



UPPSALA
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Programme for Quality Work at Uppsala University

Adopted by the University Board 2008-04-22

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Preface

Uppsala University actively pursues quality work. The Programme for Quality Work at Uppsala University is intended to help the University achieve its goals and is a point of departure in accounting for quality work to governmental authorities and the wider community.

Uppsala University's Programme for Quality Work is determined by the University Board. The Programme has been developed by the University's Quality Committee with support from the Unit for Quality and Evaluation at the University Administration. The Quality Committee consists of teachers, students, and doctoral students from the three disciplinary domains and the Faculty of Educational Sciences. The Programme has been anchored in various ways within the University, including a round of circulation for comment from domain boards, the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, the University Administration, the University Library, and the student unions.

It is my hope that this Programme will provide solid support for quality work in the University's activities.

Uppsala April 2008

Anders Hallberg
Vice Chancellor

Introduction

Goals and Strategies for Uppsala University delineates the overarching goals for the University's activities. These objectives make it clear that the University is to be an outstanding research institution with first-class education and with multi-faceted interfaces with the wider community. Besides *Goals and Strategies*, there are special goal documents for various areas (see Appendix 1). Well-developed quality work is intended to contribute to the fulfilment of these goals.

This Programme for Quality Work is a policy programme that provides direction and structure for the University's systematic quality work, that is, *quality assurance and quality enhancement*,

in education, research, and cooperation (see Appendix 2 for an analysis of concepts). The Programme elucidates goals and strategies as well as responsibilities for quality work. The aim is to stimulate quality work and to contribute to continuous developmental work throughout the University and to ensure that this is done in such a way as to make it possible to take action should any quality issues occur.

The Programme for Quality Work at Uppsala University supersedes the Programme for Quality Enhancement from 2002 and is complemented by limited-time action programmes.

Points of departure for quality work

Quality work must meet both the University's internal quality requirements and the external accountancy requirements laid down by the government and other stakeholders.

Quality work at Uppsala University constitutes an integral component of activities and is mainly carried out within the framework of the University's core activities. Further, it is supported by a central infrastructure whose purpose is to facilitate, complement, draw attention to, and coordinate the University's quality work. Continuous quality work is also pursued within these support functions.

Quality work takes its point of departure in established academic values and modes of working that have long been self-evident elements of the culture of quality that permeates University activities. This quality culture is characterized by constant revision and renewal, driven by teachers, students, and other staff.

Among the academic modes of working to create quality in research are regular seminars or other forms for ventilating and critically reviewing drafts of dissertations, research reports, and other publications ahead of publication, as well as peer review of applications and demands for testability in research.

In *education* that is based on a close connection between research and education, what are involved are systematically designed procedures for criticizing degree projects and short theses. Moreover, there are also processes for establishing content and progression in programmes and curriculum statements on the basis of current research, course evaluations, and other assessments. Quality assurance of degrees is effected by having appointed examiners, and, for research-level education, examination panels. Quality assurance in

research-level education further involves systematic processes for admitting doctoral candidates and following up individual progression in the programme.

Also included among academic modes of working are quality assessments performed by national and international experts. One special form of peer review is the comprehensive system for making appointments and promoting teachers, which involves expert assessments.

The University has active exchanges of knowledge and experience with *the wider community*, characterized by the balancing of openness and confidentiality. Through an open dialogue the University contributes to the analysis, questioning, and understanding of social phenomena, while at the same time social perspectives can enrich reflective discussions about research and education.

Even though a well-established culture of quality permeates the University's activities, the quality work that is pursued needs to be documented and brought to the fore within the organization to make it accessible for analysis and further development. At the same time, this stresses the importance of maintaining a culture of quality in activities, in accordance with the description above. The ambition is for documentation and foregrounding of quality work to take place in such a way as not to burden core activities more than is good for them. As far as possible, documentation of quality work must be integrated with the routines that are already in place for planning and following up activities and must be facilitated by the use of valid quality indicators. Systematic forms for documenting quality work reduces the need for special-purpose gathering of data in connection internal and external audits, for instance. Moreover, they simplify the collegial exchange of experience within the University.

Besides these internal academic values and quality demands, quality work must also satisfy external demands for accountancy presented by the government and other stakeholders. External demands include regulations in the Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance and guidelines in "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education," which was published in 2005 by the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA), and in the National Agency for Higher Education system for national quality assurance.

Goals for quality work

Quality work must satisfy internal and external quality demands and contribute to the achievement of the goals formulated in the University's document for goals and strategies.

- Those responsible at various levels must further develop and promote structures and processes to monitor, ensure, and enhance excellence in activities.
- The involvement and professional approach of employees, including continuous self-critical review of their own work, must constitute a central component of the culture of quality.
- The influence and responsibility of students and doctoral candidates must be strengthened by effective routines and forms for their engagement in work to further advance education at all levels.

Strategies to attain the goals of quality work

In accordance with Goals and Strategies, quality work must be systematic and constitute an integral part of the University's activities. It must be characterized by involvement and openness and be based on active monitoring of the wider community. The following strategies are intended to contribute to the fulfilment of the goals for quality work:

- *Systematic follow-ups* at various levels of activities must provide a factual basis for improvements in education, research, and cooperation. Areas of concern for quality work must be highlighted by those in charge by being integrated in the annual planning of activities and in following up of activities.
- *Clear leadership* at all levels must promote a good culture of quality and favourable conditions for systematic quality work. This includes stimulating associates to analyze, reflect upon, and discuss quality in activities. Leadership also entails that attention must be paid to professional development of teachers, doctoral students, and other staff in terms of teaching skills, academic knowledge, and other competencies.
- *The involvement of employees and students* is a necessary condition for well-functioning quality work, that is, it must be self-evident that teachers, doctoral candidates, other employees, and students are active in the assessment and enhancement of quality in the activities they are part of.
- *Management systems, administration, libraries, external and internal communication, premises, and other infrastructures* exist to provide support for the University's core activities and for the quality work entailed by them. This includes operation and development of system support and other support contributing to a systematic information base for planning, developing, and following up activities. Support functions must be cost effective and of good quality and must be developed apace with the needs of the core activities and external demands.

Responsibility for systematic quality work

The Higher Education Act (Ch. 1 Sec. 4) declares that quality work is a concern that is shared by the institution's employees and students. The overarching responsibility for quality enhancement and quality assurance of education, research, and cooperation lies with the University Management, that is, the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University Director, and the Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences. This responsibility entails the taking of overarching, strategically important initiatives for quality enhancement. It further means that the University Management ensures feedback of quality in education, research, and cooperation in a manner that stimulates continuous developmental work and that measures are taken if weaknesses should occur that cannot be remedied at the level where they were uncovered.

Under the Higher Education Act (Ch. 2 Sec. 5a) the faculty board is responsible for assuring and enhancing quality in education and research within its sphere. This responsibility entails that the faculty board must have systematic routines for assuring and enhancing quality within the faculty's field of activities. Therefore goals and strategies for quality assurance and quality enhancement must be stated in the faculty board's planning of activities. The faculty board must follow up quality work annually and account in its annual report for quality work performed in a way that highlights strengths and weaknesses in activities. To make such accounting possible, departments and other units are also required to plan and account for their quality work to the faculty board.

Under the University's delegation regulations, there is a chain of delegation that runs from the Vice Chancellor via vice rectors of disciplinary domains and/or deans to heads of departments. Departments are the University's units for education and research. This is where the institution's core activities take place. Each department is led by a head, who has a great responsibility for activities and has considerable prerogatives to make decisions. The vice-rector and, in relevant cases, the dean have management responsibility in regard to the head of department, which entails a responsibility to oversee and follow up assignments delegated. The head of department is answerable to the vice rector or, in relevant cases, the dean in his or her execution of duties as department head.

University-wide functions for quality work

Special University-wide functions are intended to support the systematic quality work carried out at faculties and at departments and other units.

A central Quality Committee advises the Vice Chancellor in matters concerning long-term work with quality assurance, quality enhancement, and evaluations in research, education, and cooperation (see Appendix 3). The Committee is to help ensure that overarching quality work is predicated upon the needs and resources of activities. Its members are active researchers and teachers in the disciplinary domains of Science & Technology, Medicine & Pharmacy, and Arts & Social Sciences and the Faculty of Educational Sciences. Also included are student representatives from education at the basic and advanced levels and from education at the research level.

The University Administration includes a central unit for quality work at the University, the Office of Quality and Evaluation. This office is tasked with helping to create the preconditions for, coordinate, highlight, and complement work that is done at departments and faculties. This can be carried out by supporting departments and faculty boards in quality work that they themselves initiate and in connection with external and internal quality assessments. Their mission also includes promoting work with policy issues regarding quality assurance and quality enhancement and monitoring and participating in national and international developments in the field.

Following up the Programme for Quality Work

This programme is to be followed up successively in the form of recurring programmes of action for quality work at Uppsala University, in which various measures are given priority. Ahead of future revisions of the programme there must be a comprehensive follow-up regarding how it is being used in activities.

Appendix 1. A selection of programmes and regulations at Uppsala University

The Programme for Quality Work is intended to help fulfil the University's goals for its activities. Below is a list of local programmes and regulations that account for overarching goals and auxiliary goals for activities at Uppsala University (accessible in English):

- Goals and Strategies for Uppsala University (Decision of University Board 2008-04-22, unit responsible: Planning Division, UFV 2007/1478)
- Teaching and learning at Uppsala University (Decision of Vice Chancellor 2008-05-06, unit responsible: Division for Development of Teaching and Learning, UFV 2007/670)
- Guidelines Regarding Student Working Conditions at Uppsala University
- Uppsala University Internationalisation Programme
- Equality plan relating to sexual orientation and sexual identity 2006-2009
- Cooperation Programme, Uppsala University in Dialogue with the Wider Community.

Appendix 2. Concepts in the field of quality assessment

Quality is a relative and dynamic concept. Notions of quality depend on who is making pronouncements about it. What is meant by quality may also change over time. In higher education quality in education and research is often assessed by peer review, in many cases with student involvement. Quality assessments can also serve multiple purposes. They may focus on quality as such, for example depth and breadth of education and/or research, processes, and outcomes of activities. Assessments of quality work can be based on the degree of goal fulfilment (fitness for purpose) or economic judgements (value for money). Evaluations can be target whole organizations or parts thereof, including the level of the individual. The central issue in assessments of quality work is *how* management at various levels in the organization ensures that quality in education, research, and cooperation is high, and how teachers, researchers, and students contribute to this work.

Language usage in higher education assessment is often ambiguous. One way to facilitate quality work at Uppsala University is to use uniform terminology. Swedish usage in the field is often problematic, but the international conversation about quality has developed some concepts with more well-defined meanings.

Quality assurance is used as an overarching concept for guaranteeing quality.

Quality enhancement denotes work to improve quality. In a strict sense quality work comprises both quality assurance and quality enhancement.

Quality audit is an assessment of quality work in which processes that are in place to guarantee good quality in activities are themselves analyzed. In this context what is being judged is "quality."

Quality assessment is an evaluation of quality, usually stressing the results of educational activities. Such an analysis may comprehend qualitative and quantitative achievement in activities, for example, number of lecture hours per student, number of examination opportunities, forms of examination, knowledge content in examinations, student throughput. A common way of measuring these results is to create so-called key ratios, such as the quotient between students and teachers,

surface area of premises per student, number of class sessions per student, economic resources per student, etc. In this context “standards” are what are being assessed.

Application of these concepts at Uppsala University entails that

Quality assurance and enhancement are represented in this *Programme for Quality Work* as expressions for overarching work to ensure and further enhance quality.

Quality audit is an *assessment of quality work*, which means that the processes of the activity are evaluated. Examples are evaluations of higher education institutions by the National Agency for Higher Education, including evaluations of Uppsala University in 1996 and 2000.

Quality assessment is *evaluation of quality*. One example is evaluations of subjects and programmes by the National Agency for Higher Education. These evaluations target preconditions for education, the educational process, and educational outcomes. The latter include analyses of results of education in the form of throughput ratios and quality of degree projects. Assessment of research by peer review also belongs to the quality assessment category.

Appendix 3. Quality groups/committees from 1993 onward

Quality Group 1993-1998

In 1993, on its own initiative, Uppsala University embarked upon a collaboration with the Chancellor of Swedish Universities with the aim of contributing to the creation of principles and methods for quality assurance and quality enhancement.

A management group was appointed within Uppsala University, consisting of representatives of the various faculty areas. The group, which came to serve as an idea factory, worked with seven priority areas: management issues, self-evaluation, the situation of students, gender equality, research-level education, information technology, internationalization, and the University's contacts with the wider community. The group presented a Programme for Quality Enhancement at Uppsala University (Log No.

5036/93), which was motivated by the new achievement-based system for allocations for undergraduate education that the government introduced. The group published twelve reports with various themes. The last report “The Quality Group 1993–1998” can be regarded as the group's testament.

In 1995 a self-evaluation of quality work at Uppsala University was undertaken. It was summarized in a report from the Quality Group. An assessment group from the National Agency for Higher Education visited the University in 1996. The assessment report indicated that quality work at Uppsala University was characterized by high ambitions and was developing in the right direction.

Quality Group 1999-2000

In 1999 a new group was appointed and tasked with coordinating work with the University's self-evaluation ahead of the National Agency for Higher Education's assessment of quality work in 2000. Comprehensive work with self-evaluations at both departmental and faculty levels was carried out. This formed the basis of the University's self-evaluation report. The National Agency for Higher Education's assessment group visited the University in late 2000, and the Agency's assessment report was finished in early 2001. The group gave Uppsala University many positive assessments.

Quality Committee 2001- 2007

The Vice Chancellor appointed a Quality Committee in 2001 that was charged with proposing suitable forms for quality work at Uppsala University and to initiate other issues essential to quality work. Members of the Quality Committee were appointed by the Vice Chancellor following

nomination from the vice rectors of disciplinary domains. These representatives were active researchers and teachers. From the disciplinary domains of Science & Technology and Medicine & Pharmacy there were two representatives each. From the Disciplinary Domain of Arts & Social Sciences there were three representatives. There were also four students, two from undergraduate education and two from research-level education. The Vice Chancellor chaired the Committee. The deputy chair was the head of the Secretariat for Quality and Evaluation.

The Quality Committee initiated an evaluation of research-level education at Uppsala University. The committee also monitored the subject and programme assessments that the National Agency for Higher Education performed during the period.

Quality Committee 2008 –

After some revision of the assignment of the Quality Committee, it was determined that the Committee is to advise the Vice Chancellor on issues regarding quality enhancement. The main task of the Committee is to participate in the shaping and follow-up of Uppsala University's quality programme, to take part in the creation of reports to be used in external assessments, and to take the initiative for evaluations and to bring to the fore other issues that are essential to quality work. The Vice Chancellor, or a person appointed by the Vice Chancellor, is to chair the Quality Committee. Other members are appointed by the Vice Chancellor following nomination by domain boards and the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Educational Sciences. Furthermore, there are to be four student representatives, two from basic- and advanced-level education and two from research-level education.