the national qualitative targets divided into three types of learning outcomes: knowledge and understanding, competence and skills and judgement and approach. To limit the extent of the evaluation some qualitative targets have been excluded and sometimes an evaluation question will deal with only some aspect or aspects of a qualitative target. The main principle for the selection process has been to omit a target, or part of a target, that is normally tested through the dissertation process and the public examination. It is reasonable to assume that the ways in which the training offered enable attainment of the qualitative targets and how they are examined differ, depending for instance on the dissertation project and different disciplinary traditions. In addition there are evaluation questions about how the HEI, for instance, works systematically with supervision or the influence exerted by the doctoral students. The questions also include how students are provided with access to a third-cycle programme setting that is extensive enough. The open questions are intended, where necessary, to provide scope for subject-specific clarifications of the reasons for responses

Section 3: Overall analysis

In this section the HEI adopts an overall holistic view of the programme evaluated and makes a coherent analysis of how the third-cycle programme's setting helps doctoral students to attain all of the national qualitative targets. The analysis covers the programmes from recruitment to the award of doctoral degree. What are the main

strengths of the programme? What weaknesses are there? What is done to maintain its strengths? What possibilities are open for remedying weaknesses and for developing the programme? The assessment will be based mainly on what the HEI has done or plans to do to remedy weaknesses and problems identified.

Section 4: Annexes with tables

To supplement the evaluation questions UKÄ will also ask the HEIs to provide the following kinds of data:

- Number of active doctoral students
- Information about the principal and assistant supervisors linked to the doctoral students
- Information about other researchers with links to the programme's doctoral students
- Publications (supervisors, doctoral students and other researchers linked to the programme)

The tables in the annexes and the lists of publications are extensive and the pilot round will include appraisal of what information is necessary as well as what sections and/or questions can be removed or reworded. In addition it should be pointed out that UKÄ will review how to gather and process the information requested in these tables from large-scale third-cycle programme settings.

General syllabuses and individual study plans

General and individual syllabuses will also provide assessment material for the evaluation of third-cycle programmes.

General syllabuses

The Higher Education Ordinance lays down that a HEI entitled to award third-cycle degrees shall determine the subject areas in which third-cycle courses and programmes may be offered (HEO 6.25) and that a general study syllabus is required for each subject area in which third-cycle programmes are offered (HEO 6.26). The general study syllabus must indicate the main content of the programme, specific entry requirements and any other regulations required (HEO 6.27). The general syllabuses will be included in the background information for the evaluation of third-cycle programmes to assist in assessing how the individual syllabuses are used.

Individual study plans

Individual study plans have to be drawn up for each doctoral student. The Higher Education Ordinance lays down that they are to be decided in consultation between the doctoral student and the supervisor. These study plans are to be “reviewed regularly” and “amended by the higher education institution to the extent required” (HEO 6.29).

The individual study plans and the routines for reviewing them should round out impressions of quality assurance processes and how progressivity and attainment of qualitative targets is ensured in the programmes. It should also be possible to use the

individual study plans to assess how the students' attainment of their qualitative targets and access to breadth and depth in the third-cycle programme setting is ensured. The idea is to collect individual study plans from every phase of a programme. It should also be pointed out that the evaluations of third-cycle programmes in 2001 and 2007 took random samples of individual study plans but now UKÄ is aiming to make the appraisal of the study plans more systematic.

It should not be possible to question the quality of a programme because the individual study plans do not contain more than the statutory requirements.

The usefulness of the individual study plans as material for evaluation and what weight they are to be given as well as how many needs to be collected will be appraised in the pilot round.

Interviews

The material will also be supplemented by interviews with both doctoral students and representatives of the teachers and supervisors in the third-cycle programme setting. As far as possible the interviews should include doctoral students from various stages in the programme and of different genders and backgrounds so that different perspectives on the programme will be elicited. In order to offer a broader view of the third-cycle programmes the possibility of interviewing recent graduates, alumni, has been explored. Even though about half of the HEIs consulted reacted positively to the inclusion of their alumni in the evaluation and claimed that their perspective would make a positive contribution to the evaluation, UKÄ has come to the conclusion that interviews with alumni or questionnaires addressed to them should not at the moment be included in the evaluation. This is mainly related to the methodological problems that would arise as a result of lack of responses from HEIs only recently entitled to award third-cycle qualifications that have only a few or no alumni or small-scale programmes with few alumni as well as the difficulty of contacting recent graduates who have left Sweden after qualifying. On the other hand, UKÄ encourages the HEIs to include descriptions of what action they take to benefit from the experiences and opinions of alumni in their quality assurance processes.

Assessment

The model is based on evaluations undertaken by a panel of external assessors (peer-review) comprising subject experts and representatives of the professional life and doctoral student representatives. The selection of the panels of assessors should be made in dialogue with the HEIs to be evaluated.

Professional life representatives should pay particular attention to how the programme under evaluation ensures that the doctoral students are prepared to face requirements and changes in the professional life during their careers. The professional life representatives are responsible for the section of the panel's report that deals with these aspects and it is therefore important for them to be well acquainted with the conditions that apply on the professional life for individuals with

research qualifications. The representatives of the doctoral students should particularly take into account issues that concern the influence exerted by doctoral students and the settings in which third-cycle programmes are offered and they will be responsible for the section of the panel's report that deals with these matters. The doctoral student representatives should have completed at least half of their programmes and experience of working with issues that concern third-cycle programme settings and student influence is meriting. The roles of both the professional life representatives and third-cycle student representatives will be further development during the pilot round.

A binary scale will be used for the evaluations that are to decide whether or not a programme evaluated is of high quality. To be able to make a fair appraisal of the extent and quality of a third-cycle programme setting, for instance, it is important for the assessors to be familiar with the subject being evaluated and its distinctive features. One important question that has to be borne in mind is how the interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary programmes are to be dealt with in the evaluations. What this means, above all, is that the expertise of the assessors must be broad enough to understand the specific features of the programme. In order to achieve as sound and as fair an evaluation as possible it is therefore important that there is a dialogue between UKÄ and the HEIs about the selection of the assessors for the various panels.

In the evaluations, great weight will be given to how the HEIs work to ensure that doctoral students attain the qualitative targets but other aspects will play an important role as well. One example could be a HEI's failure to show that a third-cycle programme setting is stable enough for the long-term commitment involved in admitting doctoral students, or that the setting does not offer doctoral students adequate breadth or depth. How the different kinds of material and the different sections of the evaluation are to be weighted in the final evaluations will be tested in the pilot round that starts during the spring of 2015. This will involve dialogue with experts from the HEIs and the possibility that this weighting may need to be different for different subject areas should be taken into account.

The evaluation criteria and the best way of calibrating the evaluations internally and with each other will be developed and tested during the pilot round.

Panel report and decision

All of the assessment material has to be taken into account in all assessments so that they provide a coherent evaluation of a third-cycle programme's quality. There will be more scope for feed-back and analysis than in the first and second-cycle programme evaluations conducted between 2011 and 2014, which means that the panels of assessors will have more scope to justify their assessment and provide feed-back for the HEIs in their report.

Different parts of the assessment material will be used to assess how the HEIs work to ensure that third-cycle students achieve the learning outcomes, the extent and quality of the third-cycle programme setting and their internal quality assurance processes.

Achievement of learning outcomes is evaluated through the questions about the qualitative targets or certain aspects of them, and the assessment of the attainment of these targets will be judged for each learning outcome category. For the sake of clarity, the extent and quality of the third-cycle programme setting as well as the internal quality assurance processes will also be given separate sections in the panels' report. In addition the report will include different sections with comments on the professional life perspective and the doctoral student perspective.

The HEIs will be given an opportunity to read and comment on the report before the final version is submitted. This will then be used by UKÄ as the basis for its decision.

In cases where the entitlement of a third-cycle programme subject area to award a qualification is called in to question, the report must state clearly what is not considered to have attained an adequate standard.

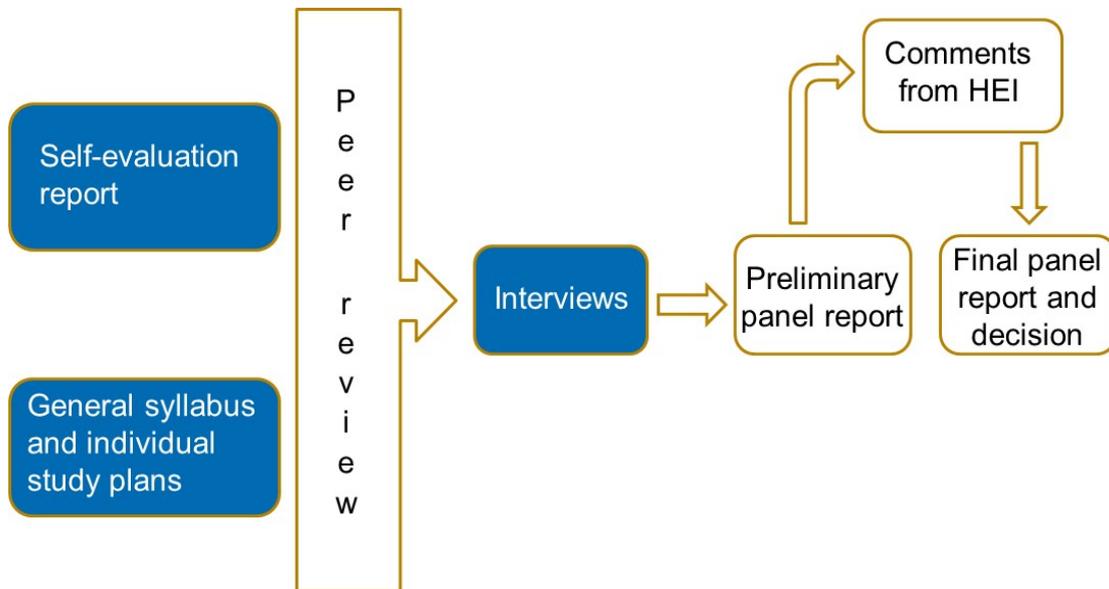


Fig. 2. Schematic sketch of the evaluation system.

Follow-up

Third-cycle programmes whose entitlement to award a qualification within a subject area has been questioned have one year to analyse and remedy the shortcomings and submit a report on the actions taken to UKÄ. In analogy with the way this has been dealt with in the system for first and second-cycle programmes, follow-up will involve a review of this report by a panel of assessors. When the panel considers that it has a complete account it makes a joint assessment of the analysis and reported actions which it then submits to UKÄ in the form of a report with a recommendation of whether entitlement to award the qualification should be revoked or not.

UKÄ uses the report submitted by the panel of assessors to decide whether the programme now is of sufficiently high quality or whether its entitlement to award a

qualification should be revoked, or alternatively, in the case of independent higher education providers, it should recommend the Government to revoke an entitlement.

In cases where a HEI has had its entitlement to award a third-cycle qualification revoked, the third-cycle students it has admitted who have already started on the programme have the right to complete their studies (Section 14 of Chapter 1 of the HEA). This does not apply to third-cycle students at independent higher education providers. The revocation of an HEI's entitlement to award a qualification only applies to the third-cycle subject area or specialisation in which shortcomings have been established. On the other hand it is not impossible that the remaining entitlement will be so narrow that the conditions enabling the HEI to offer high quality third-cycle programmes in the remaining subject areas can be called into question.

The HEIs also have the option of discontinuing the third-cycle programmes called into question. In such cases the HEI must submit a decision to this effect no later than the final date for submission of its report on the actions taken to UKÄ. The file on the third-cycle programme will then be closed. On the other hand, it will remain open if the discontinuation decision is submitted after the final date for submission of the report on the actions taken. In these cases UKÄ will complete the follow-up and appraise the entitlement of the programme concerned to award a qualification.

Universitetskanslersämbetet är en myndighet inom högskoleområdet.
Ämbetet utvärderar kvalitet i högre utbildning, har tillsyn över universitet
och högskolor, granskar effektivitet och ansvarar för statistik och uppföljning.
www.uka.se



