



National Review of Subjects and Programmes in Sweden

Högskoleverkets rapportserie 2001:11 R

 **HÖGSKOLEVERKET**
National Agency for Higher Education

QUALITY REVIEW

National Review of Subjects
and Programmes in Sweden

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National Review of Subjects and Programmes in Sweden

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Preface

Let me begin by stating the obvious: evaluation in the academic world has no value in its own right. Evaluation is linked to the *outcome* of academic endeavours. Indeed there can be no point in any evaluation system that is not linked to quality.

Discussion of the impact of the higher education policies pursued in recent decades on the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes merits a genuine factual basis, not least in view of the major significance the universities and colleges have in the emerging knowledge-based society. Here different types of evaluations have important roles to play.

The key role played by undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in a knowledge-based society means that we must remain vigilant and ensure that evaluation systems in these areas do not lead to the extinction of what is specific, what is original. A review must be able to recognise what is characteristic of a subject or a discipline, what is unique. In this context off-the-shelf models are of little avail.

It is of the utmost importance to the National Agency for Higher Education that our duties are discharged in *dialogue* with representatives of the activities which are subject to our appraisal. This dialogue is indispensable if our evaluation programmes are to contribute to improvements and developments in the universities and colleges. It is my earnest hope that the principles presented here on which the Agency will base its national evaluation of programmes and subjects will be of assistance in this work.



Sigbrit Franke
The University Chancellor

The National Agency's quality assessment

The National Agency for Higher Education conducts assessments of the quality of higher education in different ways. These assessments may take the form of national quality evaluations of subjects and programmes, assessments of applications for the right to award degrees or monitoring the quality processes of the individual universities and colleges.

The government has also entrusted the Agency with the task of examining applications from colleges of higher education to establish an area of research or to be granted university status.

This document will provide an account of the principles and approaches adopted in the Agency's national review of subjects and programmes.

In addition to this document, two other reports on evaluation have been published by the Agency: *Examensrättsprövning – utgångspunkter och tillvägagångssätt för Högskoleverkets examensrättsprövning (Assessing applications to award degrees – principles and approaches for the National Agency's assessment of applications to award degrees)*, Report 2001:4 R, and *Fortsatt granskning och bedömning av kvalitetsarbetet vid universitet och högskolor (Continued monitoring and assessment of quality processes at universities and colleges)*, report 1998:21 R.

National review of subjects and programmes

The National Agency carries out national assessments of undergraduate programmes in the major subjects for which bachelor's and master's degrees are awarded, programmes awarding professional qualifications and postgraduate programmes leading to licentiate and doctoral degrees. Since 2001 all these programmes are subject to review, which will take place at six-yearly intervals.

A government bill, 1999/2000:28 led to a decision by the Riksdag on April 12th 2000 (Parliamentary record 1999/2000:96) on the contents and extent of national review. Previously the National Agency had conducted evaluations of national programmes and courses in various major subjects. Now, however, the government has set it the task of conducting these evaluations more systematically to provide complete coverage over a long period.

The focus of the review is the quality of the education provided. These national reviews are intended to provide a basis for the quality development which the universities and colleges are themselves responsible for. Information about the quality of the programmes offered at Swedish universities and colleges both in relation to each other and internationally is valuable not only for students and teachers but also for other stakeholders.

From the point of view of the national authorities, a firmer knowledge base is desirable for assessment of the quality of higher education. The general public also has a legitimate interest in information about the outcome of the collective investments being made in the higher education sector.

According to the government bill, the aim of the systematic monitoring of quality development in the universities and colleges can be summarised in the following way.

Development: The universities and colleges should themselves be able to utilise these reviews in their own quality and development processes.

Diversity: The reviews should stimulate innovation and diversity in the programmes.

Information: Students need readily available information when selecting programmes.

Comparison: The information must be of the kind that will provide a perspective on the different profiles of the various programmes.

Monitoring: Programmes must fulfil the goals and regulations laid down in the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. Students must be given equivalent education of good quality irrespective of where they choose to study.

According to the government bill, the quality evaluation system is to be developed so that students are provided with better means of participating in and influencing the institutions. At the same time, the autonomous responsibility of the universities and colleges for quality assurance and quality development is, like the impartiality of the National Agency's reviews, to be upheld.

General aspects of quality

Assessing the quality of higher education is a complex task. These appraisals are always made in contexts in which those involved may have varying opinions about what constitutes quality.

However, the government has decided that the national reviews are to be based on the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance, together with the conditions and goals which determine the way in which each institution plans its activities. It should, in other words, be possible to carry out these reviews on an equal footing without this therefore resulting in national standardisation of programmes in higher education.

The Act and the Ordinance also contain provisions concerning other important issues for education, such as student influence, quality demands, aspects of gender equality, internationalisation, etc. (See Appendix 1 for a summary of the overall aims laid down in the Higher Education Act and references to the provisions in the Ordinance that are of particular relevance to these reviews.)

On the basis of an interpretation of these general goals and provisions, in consultation with the institutions of higher education, the National Agency has developed a number of general quality factors on which to base the national reviews. These assessment principles are also in harmony with quality factors that have gained international acceptance in the context of evaluating higher education.

The general quality factors must not, however, be regarded as definitive or exhaustive. They have been formulated to serve as effectively as possible the twofold aim of the reviews to monitor and account for quality in higher education and to provide a stimulus for further development and innovation in the programmes. Out of respect for the distinctiveness and diversity of the programmes, these factors have been couched as broadly as possible. It is hoped that this will minimise the risk of standardised assessment and allow full credit to be given to flexible arrangements.

The National Agency's quality factors are therefore intended to provide general guidelines and to provide a basis for questions that representatives of the programmes will respond to in their self-evaluations and during the site visit by the external assessors. These guidelines find more explicit expression in the manual for self-evaluation (see Appendix 3) and in the dialogue with each university or college before and during the review. Like the self-evaluations, this dialogue can help to disclose and emphasise various innovative

initiatives in the organisation, contents and teaching methods of the programmes.

The National Agency will be evaluating the programmes in terms of their structure, processes and outcome. Several of the quality factors and the comments on them are based on the Agency's previous experience from the national evaluation of programmes and assessment of applications for the right to award degrees. The quality aspects that will be applied in the national review of subjects and programmes are presented in appendix 2.

Evaluation model

The evaluation of subjects and programmes usually includes both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The assessment and appraisal follows a three-stage process. To begin with the department or the subject provider responsible for the programme carries out a self-evaluation. This includes a fundamental description and analysis of the programme. A group of external assessors then reviews this self-evaluation and discusses it with those concerned during an on-site visit. The third stage involves following up the review after an interval of 1–3 years. Should the need arise, the National Agency may also collect data in other ways, such as in-depth interviews and/or questionnaires involving, for example, students, staff or future employers.

This model has been tested and shown to yield good results in the educational sector in particular. Self-evaluation and external assessors complement each other in allowing, for instance, the subjectivity that can naturally colour self-evaluation to be balanced by the appraisal and judgements of the external assessors.

Co-operation and transparency

Co-operation and transparency are fundamental if a review is to stimulate the internal quality development of the programmes effectively and to ensure that the results are positive. This means that review must be conducted in agreement with those subject to it and with satisfactory transparency about the approach to be adopted. It is in the interest of both those involved in and those affected by educational programmes to strive for their positive development.

Preparations

The National Agency informs the administrative authorities of the university or college that review is to take place. Agreement is then reached on the organisation of the review process.

An official in the National Agency is appointed to take charge of each review and also to provide information and guidance. The university or college also appoints someone to liaise with the National Agency, who can well be the member of staff responsible for the organisation of the self-evaluation process. Agreement has to be reached on the review model and approach to be adopted. At the same time a timetable is drawn up. The department or subject provider then has to inform its staff and its doctoral and undergraduate students. This information is vital to the success of the project as support for work with quality guarantees the commitment of the staff. Ideally this information will

make it clear that the main purpose of the review is to provide a basis for improvement and development. It should also be made clear that the department or subject provider will play an active role in the evaluation process.

The university or college is given the opportunity of proposing who should be appointed to the group of assessors. This should be made up of individuals with sound knowledge of the subject, appropriate experience and whose judgement will be respected. The assessors should also be fluent in Swedish or one of the Nordic languages. In addition to assessors with academic and teaching qualifications from Swedish and foreign institutions of higher education, the group must contain one student representative. The university or college requests its student organisations to propose suitable candidates. In reviews of programmes that award vocational qualifications, the group must also contain an assessor with professional experience. The National Agency then appoints 3-5 assessors. This group should as a whole represent an appropriate spread of subject specialisation. Its secretary is normally a member of the staff of the National Agency.

Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation means that the department has to analyse and reflect on its own activities and also evaluate both their strengths and weaknesses. The work of self-evaluation is an important basis for the department's own internal deliberations as it affords scope for development. An important target-group consists therefore of its own staff and students. In addition, the dialogue between the department and the group of external assessors is based on this self-evaluation, which also provides material for an overall assessment of the programmes. The final self-evaluation report can be submitted to the forum in which decisions about the programmes are made.

Self-evaluation is based on a manual (see Appendix 3). Consultation takes place between the National Agency and the departments or subject provider on the questions to be included in the self-evaluation. In addition to those selected from the manual, specific questions relating to the discipline should be added. It is important to supplement the manual with information on factors that are unique to the individual programme and also to ensure that ongoing changes are accounted for. At each institution of higher education, however, responses are sought to a common basic set of questions. The group of assessors is also at liberty to collect further documentation.

The manual is based on a well-tried model for planning evaluation and quality assessment. The main components are *Structure – Process – Outcome*. This model embodies a holistic approach to the subject or programme under review. For example attention is paid to objectives, the educational and organisational framework, teaching processes, the contents of programmes and their outcome in broad terms. Assessing both structure and the process is very important if the outcome is to be understood. The manual is divided into

two sections, one for undergraduate and one for postgraduate programmes.

The final self-evaluation report should consist of no more than 20 A4 pages for each level (undergraduate and postgraduate) unless otherwise agreed. The report has to be submitted to the National Agency in both digital and printed form.

Site visit and the external assessment

The function of the groups of external assessors is, in collaboration with the departments or subject providers, to gain insight and to draw conclusions about the quality of the programmes in relation to their objectives and also to provide a firmer basis for the university or college's own development activities.

When the external assessors have received the self-evaluation report and any accompanying documentation, they first study it individually. The group then meets for a joint analysis of the material and to prepare the site visit.

Normally each site visit occupies one day. The external assessors meet representatives of the programme's administrators, teachers, other member of the staff and students, each category separately. The group of external assessors steer the discussions during the site visit. The site visit is intended to deepen the insights provided by the self-evaluation and any other documentation that may have been supplied. The dialogue that takes place during the site visit enables the group of external assessors to elucidate circumstances that may be unclear.

It is important for the site visit to be well prepared both by the group of external assessors and by the subject provider. The university or college and the National Agency therefore plan the meeting jointly.

After the site visit the group of external assessors compile their report, which contains recommendations for improvements.

Consultation and publication

Before assessors' reports are published, the universities or colleges are allowed to review the factual information they contain and the descriptions of the programmes. This allows a certain amount of time for departments or subject providers to express their own points of view or to comment.

The National Agency then decides how to deal with the conclusions reached by the group of external assessors, formulates a statement and makes any decisions that are called for. Advance notice is given to a university or college before any decision concerning it is made.

In principle, each review is an assessment of the right to award degrees. (The factors on which the reviews are based can be found in Appendix 2). The right to award degrees is not, however, withdrawn without prior notice, even if appraisal discloses such shortcomings in quality that it is doubtful whether the institution concerned should be entitled to award degrees for the programme under review. In such cases the institution is informed and a time limit is set. During this period the institution is offered the opportunity to rectify the

shortcomings identified. Then a new appraisal of the right to award degrees begins.

Reviews can also give rise to other assessment measures or monitoring.

Feed-back and follow-up

Normally feed-back and follow-up takes place in two stages. In close conjunction to the publication of the report, universities or colleges are invited to participate in a joint feed-back and follow-up conference. This conference has a number of aims:

- to further stimulate departments or subject providers to improve programmes themselves
- to create a forum for co-operation
- to disseminate examples of good practice
- to discuss the results
- to offer an opportunity for feed-back on the evaluation model and approach adopted.

Further follow-up is arranged when a suitable period has elapsed for development measures and improvements to have been implemented or planned – usually 1–3 years after publication of the review. This follow-up can take different forms – questionnaire surveys, interviews or meetings. The National Agency selects the appropriate method depending on the subject of the review, its extent and its results.

The evaluation process step by step

- The National Agency and the university or college agree on the evaluation model and approach to be adopted.
- A group of external assessors is appointed by the National Agency in consultation with the university or college.
- The university or college conducts its own self-evaluation.
- The group of external assessors studies and analyses the material provided.
- The group of external assessors makes a site visit.
- The group of external assessors compiles its report.
- The university or college is given an opportunity to comment on the factual information contained in the report and the descriptions of the programmes.
- The National Agency formulates a statement and makes any decisions that are called for.
- Publication of the report.
- A joint feed-back and follow-up conference takes place.
- Additional follow-up is arranged after about 1–3 years.

Appendix I

Relevant goals

Relevant goals in the Higher Education Act and relevant provisions in the Higher Education Ordinance

Relevant overriding goals in Chapter I of the Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434)

2 § The state shall be responsible for the provision of institutions of higher education for 1. programmes grounded on a scientific or artistic basis and also on tried and tested experience,

- - -

The universities and colleges shall also co-operate with the surrounding community and provide information about their activities.

3 § Activities shall be so arranged that there is a close connection between research and teaching.

4.a § The universities and colleges shall endeavour to ensure that their students take an active part in the further development of teaching programmes.

5 § In the activities of the universities and colleges, attention shall be paid to equality of opportunity for women and men, which is to be enhanced.

Furthermore, the universities and colleges should in their activities further understanding of other countries and international circumstances.

9 § In addition to knowledge and skills, undergraduate programmes shall equip students with the ability, within the field of study concerned, to make independent and critical assessments, to solve problems autonomously and to follow developments in knowledge. Programmes should also expand the students' ability to participate in the exchange of information at a scholarly level.

Postgraduate programmes shall, in addition to that which applies to undergraduate programmes, provide the knowledge and skills required to undertake independent research.

Relevant provisions in the Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100)

Chapter 6. Undergraduate programmes; general provisions, degrees together with the prescribed contents of curricula and courses of study.

Chapter 8. Postgraduate programmes

A2-Degree system

A) General degrees

B) Professional qualifications

Appendix 2

Quality factors

Quality factors in national review of subjects and programmes

The National Agency reviews the quality of programmes in terms of their prerequisites, implementation and results. Several of the quality factors and the comments made on them are based on the National Agency's previous experience from, for instance, its assessment of applications for the right to award degrees. Where nothing else is stated, these quality factors apply to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

The structure of the programme

The recruitment and composition of the undergraduate/postgraduate groups

The levels of prior learning, prior understanding and motivation possessed by undergraduate or postgraduate students are, like the quality of any preparatory courses offered, important initial factors that have an impact on the quality of programmes. These factors are governed to a great extent by information, student counselling, eligibility and enrolment routines. The size of student groups and their composition in terms of gender, age, social and ethnic background will affect the learning process as it evolves during the programme. How students are recruited and selected for a postgraduate programme will affect its quality.

Teachers' qualifications and opportunities to enhance their skills

High quality presupposes programmes that are sustained by teachers with academic/artistic training in the subject/discipline and with well-developed teaching skills. One prerequisite, if a close link between research and teaching is to be attained, is that the teachers or supervisors themselves have research qualifications or are creative artists and that they combine these activities with their teaching. Teachers should also have the opportunity to maintain and enhance their academic/artistic expertise and their teaching skills. In this context it is important to consider the dynamic effect or the synergy that can derive from the combination of a teacher's academic training and professional experience.

The objectives, content and organisation of a programme

The objectives, content and organisation of a programme find expression in the curriculum or the study programme or in some other way. These should include or refer to the goals in the Higher Education Act and to applicable

provisions in the Higher Education Ordinance. It should be possible to assess to what degree these objectives are fulfilled. Effective administration and a distinct organisation with clearly defined divisions of responsibility and adequate administrative support are important. Both ongoing and long-term innovation in the programme are important. The same applies to the opportunities afforded students, teachers and other members of the staff to take an active role in the work of developing the programme. Initiatives in renewing the organisation of programmes, their contents and teaching methods in order, for example, to increase the possibility of flexible learning are innovative quality factors to consider. The requirement that a subject should be dealt with in some depth in undergraduate programmes should be supplemented by requiring some degree of breadth as well.

Library and other sources of information

Favourable conditions for teaching presuppose adequate access to scholarly texts of various kinds in the appropriate discipline. Libraries constitute an educational resource and co-operation between students, teachers and those responsible for the programmes is important, as is access to search facilities using computers. For artistic programmes contact with a creative artistic environment is important.

Premises and equipment

Good infrastructure that also provides scope for flexible learning is important if a programme is to function well, and this applies for example to the availability of self-study positions, venues for meetings, computers, laboratories etc.

Implementation of the programmes

Student working environment

The pace and methods of learning in the programme together with the demands made of the work to be done by undergraduate or postgraduate students are important factors in its implementation. In undergraduate programmes the way in which beginners are introduced to the higher education environment will be important for their continued learning. If postgraduate programmes are to be completed within the prescribed time effective supervision is required.

Teacher working environment

The various roles played by university teachers as teachers/supervisors, researchers/practising artists, or as administrators, and the extent of these roles influences the quality of a programme.

Organisation of the programme

The programme should correspond to the current state of awareness and research, through, for instance, links to ongoing research and the latest research findings in the form of taught classes, seminars, etc. The integration of theoretical and applied knowledge is important for future professional application. This is also true of co-operation with both the community and other academic environments, in Sweden and abroad, in the form, for instance, of staff or student exchange.

Examination methods

Examination methods have a major impact on the way in which students process the contents of programmes. From this point of view, the appraisal of the examination methods in use forms an important part of quality evaluation, by relating, for instance, the relevance of these methods to the goals of the programme. External assessment of examination methods and their results can help to raise the quality of a programme.

A critical and creative learning environment

This quality factor should be seen as a synthesis of the factors described above. The quality of a programme is decided by the interplay of a number of factors. An effective network of contacts with neighbouring programmes and related subjects and disciplines, both nationally and internationally, will help to create a critical and creative environment. This also applies to the opportunities provided for both undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as teachers/supervisors to exchange opinions that are important for the programme and for learning in various fora and in different constellations.

The outcome of the programme

Review and quality control

A decision in the Riksdag of April 12th 2000 (Parliamentary record 1999/2000:96) made course evaluation compulsory in higher education. The role played by the course evaluations in the development of programmes is determined by the reactions of teachers. What is also important is whether the department or subject provider has any system for supplementing course evaluations at a more general level and how this system is applied. The links between programme evaluation and quality measures at different levels are important. What is also interesting is to what extent the university or college has a system for ascertaining that students have attained the objectives of the programmes and also whether their attainment is of sufficiently high quality.

Follow-up

Whether there is any system to enable the feed-back of the viewpoints of previous students into a programme is also relevant to its quality. This applies as well to whether those responsible for the programme arrange any survey of the viewpoints of future employers or use some other method of establishing the assessment by stakeholders of the value of the programme on the labour market or to the community and also whether any attempt is made to trace the careers of students after graduation. National and international comparison of programmes can spur quality development. International comparisons are also growing in importance in an increasingly international educational and labour market.

Completion rates (indicators)

The fact that students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level are completing their programmes within the periods allowed is one expression of quality even though high throughput in undergraduate programmes can also indicate that the standards are too low.

Appendix 3

Manual for self-evaluation

Introduction

Self-evaluation together with the site visit by the group of external assessors is an important element in the review. Self-evaluation means that the department makes its own appraisal of its activities. The dialogue between the department and the group of external assessors is based on this self-evaluation and it provides the material that enables an overall assessment of the programmes to be made. Successfully implemented, self-evaluation is a very effective way of launching a department's own quality development process. Self-evaluation comprises both undergraduate programmes and postgraduate programmes. For practical reasons the questions have been divided up into one section dealing with undergraduate and one with postgraduate programmes.

Curricula, syllabuses and reading lists should be included with the self-evaluation as appendices.

The organisation of the self-evaluation

In addition to the questions in the manual, specific questions relating to the subject should be added. Consultation will take place between the National Agency and the departments concerned on which questions to include in the self-evaluation.

This manual is based on a tried and tested model for planning reviews and quality assessments¹. The main components are *Structure – Process – Outcome*. The model provides a holistic view of the programme or subject under appraisal and involves studying objectives, the educational and organisational framework, teaching processes, the contents of programmes and their outcome in broad terms. Assessing both structure and the process is very important if the outcome is to be understood.

¹ See for instance Donabedian,A.,1973. *Aspects of Medical Care Administration*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, Lundmark,A.1985: *Utvärdering av personalutbildning (Evaluating Staff Training Programmes)*. Stockholm: Arbetslivscentrum, Forsberg,B et. al.1984: *Att planera utbildning (Educational Planning)*. Lund Studentlitteratur, Franke-Wikberg,S.,1992: *Utvärderingens mångfald-några ledtrådar för vilsna utbildare (The Diversity of Evaluation – Some Clues for Educationalists Who Have Gone Astray)*. UHÅ-report 1992:4

Implementing the self-evaluation

So that the self-evaluation will be of as much practical benefit as possible to the department and will provide the basis for its own development of its programmes, it is desirable for the work to be spread widely throughout its entire organisation. Previous experience has shown that the various aspects that need to be taken into account should be examined from different viewpoints, for instance through internal studies, various working groups, in collaboration with students in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and student organisations, etc. This will allow the different groups of staff and students involved in the programmes to participate and to express their points of view in the self-evaluation. This work should be organised by a facilitator who is also responsible for liaison with the National Agency. The final report should be discussed in the forum in which decisions about the programmes are made.

The self-evaluation report should consist of no more than 20 A4 pages for each level (undergraduate and postgraduate) and is to be submitted to the National Agency in both digital form and in 7 printed copies. Appendices which are considered to be of particular importance may also be attached. It is however important that these should not be essential for comprehension of the report itself.

Timetable

The self-evaluations must be completed early enough to allow the external assessors a reasonable amount of time to read them through before the site visits and the external assessment occurs.

Section I: Questions about undergraduate programmes

Structure

Structure means, in simple terms, *what one starts with*. One important aspect of this can be found in the goals prescribed for the programmes. The goals for all higher education are provided in the Higher Education Act, which lays down goals for both undergraduate courses and goals for postgraduate programmes. Appendix 2 of the Higher Education Ordinance applies to vocational qualifications. In addition, each university or college has formulated goals for the different programmes it offers.

Contents

1. Give a brief description of the department/subject and its undergraduate programme.
2. What proportion of the programmes consists of compulsory or optional courses?
3. What opportunities are offered to students to specialise in various fields?

Goals

1. What specific goals of its own does the faculty/department have for the programmes (i.e. in addition to those stipulated in the Higher Education Act or Ordinance)?
2. How do these specific goals relate to the overriding goals laid down in the Higher Education Act or Ordinance?
3. Are changes needed in the overriding goals laid down in the Higher Education Act or Ordinance? What are they?

Organisation

1. Give a brief description of the decision making structure in the department or unit. (How is the administration of its undergraduate programmes organised? Where does the support for decisions come from? How are decisions communicated, once made? Are there any possibilities for individuals outside the decision-making bodies to influence the decision-making process?).

Finance

1. What financial resources do undergraduate programmes have at their disposal (How is the available funding distributed and used? Describe the decision-making process involved in questions of funding.)

The students

1. How many students have been enrolled each term or each year for the last 3 –5 years?
2. What does the student body look like? (What entry qualifications do they have? What is the enrolment procedure? What effect do students' entry qualifications have on the way programmes are planned? What is the average period of study?)

The teachers

1. Describe the availability of teachers and other members of staff. (Number of professors, readers, with or without doctoral degrees, lecturers, assistant lecturers, hourly paid teachers [and their qualifications], other members of staff. Is this the optimal mix?) This question applies to the current term.
2. How much of the teaching is given by salaried teachers and how much by hourly paid teachers? This question applies to the current term.
3. What opportunities are teachers given to enhance their skills?
4. What opportunities are offered to lecturers and assistant lecturers to undertake research?
5. What proportion of the work-load of professors consists of teaching in undergraduate programmes?

Infra-structure

1. What premises and what equipment are available for the programmes?
(Are they suitable?)
2. Describe the availability of computers, self-study places and the provision of scholarly texts.

Summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the structure. What scope is there for future development of the programmes? What obstacles could prevent favourable development?

Process

The process could be described as *what is done* with the materials available. Several factors are important if the outcome of a process is to be successful, such as effective planning, management and distribution of tasks, financial administration, information and communication. The contents of the teaching, its scope and level of difficulty, the ways in which teaching materials are used, together with the roles played by the teachers are other examples of factors that have a major impact on the process.

Follow-up and evaluation, other forms of feed-back and programme development are valuable elements for the quality assurance of a process and its further refinement.

Scholarly basis and critical thinking

1. How is the scholarly basis of the programmes safeguarded?
2. How are students given the opportunity to develop their ability to think critically and autonomously?
3. What stimulation is provided in the programmes for the students' interest in research?

The students possibilities of exerting influence

1. What opportunities are offered to the students to exert influence on and take responsibility for the programmes?

Methodology – Teaching methods – Examination

1. What underlying methodological approach is embodied in the programmes?
2. What teaching methods are used? How many taught classes are offered and in what forms? (Have there been any changes in recent years? Why? If not, why not? What teaching methods are predominant? Do teaching methods alter during the period of study?)
3. How is student activity encouraged by the teaching?
4. To what extent is practice given in oral and written presentation skills?
5. What examination methods are used during the programmes?

6. To what extent do these examination forms correspond to the goals of the programmes?

Interruptions/ drop outs

1. Are there problems with students interrupting their studies or dropping out? If yes, why?

Co-operation – Internationalisation

1. What links are there between programmes and the community and what is defined in Sweden as "the third role" for higher education? (Is there any work placement or other forms of co-operation with future employers, etc?)
2. What international elements do the programmes contain?
3. What possibilities of making international contacts are there for students and the various categories of staff, e.g. student exchange, staff exchange, participation in conferences etc.? How many students from other countries are studying at the department?
4. Are any national and international comparisons made?
5. Is there any co-operation with other programmes either in Sweden or internationally?

Summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the process. What scope is there for future development of the programmes? What obstacles could prevent favourable development?

Outcome

The outcome could be described as *the product* of the structure and the process. The outcome is a consequence of what has been learnt during the programmes. In making this assessment the cost has to be related to the outcome. It is also important in this context to relate the outcome to the goals of the programmes and also expected professional relevance.

Completion rate

1. What is the completion rate for the subject's undergraduate programmes? How many term papers have been submitted for grading at the third-semester (C-level) and fourth semester (D-level) in the last 3–5 years. What percentage of third and fourth semester submit their papers within the period corresponding to the credits awarded for full-time students?

Follow-up

1. What happens to students after graduation or after having fulfilled the requirements for third and fourth semester programmes in the subject?

Evaluation and quality

1. Describe the measures taken by the faculty/department concerning quality and any administrative or support routines linked to them. (What impact have the department's own quality measures had during the last three years?)
2. What other forms of review or follow-up have taken place? (What importance have they had for the development of the programmes? How have they been followed up?)
3. Are there any examples of development initiatives to which the department would like to draw special attention?
4. How is equality of opportunity taken into account and enhanced in the programmes?

Attainment of goals

1. To what extent does the department/faculty attain its goals? (How does this attainment relate to the national goals, the university or college's own (local) goals and to the curricula?)

Finance

1. What is the relationship of the quality of the programmes to their cost? (Are they optimal in terms of cost?)

Summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the outcome. What scope is there for future development of the programmes? What obstacles could prevent favourable development?

Overall evaluation

1. What is your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the self-evaluation? Which are the most important?
2. What is your assessment of future possibilities and obstacles? What do you consider to be most significant aspect identified by the self-evaluation?
3. What changes would you propose as the most important for future implementation as a result of the self-evaluation?
4. Describe the link between undergraduate programmes and postgraduate programmes. (Higher Education Act 1.3) What form does it take and how well does it work?
5. What special circumstances do you consider to merit special attention?

Section 2: Questions about postgraduate programmes

Structure

Structure means, in simple terms, *what one starts with*. One important aspect of this can be found in the goals prescribed for the programmes. The goals for all higher education are prescribed in the Higher Education Act, which lays down goals for both undergraduate courses and goals for postgraduate programmes. In addition, each university or college has formulated goals for the different programmes it offers.

Contents

1. Give a brief description of postgraduate programmes.

Goals

1. What specific goals of its own does the faculty/department have for its postgraduate programmes?
2. How do the postgraduate programmes and the theses submitted relate to these goals?

Organisation

1. Give a brief description of the decision making structure in the faculty or department. (How is the administration of its postgraduate programmes organised? Where does the support for decisions come from? How are decisions communicated, once made? Are there any possibilities for individuals outside the decision-making bodies to influence the decision-making process?).

Finance

1. What financial resources do postgraduate programmes have at their disposal (How is the available funding distributed and used? Describe the decision-making process involved in questions of funding.)

Postgraduate students

1. How many postgraduate students have been enrolled each term or each year for the last 3 –5 years?
2. Describe the way in which postgraduate students are recruited.
3. Describe how curriculum issues are dealt with by the department. How are decisions made about individual study-programmes? How are they followed up?
4. Do postgraduate students have their own budget and funds at their disposal? If yes, describe approximately how much and what the reason is.
5. Describe the amount of time postgraduate students spend performing departmental duties.

6. Are there any postgraduate students financed by industrial grants? If relevant, describe their situation in relation to the other postgraduate students. Also describe their relationship to industry and the nature of their links to the department providing the programme.

Teachers

1. Describe the availability of teachers and supervisors and their academic qualifications? Are there assistant supervisors?
2. To what extent are lecturers from other institutions (in Sweden and abroad) used?
3. To what extent have supervisors from other institutions (in Sweden and abroad) been involved within the framework of postgraduate programmes?

Infra-structure

1. What premises and what equipment are available for the programmes? (Are they suitable?)
2. Describe the availability of computers, self-study places and the provision of scholarly texts.

Summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the structure. What scope is there for future development of the programmes? What obstacles could prevent favourable development?

Process

The process could be described as *what is done* with the materials available. Several factors are important if the outcome of a process is to be successful, such as effective planning, management and distribution of tasks, financial administration, information and communication. The contents of the teaching, its scope and level of difficulty, the ways in which teaching materials are used together with the roles played by the teachers are other examples of factors that have a major impact on the process.

Follow-up and evaluation, other forms of feed-back and programme development are valuable elements for the quality assurance of a process and its further refinement.

Course work

1. What is the extent of course work in the postgraduate programmes? How many of the credits awarded for postgraduate programmes are based on course work?
2. Are there occasions when courses are adapted to the thesis subjects chosen by postgraduate students? If so, describe how.
3. What form do courses take (obligatory, optional, voluntary)?

Seminars, conferences, work placement

1. Are series of seminars arranged within the framework of postgraduate programmes? If yes, give a brief description of these seminar series. Are there any series of "advanced seminars" apart from the seminars arranged within postgraduate programmes that postgraduate students are also welcome to attend?
2. Have any conferences been arranged within the framework of postgraduate programmes? If so, describe concisely the focus and extent of the conferences arranged.
3. Has work placement with – or commissioned assignments from – potential employers formed any part of postgraduate programmes? If so, describe briefly how this has worked.

Other activities

1. Have any other activities apart from those referred to above taken place?

Theses

1. Are students required to submit a licentiate thesis before submitting a doctoral thesis? What is the attitude of the administration to the relationship between licentiate theses and doctoral theses?
2. Are thesis subjects normally proposed by the department or by doctoral students themselves?
3. Is thesis work normally carried on individually or in a research team?
4. Are the theses submitted for publication usually monographs or collections of articles?

Examination and teaching methods

1. What forms of examination are used during the programmes? Why have these particular methods been selected?
2. What teaching methods are used during the programmes? Why have these particular methods been selected?

Co-operation

1. Does co-operation take place with other departments at universities and colleges in Sweden? If so, describe this co-operation.
2. Has there been any form of co-operation with other postgraduate programmes and/or research training institutes? If so, describe this co-operation.
3. Have postgraduate programmes involved any co-operation with universities or colleges outside Sweden? If so, describe this co-operation.
4. Have postgraduate programmes involved co-operation with potential employers outside the university or college? If so, describe this co-operation.
5. Has interdisciplinary co-operation increased? If so, describe how.

Strategies for raising completion rates

1. Give an account of any strategies that may exist to raise completion rates.
2. What impact does the organisation of postgraduate programmes have on the time it takes to qualify for a degree?
3. To what extent do students drop out? Which students drop out and why?

Quality measures

1. What quality measures are taken in postgraduate programmes?
2. Are there examples of developmental initiatives to which the department would like to draw special attention?
3. How is equality of opportunity taken into account and enhanced in the programmes?

Summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the process. What scope is there for future development of the programmes? What obstacles could prevent favourable development?

Outcome

The outcome could be described as *the product* of the structure and the process. The outcome is a consequence of what has been learnt during the programmes. In making this assessment the cost has to be related to the outcome. It is also important in this context to relate the outcome to the goals of the programmes and also expected professional applicability.

1. To what extent do postgraduate programmes attain their goals?
2. How large is the demand for doctoral qualifications in the fields covered by the discipline? Have any students been recruited by employers before completing their programmes?
3. What will happen to graduates from postgraduate programmes if there is no demand outside higher education? Describe the availability of posts at the department for recently qualified postgraduate students.
4. What is the relationship of the quality of the programmes to their cost?

Summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the outcome. What scope is there for future development of the programmes? What obstacles could prevent favourable development?

Overall evaluation

1. What assessment can be made of the strengths and weaknesses in the postgraduate programmes identified by the self-evaluation? Which are the most important?
2. What assessment can be made in the postgraduate programmes of future possibilities and which obstacles identified by the self-evaluation are

- considered to be most important?
3. What changes in postgraduate programmes could be proposed as the most important for future implementation as a result of the self-evaluation?
 4. Describe the link between undergraduate programmes and postgraduate programmes.(Higher Education Act 1.3) What form does it take and how well does it work?
 5. What special circumstances do you consider to merit special attention?

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The National Agency for Higher Education is a central agency responsible for matters relating to institutions of higher education. Its tasks include quality assessments, supervision, reviews, development of higher education, research and analysis, evaluations of foreign education and provision of study information.

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