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Guidelines for Uppsala University's Model for Educational Evaluations

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Guidelines for Uppsala University's Model for Educational Evaluations

Uppsala University's systematic work on the quality of study programmes includes quality assurance and quality enhancement. According to Uppsala University's rules of procedure, each disciplinary domain/faculty board is responsible for the quality of its study programmes and is best qualified by its knowledge of these programmes to assess how to ensure and enhance their quality. Uppsala University's model for educational evaluations therefore allocates responsibility for the design, implementation and follow-up of educational evaluations to the relevant disciplinary domain/faculty board. Uppsala University's model consists of two parts: annual systematic follow-ups of study programmes and educational evaluations every six years. The annual follow-ups are part of the disciplinary domain/faculty board's responsibility for the quality of study programmes and are an integral part of the model.

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

- All first-, second- and third-cycle (Bachelor's, Master's and PhD) study programmes¹ will be assessed at least once every six years in an educational evaluation. The disciplinary domain or faculty board decides how to group the study programmes into suitable units for evaluation. As far as possible, the study programmes should be analysed in their entirety.
- The evaluation will proceed from the requirements stipulated in the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) and Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) (Qualifications Ordinance), taking into account the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), Uppsala University's Mission and Core Values, and programme-specific policy documents. (See the summary box below.)
Every educational evaluation will:
 - be designed to generate the knowledge required to ensure and enhance the quality of the study programme;
 - include a comprehensive assessment of the quality of the study programme – its strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement;
 - contain an external review by at least two colleagues from one or several higher education institutions, and by at least one colleague from another faculty/disciplinary domain at Uppsala University, in accordance with the recognised principles of peer reviews;
 - allow relevant teachers and students/doctoral students to participate in the planning, implementation and follow-up of the evaluation;
 - include a self-evaluation and relevant documents as the basis for the assessment;

¹ 'All study programmes' refers to all existing study programmes at first-cycle level (courses, degree programmes, main fields, subsidiary fields), second-cycle level (courses, degree programmes, main fields) and third-cycle level (subjects, courses), access programmes, supplementary teacher training programmes and contract education. The study programme in focus in the Swedish Higher Education Authority's educational evaluations during the six-year cycle is excluded from the guidelines regarding the *implementation* of educational evaluation, but reporting and follow-up of the results will take place in accordance with these guidelines. In the event that the Swedish Higher Education Authority's evaluation results in the assessment 'questionable quality', Uppsala University's procedures will be followed. Joint study programmes with other higher education institutions may be evaluated externally according to the agreement between the higher education institutions and within the framework of national requirements, but reporting and follow-up of the results will take place in accordance with these guidelines.

- result in an overall evaluators' opinion about the study programme's strengths and weaknesses/areas for improvement, together with recommendations;
- result in a brief evaluation report in which the programme coordinators summarise the most important conclusions based on self-evaluation and the evaluators' opinion, and report planned corrective measures/improvement actions; the evaluation's method and structure should also be stated.

Disciplinary domain or faculty boards are responsible for:

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

Every educational evaluation will cover the following aspects:

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

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

Uppsala University's model for educational evaluations is based on the following principles. The model:

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

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

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

The model permits full and varied qualitative comparisons, international comparisons, comparisons over time and meaningful comparability through the facilitation of valid and relevant comparisons between study programmes. This is essential from both a quality assurance and quality enhancement perspective.