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How Did Things Turn Out?

Final report on the Swedish National
Agency for Higher Education's quality
appraisals 2001–2006



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**Final report on the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's
quality appraisals 2001–2006**

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Foreword

Between 2001 and 2006 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has conducted about 1,700 evaluations of programmes leading to the award of a general degree or a professional qualification. These evaluations have only been made possible by extensive and committed endeavours in various quarters: the governance, teachers, students and administrative staff of the higher education institutions, the experts who have been engaged by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education to participate in the panels of assessors and the staff of the National Agency itself.

Now the first six years have come to an end and it is time to sum up both the important observations that have been made during the evaluations and also the experience provided by the evaluation system. The first section of this report will provide an account of the final evaluation year, 2006. Its second section will offer an overall view of the past six years. The emphasis is on the evaluations of subjects and programmes, but the report will also deal with the other quality evaluations undertaken by the National Agency.

The report shows how quality evaluations have contributed to the development of higher education in Sweden. It also demonstrates how Sweden has influenced international developments in the quality assurance of higher education through its involvement for instance in ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).

On the basis of the results of the quality evaluations of the last six years the report concluded with a presentation of a number of important areas in which measures are required.

A new quality evaluation system for higher education has been adopted and preparations are being made for the first round of appraisals.

I am convinced that during the next six years combined endeavours in the quality assurance of higher education will further raise the standards of higher education in Sweden and help it to more than hold its own in an international perspective.

This report forms part of the account required by the Government in its directives to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education. The results have been discussed by the board of the Agency.



Sigbrit Franke
Chancellor

Summary

In 2001 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education began its task of evaluating all undergraduate and graduate programmes that lead to the award of a general degree or a professional qualification. Now the first six-year cycle has come to an end and it is time to sum up. Between 2001 and 2006 no fewer than about 1,700 programmes have been assessed. During the period other forms of evaluation have been undertaken as well: about 150 applications for entitlement to award degrees have been appraised, there have been a large number of audits of the quality assurance procedures at the higher education institutions and a several thematic evaluations.

Within the framework of the subject and programmes evaluations as many as ten per cent on average of the programmes assessed have had their entitlement to award degrees called into question. The evaluations have demonstrated the importance of recurring quality appraisals. They have not only identified the poor programmes but also contributed significantly to the development of quality through the measures adopted by the higher education institutions, the Government and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education as a result of their findings. The conclusion is that on the whole higher education in Sweden maintains high standards of quality from an international perspective as well.

Calling the entitlement to award degrees into question has been a powerful measure for stimulating the development of quality. The higher education institutions have, in every case but one, implemented measures to avoid loss of this entitlement. In one case the entitlement to award a degree was withdrawn. Sometimes the higher education institutions have opted to discontinue the programmes concerned.

Threatened withdrawal of the entitlement to award a degree has been one way of stimulating quality development. Other important contributions to quality development can be found in the national survey of a subject provided by the evaluations, the examples of good programmes that the assessors have often pointed out, the self-evaluation process and, not least, the fact that there is now a great deal more knowledge about and experience of evaluation in the sector. This last could be compared with a comprehensive educational process to raise general awareness.

The follow-up of evaluations that has been arranged regularly has also contributed to the development of quality. Both the feed-back conferences held a few months after the conclusion of each evaluation and the written follow-up undertaken after three years demonstrate that the evaluations have had genuine effect.

As a result of the evaluations the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has initiated its own studies and has also reported to the Government,

for instance, on measures that may be required in certain fields. However, there are still areas where measures should be taken. This report concludes with a number of issues on which both the Government and the higher education institutions are urged to face up to their responsibilities.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's quality assurance of its own operation is undertaken on the principle of "practising what one preaches". During the last six years, in addition to its continuous quality assurance procedures, a number of external reviews and studies have been conducted. Twice during the period external evaluation of the National Agency evaluation procedures has taken place and as a result Sweden is one of the first countries to be approved by ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has been involved internationally at both European and Nordic level in, for instance, various cooperative projects. The National Agency's Advisory Board, an international group, has continuously monitored the quality evaluations. The international perspective is also obvious in the composition of the panels of assessors. During the six years just over 850 assessors have been involved and this only in the evaluations of subjects and programmes. About half of the expert assessors (excluding undergraduate and graduate students and labour market representatives) have come from countries other than Sweden.

The experience acquired during the last six years has provided the basis for the new quality assurance system for higher education that has now been adopted.

Part I: Evaluations of subjects and programmes in 2006

The final year of the six-year evaluation cycle, 2006, has comprised the largest number of evaluations. During the year 19 evaluation projects were completed and they involved about 444 appraisals of undergraduate and graduate programmes.

Evaluations and number of appraisals

Programmes evaluated in 2006	Number of undergraduate programmes appraised	Number of graduate programmes appraised	Total number of programmes appraised
Pharmacy and dispensing pharmacy	8	0	8
Art history, film studies, musicology, theatre studies	29	14	43
Public health science, habilitation studies, handicap studies	1		6 17
Gender studies	10	2	12
Humanities –social sciences combinations	14	5	19
Physical education	6		
Journalism	8	2	10
Law, jurisprudence, commercial law, business law	14	10	24
Cognitive studies	5	3	8
Programmes in the arts			
Fine arts	7	3	10
Design and applied art	20	2	22
Interactive media/design	6	0	6
Music	32	2	34
Performance and production	32	2	34
Psychotherapy qualifications	18	0	18
Programmes at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (forestry, forestry economics, horticulture, horticultural management, horticultural science, veterinary medicine,)	6	3	9
Study and career guidance	3	0	3
Thematic programmes	5	12	17
Caring sciences and medicine (undergraduate programmes)	136	0	136
Total	370	67	437

In addition to a number of evaluations of subjects and vocational programmes, this year's evaluations also included a few blocks of combined programmes. One of these consisted of interdisciplinary programmes in the humanities and social sciences; another was the thematic graduate and master's programmes at Linköping University, as well as cognitive science and gender studies. Another extensive block of programmes evaluated consisted of all the artistic programmes: design and the applied arts, the fine arts, interactive media/design, programmes in music and scenic performance and production. By far the larg-

est evaluation project during the last few years also took place in 2006. This comprised a block of undergraduate programmes in the caring sciences and medicine which involved 136 appraisals divided into 16 sub-projects.

What do the evaluation reports show?

Programmes in pharmacy and drug dispensing – major increase in volume threatens quality

Up until 2000 programmes in pharmacy and drug dispensing were offered only at Uppsala University. In recent years the volume of programmes in pharmacy has increased heavily and these programmes are now offered by six higher education institutions in Sweden. The number of students on programmes in pharmacy has risen by 50 per cent and in programmes in drug dispensing has increased threefold. Recently there has been a decline in the pressure for places, which has meant that students with lower school-leaving grades and poorer background knowledge have been admitted. A few institutions have reduced the number of places on programmes in drug dispensing but still find it difficult to fill all those offered.

The staffing situation is problematic at all the higher education institution apart from Uppsala University, which can provide a flourishing research environment and teachers with advanced scientific expertise in pharmaceuticals. At the other higher education institution many of the teachers lack specific expertise in pharmaceuticals and in several cases a considerable amount of the teaching rests with guest teachers, which involves a lack of continuity and stability for the students. There is a shortage of qualified supervisors, which combined with the many students with poor entry qualifications may be one of the factors contributing to very uneven standard of the degree projects reviewed, in both extent and quality.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education notes that the programmes which were granted entitlement to award degrees a few years ago and advised in this context to continue to augment the availability of qualified teachers have not been particularly successful. The staffing situation is still problematic at these institutions.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the entitlement to award qualifications in drug dispensing at Karlstad University and Luleå University of Technology on the grounds of inadequate teaching capacity and too low a standard in the pharmaceutical subjects.

Aesthetic subjects – from excellent learning environments to those that are far too small

Film studies – new and appealing

Film studies is a subject offered at nine higher education institutions. Stockholm University has both the oldest and by far the most extensive programme. The others are relatively small, were launched recently and are offered in a vari-

ety of departmental contexts. This enables cooperation with other subjects and also within regions, which in many cases creates the possibility of adopting different profiles within the subject area.

The staffing situation in the subject is characterised by some degree of instability. Those awarded PhD's at the universities of Stockholm and Lund are often recruited to the university colleges and new universities but then leave them when posts become vacant at the major universities.

International exchanges are also limited except at Stockholm. This applies to both student and staff exchanges and to the presence of guest lecturers. Here too increased national cooperation could lead to improvements.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the entitlement to award a bachelor's degree in film studies at the University College of Skövde on the grounds that the level required cannot be maintained throughout the range of courses on offer.

Art history – a subject with variations

Art history can be studied at eleven higher education institution in Sweden but under somewhat different names (art history, art and image studies, art history and visual studies) and with differing profiles. There can be differences both in forms of expression and focus. Student populations and also the number of qualified teachers vary widely between the different higher education institution and in some cases numbers are disturbingly low. The panel of assessors considers that the programmes at both Göteborg University and Uppsala University attain high standards. Södertörn University College offers an interesting thematic organisation of the subject.

Student groups are often heterogeneous in terms of age, experience of study and vocational experience. Three-quarters of the students in undergraduate programmes are women as are fifty per cent of the graduate students and the majority of the teachers.

Teaching art history required various forms of technical aids, mainly for showing pictures, but access to suitably equipped premises is not provided everywhere. In addition, study trips, visits to museums and excursions form an important element but, for financial reasons, these are arranged less and less frequently.

Several higher education institution offer net-based teaching which is appreciated but the performance required from the students who take advantage of this alternative is in most cases comparatively low.

Graduate courses are characterised by a declining number of students. This is mainly due to the decision to stop enrolment at some of the higher education institution and the resulting reduction of the learning environments in which programmes are offered.

The assessors from countries outside Sweden were also surprised by the comparatively limited time available to teachers for their own research within the frame-

work of their posts. In the long run this could affect the quality of their teaching by impairing links with research.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the entitlement of the University College of Halmstad to award bachelor's degrees on the grounds of shortcomings in teaching capacity and teachers' qualifications.

Musicology – students with varying entry qualifications and aims

Programmes in musicology are offered at five higher education institutions. Today the subject comprises an increasing number of specialisations and has expanded in cooperation with other subjects towards musical technology and the sociology of music, for instance.

The entry qualifications of the students vary, one reason being that they comprise both practising musicians and humanists with an interest in music. Various ways of dealing with this problem are being tested at different departments. At Uppsala University and Lund University courses in interpretation are offered and a course in musical specialisation has been developed at Växjö University. Stockholm University has cooperated with the Royal College of Music and the University College of Opera in Stockholm in creating a qualifying course in music theory and ear training skills.

In spite of these initiatives comparatively few students continue to the more advanced levels. Teachers have heavy workloads without being able to devote time to any research they may be undertaking. There is a risk that the links between the teaching and research will be restricted. Graduate student populations are small and at Lund University no new appointments are being made, which leads to further impoverishment of the subject. There is a little participation in international conferences but student and staff exchanges are uncommon.

Theatre studies – a small and dwindling subject

Theatre studies are taught at four higher education institutions. The most extensive programme is offered in Stockholm, which also has the most developed international collaboration. At the other universities the subject is small and vulnerable. No organised cooperation between the various programmes takes place. Applications for enrolment are declining in number at all the higher education institutions.

Göteborg University has adopted a profile that focuses on regional and local cultural activities, which the panel of assessors considered particularly interesting and capable of development.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education questions the entitlement to award bachelor's and master's degree at Lund University on the grounds of inadequate teaching capacity.

Public health science – a popular subject that attracts women

Programmes in public health science are offered by thirteen higher education institutions in Sweden.

This is a popular multi-disciplinary subject that appeals above all to women. There is no mutual understanding of what public health science comprises, but the panel of assessors consider that the population perspective should be central. One general impression is, however, that the emphasis in undergraduate programmes in public health science at the university colleges is on health measures aimed at individuals and that there are too few courses in the disciplinary areas of health systems/health policies and health economics.

There are few courses in health science in graduate programmes and it is possible to be enrolled for graduate programmes and be awarded a PhD without having taken any courses in the subject. Graduate programmes in disability studies are considered to function better in this respect.

Teaching and supervision were assessed positively as was integration of theory and practice, student influence and infrastructure with access to modern premises and libraries.

In view of the relatively unpromising labour market for students when they graduate, who will also have to compete with other professional groups for the same positions, the question arose of whether the large number of programmes in public health science did not involve some risk of overestablishment.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the entitlement of the Blekinge Institute of Technology to award bachelor's degrees on the grounds of lack of progressivity, research links and continuity. The entitlement of the University College of Physical Education and Sports in Stockholm to award a bachelor's degree was also questioned on the grounds of shortcomings in the qualifications of the teaching staff, too few elements of public health science as well as lack of progressivity in the teaching of theory and methodology. The entitlement of Örebro University to award a bachelor's degree was questioned because of inadequate teaching resources, weak progressivity and poor research links and also because degree papers in the bachelor's programme were examined by teachers without PhD's.

Gender studies – positive enrolment figures but few students go on to advanced levels

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education undertook an evaluation of programmes in gender studies at ten higher education institutions in Sweden. All of these programmes meet the quality requirements laid down by the panel of assessors. Generally speaking, it can be said that the main branches of gender studies are well represented in the organisation of the syllabuses, progressivity is clear and there are sound links with research. The enrolment figures are positive but most students study for only one or two semesters. Course evaluations are carried out and feed-back of their results to the students works well.

At the same time there are general problems. The learning environments are often small and this applies to both undergraduate and graduate programmes. To avoid the risk of their becoming too small several higher education institutions are involved in partnership projects. The panel of assessors recommends increased collaboration. Here Umeå University and Linköping University are cited as examples of good practice. Cooperation should not only take place within the higher education institutions but also at a national and international level. Lund University and Örebro University offer good examples of international collaboration. There are few teachers with permanent appointments, which means that teaching in undergraduate courses is provided mainly by hourly-paid teachers. The evaluation also shows that there are major variations in the number of teaching hours offered at the different higher education institutions. The panel of assessors noted a gender imbalance as the graduate students consist only of women. Finally the panel recommended the higher education institutions to pay special attention to the employability of the students after they graduate from the programmes.

Humanities-social science combinations – multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, polydisciplinary?

Child and youth culture, children's culture, culture and media production, and social and cultural analysis – four multidisciplinary programmes in the humanities and social sciences

These four programmes are offered at different higher education institutions. What they have in common is that the central disciplinary area is "culture" with clear links to the social sciences. Otherwise the programmes deal with totally different subjects. The panel of assessors considers that all of the programmes have highly qualified teachers, are well organised and cooperate effectively. However, none of the subjects offer graduate programmes or have resources for research. As a large number of teachers with PhD's are involved in the programmes it is still considered that the links with research are sound.

Child and youth culture at Göteborg University is praised for the coherence of both the organisation and the subject matter of its programme. However many students do not complete their studies and the panel of assessors therefore recommends distance study as one way of attracting and retaining students.

A programme in children's culture is offered at Stockholm University. This also receives praise for the excellent way in which coherence is imposed by its administrators. The quality assurance procedures at the Centre for Child Culture Research are described as exemplary. Better marketing is recommended, to attract more men for example.

The programme in culture and media production is given at Linköping University. This programme consists of two elements: one with a more theoretical orientation and one that is more practical. The panel of assessors considers that the programme is well organised and that the teaching staff, despite

their disparities, form a cohesive whole. One recommendation is that a more explicit introduction to the course should be offered to avoid student uncertainty about what the programme leads to.

Social and cultural analysis is another programme offered at Linköping University. This programme is intended to train social and cultural analysts with broad and deep trans-sectoral expertise on social and cultural issues. The studies involve a large proportion of project work. Both students and teachers are satisfied with the programme. The panel of assessors recommends better marketing to raise the numbers applying for the programme.

Health care administration – young and multidisciplinary subject

Health care administration is a young and multidisciplinary subject whose contents mainly belong to the social science disciplines. The subject has no clear departmental affiliations at the higher education institutions and even though its primary target group – those working in the health services – is a large one, the student population is small. The subject is offered as programme of advanced study and only few students proceed past the end of their second semester. The students' professional concerns form a natural element in the programme and this to some extent undermines the academic value.

The programmes, which are offered at three higher education institutions, differ markedly in terms of course contents, teaching methodology and examination procedures. This is not the result of the deliberate adoption of profiles but is based on traditions, the teaching staff available and the professional standing of the students. The differences could jeopardise the equivalence of the programmes and they are urged to cooperate on issues relating to the scientific basis of the teaching and their identity.

Human ecology – clearer labour market requirements

Human ecology is offered at two higher education institutions. Human ecology seeks solutions to problems that can offer a more sustainable and equitable global community. Both programmes maintain good standards and the number of PhD's awarded has been satisfactory. The panel of assessors sees the need, however, for more cooperation between the two higher education institutions, particularly in graduate programmes, as well as with other institutions that offer teaching in the subject. National cooperation is one way of countering the problems posed by the restricted learning environments and declining enrolment at undergraduate level. In order to remedy this latter problem it is also important to inform potential students clearly about their possibilities in the labour market when they graduate.

International migration and ethnic relations – a powerful subject but unknown outside higher education

This programme, which focuses on the causes of international migration and its results, is offered at the University College of Malmö. This a multidisciplinary

nary subject that endeavours to cover the entire migration process, from source to recipient country. The University College of Malmö offers an undergraduate programme in the subject.

The panel of assessors emphasised the sound qualifications of the teachers and the breadth of their subject expertise, there are 17 permanently employed teachers with PhD's. Responsibility for the organisation of the courses is shared by two members of the staff, in other words teachers with backgrounds in different subject are responsible for each course. This results in differing approaches to the subject. The content of the courses is considered relevant but the panel would like to see clearer progressivity between the C and D semesters of the programme.

The programme has a strong footing in the University College but it is not very well known in the labour market. Here better contacts are recommended with the surrounding community. The assessors also recommend enhanced student influence and greater internationalisation, for instance through increasing student and staff exchanges with higher education institutions abroad.

Public administration – multidisciplinary with strong research links

Public administration is described as a multidisciplinary subject in which political science and business administration predominate. The programme is offered by one higher education institution, Göteborg University. The panel of assessors feels that the university describes the programme as being more general than in fact it is. The profile it has adopted aims at local authority and regional administration but the panel feels that it could extend its scope to include public administration at state and international level. The panel praises the links with research in the programme and points out that the subject content of the undergraduate programme is of high academic standard. Praise is also given to the possibilities of placements and the well developed network for providing placement positions that exists. At graduate level criticism is expressed of the fact that the students do not automatically receive instruction in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies as part of the programme. It is also recommended that more theses should be written in English.

Service management – a programme with an identity problem

This programme is offered at Lund University. The panel of assessors identifies a number of problems relating to the programme's identity. It lacks a clear profile which can give rise to problems in the development of theory, methodology and progressivity. The international elements in the programme should be augmented, for instance by locating some section of the programme abroad, by including more reference works and teaching in English and in writing more papers in English. Another problem area related to the links with research. Despite the problems, there are a number of positive factors such as the large proportion of teachers with PhD's, the well-thought out management struc-

ture, excellent organisation and administration and the broad scope offered to students to influence the programme.

Science and technology studies – highly interesting programme in a small learning environment

This evaluation comprised only one graduate programme at one higher education institution, Göteborg University. The panel of assessors considered the programme to be extremely interesting and emphasised the great commitment shown by the teachers responsible for it. However, it was pointed out that the small learning environment in which the programme is offered causes difficulties. The recommendations made were to take advantage of all resources available, to concentrate the choice of subjects and to try to raise the number of graduate students. The panel also pointed out that the graduate programme not only offers preparation for research but that there is also a labour market outside research for students when they graduate.

Programmes in tourism studies – good cooperation with the tourism industry

Programmes in tourism studies are offered at three higher education institutions. The impression gained by the panel of assessors was positive. The assessors point in particular to the good cooperation with the tourism industry. Students cooperate with companies and organisations in the tourism sector when they undertake projects and write their degree papers. Hitherto no PhD's have been awarded in tourism studies. Instead the teachers have qualifications from business administration, cultural geography and sociology. The assessors point out that measures are needed to assure access to qualified teachers in the future. One criticism of the programmes was that there was a tendency for degree papers to be supervised and graded by the same person, which is not recommended.

Physical education – a young subject with no clear identity

Physical education or sports studies is a recent subject in Sweden, more recent than in many other countries. The programme is offered at six higher education institutions. Only one graduate programme in the subject is offered in Sweden. The contents of the programmes range from the social sciences to the natural sciences. Several higher education institutions have programmes that resemble those evaluated but they are given different names. This makes it difficult to give the programmes clear identities.

There are close links between the subject and programmes for physical education instructors. These have influenced the departmental affiliations of the programmes at the higher education institutions and also influenced the programmes in various ways, both positively and negatively. One positive influence is the availability of experienced teachers which has contributed to the

variety of teaching and examination methods. An example of negative impact can be found in the lack of research activity in some quarters.

The assessors cite two programmes as positive examples. One is offered by the University College of Physical Education and Sports in Stockholm, which has a long tradition of training physical education teachers, a large teaching staff and extensive research activities. The other is the University College of Malmö which has managed to organise excellent placement studies for its students and is cited as an example for all programmes that require placements.

The panel of assessors points out that there is a discrepancy in the way in which the higher education institutions describe the labour market for students after graduation and the actual lack of any clear labour market for this group. On important responsibility for the higher education institutions is to market the programmes correctly.

The programmes maintain high quality standards with the exception of the graduate programme at Örebro University. This is criticised for its lack of professors and researchers actively involved in research in the principal subject areas. In addition the department should have a programme from which it can recruit its own students to graduate programmes. The graduate programme also lacks any statement of objectives for high priority research areas. The entitlement of the graduate programme to award degrees is questioned.

Journalism – difficult to combine theory and practice

This evaluation involved programmes in journalism at eight higher education institutions.

Journalism is a subject that should have a clear vocational direction if it is to be relevant to future careers but at the same time it must be grounded in theory to form part of higher education. Better integration of the two is desirable to meet future developments in the media and the community and ensure the academic standing of the discipline.

On the whole the programmes stand up well to international comparison and the qualifications of the teaching staff have been enhanced, for instance, since the evaluation undertaken in 2000. The criticism that was expressed referred to the lack of monitoring of former students that could help to add greater relevance to the programmes.

The scholarly basis of the degree projects and the criteria on which they are assessed need to be made more explicit in order, for instance, to make it obvious that they qualify students to apply for graduate programmes.

Finally the panel of assessors points out that there is a need to increase ethnic diversity in the recruitment to programmes in journalism to enable the profession to reflect the community more effectively.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the entitlement to award a master's degree in journalism at Umeå University on the grounds of shortcomings in the qualifications and supply of teaching staff.

Law – popular programmes that still face problems

This evaluation comprised five programmes leading to the award of a bachelor's degree in law, a professional qualification, as well as nine programmes that led to the award of general degrees in commercial law, business law and jurisprudence. At graduate level ten programmes leading to the award of a PhD or a Doctorate in Law have been reviewed. Twelve higher education institutions were involved in the evaluation.

These programmes are popular and there is keen competition for the places on all programmes leading to the award of the L1B qualification in Sweden.

Where the L1B programmes and the local programmes in law are concerned this evaluation was a follow-up, as they were appraised in 1999. Several of the shortcomings in the undergraduate programmes that were then pointed out still exist. For the L1B programmes these involve the length of time taken for completion, the poor labour market links and the competition for grades between the students. Prominence was given to Umeå University for being the only higher education institution that had managed to moderate student rivalry to some extent and improve the low throughput and length of time taken to complete the L1B programme. The assessors propose the introduction of a new degree: a professional qualification in law that focuses on the needs of the commercial sector and above all on skills in commercial and business law. The number of teachers with PhD's and who are actively involved in research is still low in many places and the teachers do not have the time to enhance their own qualifications within the framework of their posts.

Something that has been improved but which can be further developed is work for gender equality. Greater emphasis also has to be given to ethnic diversity. The international perspective in the programmes is still weak, with the exception of Jönköping University Foundation and Stockholm University.

In graduate programmes it is pointed out that jurisprudence is a field of research in which many small graduate programmes have been established in recent years. The panel of assessors warns against programmes with student populations that are too small. One of the panel's recommendations is the establishment of a national graduate school in the area of law.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the entitlement of the University College of Mälardalen to award a bachelor's degree in commercial law because of the lack of research links. The graduate programmes in business law at Linköping University and jurisprudence at Örebro University are also questioned. These programmes are too small and isolated and the learning environment offered for graduate students is not critical or creative enough.

Cognitive science – different but equally good programmes

Cognitive science is offered at five higher education institutions in Sweden. All of them fulfil the standards required even though they are different and in certain cases lead to the award of different degrees. These programmes, which are relatively new, deal with issues relating to cognitive phenomena and

processes in various contexts and from different perspectives. Cognitive science is made up of six subjects but how these relate to each other and form an entirety is unclear to many students, which leads to unnecessary drop-outs. A clearer profile that can be reflected in the programmes, collaboration with the relevant subject departments and continual discussion of the contents of the programmes are recommended to determine the unifying theme. In this context it is important to remove organisational obstacles to collaboration arising from the fact that cognitive science, like many multi-disciplinary programmes, has no clear departmental affiliations. There is a risk that responsibility for the programmes will end up lying with nobody.

The number of graduate students at the three higher education institutions evaluated is limited but there are also graduate programmes based on issues relevant to cognitive science in other subject areas. More cooperation on graduate programmes is vital and would provide more scope than today for taking advantage of the complementary expertise that exists at the different higher education institutions.

Programmes in the arts – competition for places, close contacts between teachers

During the year all the programmes in the arts have been evaluated. The evaluation has been divided into five different sub-evaluations that dealt with design and the applied arts, the fine arts, interactive media/design, music as well as performance and production.

Design and the applied arts – artistic grounding needs to be enhanced

On the whole the programmes in design and the applied arts are characterised by their high quality. The programmes in design were evaluated in 2000 and there are clearly positive developments. The assessors draw attention to the particular eminence of programmes with profiles such as industrial design at Umeå University and textile design at the University College of Borås. But Konstfack (University College of Arts, Crafts and Design) in Stockholm and the University College for Design and Crafts at Göteborg University are also judged positively. However in the applied arts the assessors consider that both identity and contemporary orientation need enhancement.

There are many contacts with the surrounding world and guest teachers with specific expertise but one problem involves definition and development of the artistic grounding. Contemporary perspectives, critical reflection, links with theory and free production need to be augmented and the lack of time available for the teachers' own artistic development is one problem. Increased national and international cooperation to support the areas of teaching and research in design and the applied arts is needed.

The entitlement to award bachelor's degrees in cabinet-making, upholstery, furniture conservation, guitar construction and furniture design at the Carl Malmsten Centre for Wood Technology & Design at Linköping University is

questioned. From the point of view of craftsmanship these are considered to be sound but they do not meet the requirements that can be made of a higher education programme in the arts. In addition the entitlement of the faculty of engineering at Lund University to award a degree in art and design is also questioned. There are shortcomings in the availability of teaching staff and their qualifications. The artistic grounding is also considered to be poor and the support from the faculty inadequate.

The fine arts – enrolment is a rite of passage but then what happens?

The evaluation of the programmes in the fine arts involved those offered by the Royal University College of Fine Arts and Konstfack in Stockholm, the Valand School of Fine Arts at Göteborg University, the University College of Art in Malmö (Lund University) and the Academy of Fine Arts at Umeå University. In addition programmes offered by the School of Photography and in the subject of creative writing at Göteborg University were included.

Two things above all characterise programmes in the fine arts: their application procedures and the high ratio of teachers to students.

Virtually all applicants have completed some form of post-secondary preparatory programme and they are admitted on the basis of portfolios and often interviews. The pressure for places is high. Teaching in the programmes is remarkably intensive and students are offered more or less individual supervision. The assessors are able to establish that this is very popular on the whole but that there are virtually no written records of the discussions about individual students that frequently take place at staff meetings nor feed-back and evaluation, including course evaluations. Individual plans of study that are monitored are required. At the same time it is clear that the teachers are very highly qualified. There are, however, relatively few permanent posts at several of the higher education institutions and many of those with short-term appointments have few teaching hours so that problems of continuity arise.

Graduate programmes are offered at Göteborg University and Lund University, but they were launched far too recently to enable any general conclusions to be drawn.

Interactive media/design – new subjects under development

Interactive media is a technical subject with an element of design that covers a wide field and includes art and design at Beckmans College of Design, game development at the University College of Gotland, computer graphics at Luleå University of Technology, interactive design at the University College of Malmö and information design at the University College of Mälardalen. At the five higher education institutions at which the programmes are offered the focus is on the arts, even though only one of them awards a degree in the arts. After the introduction of the new higher education ordinance, those that do not currently offer qualification in the arts will either be required to adapt their programmes to the new objectives laid down for these qualifications or

abandon some degree of their artistic focus and no longer admit students on the basis of portfolios.

Students are currently admitted to these programmes on the basis of portfolios but a number of higher education institutions lack criteria for what is to be appraised and should, furthermore, link the portfolios more clearly to the theoretical contents of the programmes and the degree projects. The different programmes vary a great deal, not least in the relationship of artistic and academic elements. These profiles are reasonable and desirable but at the same time the interaction of the two elements is important.

The studio-based learning environments, sometimes with individual access to studios, offered by the programmes are considered to favour creativity. The assessors consider it important for students to learn to compose their own portfolios during their studies, which is not currently included in every programme. Greater emphasis on group work and enhancement of supervision are other improvements that advocated.

Training for musicians – varying learning environments

Bachelor's and master's programmes in music are offered at five higher education institutions and graduate programmes at two of them.

Like other programmes in the fine arts, competition for places is fierce. Nearly all of those admitted have already completed some musical training programme. Despite the great interest, however, there are only few applicants for some instruments.

The extent of the teaching varies between higher education institutions. The assessors consider that the amount offered at some is inadequate. This applies in particular to the more advanced undergraduate levels and in graduate programmes.

Most of the teaching staff have short term appointments, which means that the programmes have access to special expertise. One problem with a large number of short-term appointments is that the teachers with permanent posts find it difficult to ensure continuity and that most of their time is devoted to teaching and administration. In most quarters there is very little scope for research and artistic development. The workloads of the teachers are so great that in the long run they cannot sustain their expertise, let alone add to it. It should, however, be pointed out that the teachers display a great deal of commitment to their teaching and at the same time keep up with developments in their subject. The assessors recommend an increase in the proportion of teachers with full-time appointments to ensure that the programmes do not become (or continue to be) vulnerable.

Performance and production – many branches, fierce competition for places and expensive programmes

Programmes in performance and production are offered at a total of nine higher education institutions. Some of these are specialist institutions (the

University College of Dance, the University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre, the University College of Opera and the National Academy of Mime and Acting), others are integrated into universities (programmes in opera, musicals, acting and film direction at Göteborg University, in acting at Luleå University of Technology and in acting and playwriting at Lund University's Malmö Theatre Academy). In addition there is a programme in musical production at Linköping University and the University College of Gotland offers programmes in manuscript and concept development for film and film production, 3D graphics and animation.

Like other programmes in the arts, performance and production programmes are on the whole expensive, partly because of the amount of teaching (in acting programmes up to 40 hours a week) and the pupil teacher ratio and also because of the equipment and premises required. The assessors findings are that the programmes that have an established artistic grounding maintain high or excellent standards.

In common with most of the other programmes in the arts, competition for places is fierce. The students admitted are very highly qualified and there is a very high standard of instruction. On the whole students have a great deal of informal influence on their teaching but often there are no methods for evaluation and keeping records.

In most programmes the teachers have sound qualifications and good contacts with the professional world in their respective branches. They have difficulties, however, in finding time for their own artistic development, which in the long run could have an impact on the quality of the programmes.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education questions the entitlement to award a bachelor's degree in musical production at Linköping University and bachelor's degrees in manuscript and concept development for film and film production as well as 3D graphics and animation at the University College of Gotland. There are shortcomings in their artistic and academic grounding and they lack the necessary degree of specialisation and progressivity.

Programmes in psychotherapy – major shortcomings in contents and academic standards

This evaluation comprised programmes leading to the award of qualifications in psychotherapy offered by 18 programme providers in Sweden. Six of these are universities, twelve are independent programme providers. The programmes often have a number of specialisations.

The panel of assessors highlight a number of general problems. One of these is that the providers have taken too little account of the changes the health services are undergoing, which is reflected in the remarkable few alterations in the content and form of the programmes since many of them were first entitled to award degrees. The demand for evidence on which to base caring intervention, the rapid developments in psychopharmacology, the impact of

recognised diagnoses in clinical psychiatry (DSM/IDC) have had little impact on the programmes. Many of the programmes also lack training in shorter, focused therapies which are in great demand in the health service today. The overall impression is that most of the offerings of the independent programme providers adhere statically to established methods.

The lack of an academic approach in most of the programmes can be seen both in the areas already referred to as well as the tendency at times to introduce innovations that accept without criticism methods based on inadequate evidence.

Other general shortcomings can be found for example in the students' lack of psychotherapeutic tasks during the programmes, far too few qualified teachers and the lack of links with research as well as the small learning environments in which the programmes are offered, where the same individuals play different roles and which lack the conditions to enable a critical and creative approach.

Another problem that is related to the psychotherapy programmes involves the basic training in psychotherapy required in most cases for enrolment in these programmes. This training is subject to no control and has become increasingly specialised. Some programme providers demand basic training in psychotherapy with a specific specialisation so that students specialise far too soon. Differences in the basic training in psychotherapy also mean that the knowledge that students bring with them is far too varied. The panel of assessors recommends a review of the basic training in psychotherapy. The differences in the prior knowledge of the students are augmented by the fact that programme providers often assess the equivalence of qualifications when enrolling students. This has for instance resulted in the admission of students with only school-leaving qualifications and basic training in psychotherapy with the justification that the qualifications awarded by the basic training programmes are counted as degrees in higher education. The variations in the students' prior knowledge lead on the whole to shortcomings in the quality of the programmes.

In sum the panel of assessors recommends greater state responsibility for programmes in psychotherapy and a total review of the training programmes.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the entitlement of 14 programme providers to award qualifications. These involve the Behavioural Therapy Association, Göteborg Psychotherapy Institute, Linnéstaden Psychotherapy Institute, Otterhällans Institute, the Psychotherapy Society in Stockholm, St. Luke's Training Institute, the Stockholm Academy for Psychotherapy Training, the Swedish Psychoanalytical Association and the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society, on the grounds that the shortcomings in their academic standards are too grave, their lack of research links, paucity of teaching staff with postgraduate qualifications and the learning environments offered that are too small.

The entitlement of the Center for Cognitive Psychotherapy and Training to award qualifications is questioned on the grounds of shortcomings in the enrolment procedure and that there is no element of supervision in the programme as a whole.

The entitlement to award qualifications at Linköpings University, Umeå University and the Swedish Institute for Cognitive Psychotherapy is questioned because of the introduction of approaches based on inadequate evidence. The entitlement to award qualifications at Uppsala University is questioned on the grounds of the major shortcomings in the psychodynamic approach.

Forestry, horticulture, technology and veterinary nursing – several unique programmes with few students

The programmes evaluated, all offered by the Swedish University of Agricultural Science, comprise those leading to the award of MSc degrees in forestry and in horticulture, undergraduate and graduate programmes in forestry management, programmes in veterinary nursing and in horticultural management, the graduate programme in horticultural science and undergraduate and graduate programmes in technology. Although these are the only vocational programmes of their kind and despite sound cooperation with the labour market, several of them face major recruitment problems. Focused measures are needed in this context. The difficulty in recruiting students means that many of the courses have such small populations that it is impossible to offer creative learning environments.

The possibilities of links with research are particularly good in view of the predominance of research and graduate programmes in the overall activities of the university. Undergraduate programmes fail, however, to take advantage of these possibilities on the whole, as there are few senior lecturers and the professors only participate in teaching to a restricted extent.

The graduate programmes are generally considered to maintain good quality and the links with research in the longer vocational programmes and in the undergraduate programme in technology are sound. Quality assurance needs enhancement, however, in several areas, which makes its impact on the programmes in the form of unclear distinctions between general degrees and professional qualifications, the lack of objectives, supervision and examination undertaken by the same individual, different requirements for credits in graduate programmes and marked differences in the quality of degree projects.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the programme in veterinary nursing and horticultural management. These programmes do not fulfil the requirements with respect to the qualifications of the teachers and academic level.

Study and career guidance – narrow focus with poor research links

These programmes, offered at three higher education institutions in Sweden, have strong vocational links as many teachers are also skilled and experienced counsellors. The strong links with their careers have also meant that future employers and placement supervisors have a positive attitude to the students when they complete their placements.

On the whole the programmes have too narrow a focus on the school system. Counselling adults and the development of habilitation programmes for individuals with particular difficulties in the labour market are tasks listed in the learning objectives but which students have no contact with during their programmes.

The largest problem for the programmes is their lack of research links. Too few teachers with PhD's are involved in the teaching and far too many degree projects are supervised by teachers without research qualifications. In view of the fact that just over half of the students are undertaking distance study the qualifications of the teaching staff could be augmented through greater cooperation.

The entitlement to award a degree at the University College of Malmö is questioned on the grounds of the inadequate qualifications of the teachers, lack of supervisory capacity, and shortcoming in the organisation, administration and reading lists.

Thematic programmes at Linköping University – good quality but a lack of long-term objectives and strategies

Linköping University offers five master's and twelve graduate programmes in a number of interdisciplinary themes. These programmes are considered to be of good quality but attention is drawn to the differences between the different thematic settings. The panel of assessors also points to the lack of clarity and transparency concerning the principles for the allocation of economic resources. It is not clear either on what basis the different themes have been established. The assessors recommend an evaluation system that can provide a basis for decisions on amendments to themes or their discontinuation. Other shortcomings that are mentioned deal with organisation and management. The organisation gives rise to uncertainty about where responsibilities lie. There is also a lack of strategic discussion in the thematic learning environments of the future of the themes.

Graduate programmes are offered on the graduate school model. In most cases this has given the programmes exemplary structure with well organised enrolment, a range of courses and effective quality assurance of the theses submitted. This in its turn has yielded good results and comparatively little drop-out. This excellent approach is now threatened to some extent by cut-backs in funding.

The master's programmes are offered in English to students of mixed nationalities. This involves the special challenge of creating programmes that can take advantage of the varying backgrounds of the students and still remain rewarding. One obstacle appears to be the concluding degree paper, which in many cases is the reason for poor throughput. The master's programmes are also poorly funded.

Programmes in the caring sciences – doubts about quality

This evaluation comprised 136 programmes leading to the award of 16 different qualifications offered at 27 higher education institutions. All of the programmes prepare students for careers in the health services. The evaluation therefore provides a national overview of the majority of the professional training programmes in medicine and the caring sciences in Sweden. The common denominator of the 15 vocational programmes included in the evaluation is that in all of them some sections of the clinical training takes the form of placement in the health services, county health authorities or local authorities, independent care-providers or companies linked to the health services.

Special focus was placed in this evaluation on the outcomes of the programmes in terms of the general objectives for higher education as well as the quality of the placement study in clinical settings.

The evaluation shows that the programmes in the caring sciences have undergone an impressive development in the last ten years. The progressive absorption at the end of the 1990s of the nursing colleges run by the regional health authorities into state-run higher education changed the conditions on which these programmes were offered in a number of respects. Above all it led to the availability of a considerably larger number of teachers with academic qualifications. It offered students and teachers possibilities to study at advanced levels, go on to graduate programmes and undertake research that had previously not existed. The evaluation also shows that the higher education institution involved in many vocational programmes have access to a relatively large number of teachers who have both academic qualifications and professional experience that is relevant for the specific programmes.

The same academic standards apply to the clinical courses that take the form of placements as to other courses offered in higher education. This also applies to the academic qualifications and teaching skills of the clinical teachers and supervisors. From this perspective the evaluation reveals a number of problems and shortcomings concerning the quality of clinical placement studies. Often there is a lack of both placement positions and supervisors. Sometimes no agreement exists between the health authorities and the local authorities about the clinical placement positions. Many supervisors also lack training in supervision and adequate academic qualifications. Ad-hoc solutions often have to replace the long-term planning required to establish good learning environments, train supervisors and develop teaching methods for clinical training and clinical examination.

However programmes in medicine are considered to maintain high clinical standards also seen from an international perspective.

All of the programmes offering professional qualifications for *speech therapists, physicians, opticians, orthopaedic engineers* and *clinical physicists* maintain satisfactory or highly satisfactory standards. The availability of teachers with advanced academic qualifications is also good, particularly in the programmes for *qualified clinical physicists*.

The programmes training *vocational therapists* and *physiotherapists* have undergone stable development during the last decade. The academic qualifications of vocational therapists and physiotherapists in particular are rising continually and most of the programmes maintain high standards.

There has been a major development of the academic standards of programmes offering degrees to *midwives, nurses* and *specialist nurses*. In spite of this the assessors consider that the quality is not satisfactory. It is remarkable that many of these programmes are offered at universities that also have faculties of medicine.

The programmes offering qualifications in *biomedical analysis* are considered to be of satisfactory quality. The *master's degree in bio-medicine* is the only programme in the evaluation that does not lead to the award of a professional qualification. Generally teachers with advanced scientific qualifications are available at the higher education institutions offering the master's programmes, particularly when they are affiliated to faculties of medicine.

Programmes in *dental hygiene* are only two-year programmes and fulfil the current requirements for higher education programmes.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is questioning the entitlement of the following programmes to award qualifications: Blekinge Institute of Technology, nursing, specialist nursing; Linköping University, nursing; Ersta Sköndal University College, nursing (160 credits); Göteborg University, audiology, radiology nursing; Dalarna University College, nursing; University College of Borås, midwifery; the Red Cross University College of Nursing, nursing; Växjö University, radiology nursing; Kristianstad University College, specialist nursing; Jönköping University Foundation, radiology nursing; Umeå University, biomedical analysis, nursing; Örebro University, biomedical analysis, nursing; University West, nursing, specialist nursing; University College of Gävle, specialist nursing; Uppsala University, nursing, specialist nursing; University College of Kalmar, master's degree in bio-chemistry; University College of Skövde, midwifery, nursing, specialist nursing; Karolinska Institute, biomedical analysis, nursing, specialist nursing, Luleå University of Technology, vocational therapy; University College of Mälardalen, physiotherapy.

A large number of these programmes reveal a lack of cohesion between their objectives, teaching and examinations, including poor progressivity from one course to the next and in some cases inadequately qualified teachers. Further details can be found in Report 2007:23R.

The quality of programmes – summing up

Satisfactory and in several cases Excellent

First of all it should be observed that the great majority of the many programmes evaluated during the year meet the quality standards required in higher education. Many of them receive a generally positive assessment. The assessors refer to good links with research and sometimes contacts with the labour market and therefore good scope for placements. The teachers often show great commitment. In all the programmes, including those that are criticised overall, several positive factors can be found.

Numerous hesitations in two areas

During 2006 a very large number of evaluations have been completed. It can be seen that the entitlement to award degrees has been questioned this year in a relatively large number of cases. Is this a sign that the quality of higher education is in the process of deteriorating? Analysis of the reports shows that this can hardly be the case. In most cases entitlement has been questioned in a limited number of programmes, above all those in psychotherapy, where the learning environments are often extremely restricted and have poor links with research, and certain programmes in the caring sciences where there are shortcomings in progressivity and the qualifications of the teaching staff.

Fewer undergraduate and graduate students in some subjects

The pressure for places had declined in a number of subjects, both in the humanities and certain vocational programmes. In many cases this results in less funding and therefore far too few teachers. The shortage of students also means that the programmes offer less breadth and therefore fewer options. Here administrators must face their responsibility and either seek cooperation with other higher education institutions or close programmes down.

The number of graduate students in some subjects, mainly the humanities, is disturbingly low and affects the academic discourse in seminars, the breadth of programmes and in the long run disciplinary development. This is primarily due to the lack of faculty resources, which in some cases has led to a total halt in enrolments. Both the panels of assessors and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education stress the importance of collaboration, preferably in the form of graduate schools.

Other challenges

Many of the problems accounted for here are the same as those revealed in earlier years. Often these involve issues that cannot be resolved at departmental level. One recurring question is the time available to teachers for their own research within the framework of their posts. There are great variations but there are examples of faculties in which no time is available at all. In many quarters some hours for research are allocated but they are not actually avail-

able. In the long term, as the reports point out, this will impair the links between teaching and research.

The poor funding in certain programmes, above all in the social sciences, results in very little classroom teaching. The study visits and excursions needed in some subject can only be arranged more and more infrequently.

To a greater extent than earlier the assessors have commented on issues related to the Bologna process and internationalisation. At times this concerns the relatively low proportion of students in undergraduate programmes who undertake some element of their studies abroad. Finally in several reports the question of employability is raised, above all in connection with the failure of the departments and the higher education institutions to monitor alumni and the lack of surveys of employers to acquire information about the relevance of the programmes.

The 2006 evaluations – a few themes

Evaluations of the caring sciences

During the last decade the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has undertaken a number of evaluations and studies of programmes in the caring sciences. This has made it possible to monitor the development of quality of a somewhat longer period. During the academic year 1995/96 an evaluation was requested by the Government that involved 113 higher-education programmes in the caring sciences.¹ The evaluation was also required to submit a report that could be used as the basis for subsequent appraisal of the entitlement of the higher education institution to award degrees. The results showed that almost 40 per cent of the programmes evaluated were considered not to attain academic standards, which meant that they did not meet requirements in respect of their scientific basis and links with research. This should be seen in the light of the extensive development work that had been taking place in the two decades that had elapsed since these programmes were incorporated into the higher education system. The development work was still taking place when the evaluation was undertaken and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education therefore decided to wait to see its effect before deciding on the continued entitlement of the higher education institution to award degrees. Their academic standards were, however, to be reviewed within three years to provide a basis for renewed appraisal of the entitlement to award degrees.

The follow-up evaluation comprised 84 programmes. Nine were considered not to attain the required academic standards.² The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education decided to withdraw the entitlement to award degrees from six programmes that had been admonished in connection with the 1996

1. Programmes in the Caring Sciences in Higher Education. An Evaluation (1996).

2. Programmes in the caring sciences and social care – a follow-up evaluation (2005)

evaluation. The entitlement of three programmes was questioned and they were given a fixed period in which to remedy the shortcomings.

In this context special attention was paid to gender equality and the higher education institutions were recommended to make further efforts to reduce the prevailing predominance of women among students and teachers.

It can be added that all the higher education institution finally regained their entitlement to award degrees after successful development measures.

Programmes in medicine were given good ratings and considered to maintain high standards from an international perspective in the evaluation that was presented in 1997.³ The students were considered to have the knowledge, abilities and skills required for the general practice that is fundamental in medical practice.

One criticism of the programmes was that in their development work the higher education institutions should replace the passive forms of learning and introduce more modern teaching methods. Linköping University was praised for the coherence of its methodology throughout the programme. This had also yielded good results.

The evaluation of programmes in the caring sciences presented above once again comprises a large number. Unlike the previous evaluations, this time their clinical elements have also been scrutinised.

The overall results show that an impressive development has taken place during the last decade. Many of the programmes now have access to a relatively large number of teachers who have both academic qualifications and appropriate professional experience. Even so, questions are raised about the entitlement of almost one-quarter of the programmes evaluated to award degrees. A large number of the programmes considered unsatisfactory reveal lack of coherence between their objectives, teaching and examination. This means, for instance, that the various courses included in the programmes lack natural links with each other and therefore do not offer the progressivity that should characterise higher education. This in its turns restricts the possibilities of their students to gradually acquire an academic approach during their studies.

Shortcomings in the clinical placements concern, for example, the frequent lack of both placement positions and supervisors. Many supervisors also lack training in supervision and appropriate qualifications from higher education.

Programmes in medicine are also considered in this evaluation to maintain high quality standards, particularly in the clinical elements but there are differences between the different programmes. In this evaluation the assessors cite Linköping University and Lund University as institutions that attain high standards in their programmes in medicine. The programmes at Umeå and Uppsala are developing along the right lines in the opinion of the assessors.

3. Programmes in medicine in Sweden – how good are they? (1997)

One observation made by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is that the latest evaluation raises questions about a number of programmes in nursing offered by several universities that have faculties of medicine.

Interdisciplinary programmes

The programmes to be evaluated in different years are listed in the “six-year plan”, a plan covering all the programmes that lead to the award of a general degree or professional qualification drawn up by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education. This plan is discussed with the higher education institutions and endorsed by them. Programmes have been grouped up to now on the basis of their major subjects. Initially the thematic programmes offered at Linköping University were included in the evaluations of specific subjects. However, the six-year plan was revised at the request of Linköping University, where there was a fear that the thematic programmes could receive unfair treatment if evaluated together with other subjects. The National Agency decided to evaluate the thematic programmes separately in 2006. This group was subsequently extended to include other programmes considered to have interdisciplinary major subjects. During the course of the year it has become clear that neither the concept of major subject or interdisciplinary are straightforward.

In preparation for the round of evaluations in 2006, which was to include several interdisciplinary programmes, the National Agency initiated a study of what the concept involved.⁴ This study attempts primarily to ascertain how the concepts of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary are used in the evaluations. The literature and previous studies reveal that they have numerous meanings. One difference is that interdisciplinary refers to attempts to integrate various subject areas which can in the long run lead to the creation of a new subject or discipline. Multidisciplinary on the other hand refers more to cooperation and does not lead to the formation of a new subject.

The variety of meanings and often unreflecting use of the concepts is confirmed by an analysis of research strategies from a number of higher education institutions. These have been directed by the Government to account in particular for measures adopted to stimulate interdisciplinary activities: political priority is therefore given to the interdisciplinary. The analysis disclosed a difference between the attitudes of the older universities, which place greater emphasis on the importance of the individual subjects in interdisciplinary activities, and the newer universities and university colleges, which emphasise the way in which interdisciplinary undertakings can enhance disciplines. The older universities also point out that the breadth and size of an institution is an important requirement for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary projects

4. Evaluating interdisciplinary programmes – reflections on the basis of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education’s evaluations 2001-2005. This report will be published in 2007.

while the smaller institutions take advantage of interdisciplinary cooperation to create learning environments of an adequate size and emphasise how much easier it is to establish contacts across demarcation lines in smaller organisations.

An analysis of the subject and programme evaluations undertaken by the National Agency in the years 2001-2005 shows that interdisciplinary is a concept that appears in virtually every evaluation report. The identity of a quarter of the subjects is described as involving interdisciplinary activity. For new subjects problems are referred to that relate to their frequent lack of any accepted subject core and shortcomings in progressivity. Interdisciplinary features are then seen as a threat to the development of their identity. For older subjects that do have an established core, interdisciplinary features are referred to, on the other hand as something positive, enrichment of the subject. But there is a limit to the degree of interdisciplinary involvement a subject may have before it loses its own subject identity. The evaluation reports often encourage interdisciplinary cooperation, not so much to influence the contents of a subject but to cope with financial problems. Although the assessors encourage interdisciplinary cooperation, they emphasise the importance of an explicit subject core, progressivity in the subject and links with research. This leads to a dilemma that is not easy to resolve.

Now that the six-year period has come to an end it can be seen that interdisciplinary cooperation is not a good basis for distinguishing between subjects. In the new six-year plan, for example, Linköping University's thematic programmes are grouped with similar subjects at other higher education institutions. As the Bologna process and the degree ordinance introduce the concept of "main area" instead of major subject, the disciplinary map may have to be redrawn. Issues relating to disciplinary identity, progressivity in a subject and links with research may look different in a degree ordinance that requires the specification of learning objectives and determination of the level of each specific course.

Programmes in the arts

During 2006 all the programmes in the arts that lead to the award of a bachelor's or master's degree in the arts have been evaluated. The evaluation has been coordinated to provide a basis for appraisal of the programmes for the new degrees in artistic disciplines that will awarded from 1 July 2007.

With almost no exceptions, there are large numbers of application for enrolment in the programmes in the arts. The programme in stage performance, for instance, attracts between 50 and 110 applicants for each place offered and the figure is larger for certain programmes in the fine arts. Students are normally admitted on the basis of portfolios or entrance tests and interviews, so that enrolment procedures are demanding. In many cases applicants have already prepared themselves and have one or often two years of post-secondary study behind them. Many also apply a number of times.

Programmes in the arts receive the highest funding in higher education. The panel of assessors finds that the teaching largely corresponds to the stringent requirements. A great deal of instruction is offered, but this varies from the 40 hours a week sometimes timetabled in stage performance to considerably less in certain programmes in music. The teachers are highly qualified, the students are highly satisfied and the infrastructural conditions are good.

Even though the quality of the programmes is described as high they share certain shortcomings. This applies above all to documentary records of student progress. The instruction is largely individual, each student being monitored through the programmes by one or several supervisors. Remarkably often, however, there are no written records of how students develop. Nor are records always kept of the teachers' meetings that deal with student development and this can make it difficult to describe this development during the programme, above all when a teacher is replaced or there is a change of supervisor.

The individual contacts and the structural informality mean that on the whole students have plenty of opportunities to influence their own situations. It can be difficult, however, to express criticism when teaching is so intensive. For this reason it is important to have evaluation routines and methods and to enhance student influence, not least in the master-apprentice culture that pervades artistic programmes and which presupposes an unequal relationship.

As has been pointed out, on the whole the teachers are highly qualified. They are generally practitioners themselves, and are frequently employed on short-term posts, many of them part-time. This has advantages. The institutions are provided with an input of specialist expertise and with networks. The teachers are able to switch between their own professional practice and teaching. The scope for enhancement of their qualifications within their posts is, however, limited and in no way corresponds to the situation in other countries.

Intensive discussion is taking place about artistic research both in Sweden and internationally. At the Swedish institutions research-oriented artistic development work is taking place which is not necessarily officially or institutionally sanctioned in formal graduate programmes. Nor has there been any success officially in Sweden in reaching any definition of artistic research in higher education. Instead the universities of Lund and Göteborg have, on their own initiatives and using their own funding, established artistic graduate programmes that lead to the award of a PhD. Göteborg University has also established a Faculty of Fine Applied and Performing Art. This faculty is currently also responsible for most of the artistic research projects within the university, some funded by the Swedish Research Council.

The university colleges that are affiliated to universities have the greatest possibilities of offering graduate programmes while the independent institutions are not entitled to award graduate degrees unless they cooperate with a university in Sweden or abroad.

The first PhD's were awarded in Malmö (Lund University) in 2006 and several theses will be submitted in Göteborg in the year to come. The higher education institutions should stress the specific nature of artistic research and define the relationship between artistic creation and scholarship.

The situation in Stockholm differs from the rest of Sweden as the 1997 higher education reform resulted in the artistic programmes being offered there by independent university colleges that are not entitled to award qualifications above the level corresponding to a bachelor's degree. In the rest of Sweden, unlike Stockholm, these programmes were offered under the aegis of a university college or a university, and could benefit from the institution's entitlement to launch programmes leading to more advanced degrees, including PhD's.

In view of the above situation a combined artistic university college in Stockholm entitled to award degrees at graduate level could solve a number of different problems.

Teacher training programmes – some specific studies

In 2005 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education published its evaluation of teacher training programmes in Sweden. This was highly critical and as a result it was decided to conduct a new evaluation after two years and to undertake a number of studies involving comparison with other programmes. These three studies deal with forms of examination, the quality of degree papers and research links. The evaluation of teacher training programmes also included programmes offered as distance courses. The National Agency has also undertaken additional studies on how the higher education institution cooperate with the central Agency for distance education and also how they guarantee that certain central issues are included in their teacher training.

Forms of examination

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's evaluation of teacher training programmes revealed that almost half of the beginners in these programmes in 2001 claimed that they had received no teaching on testing and knowledge assessment. The evaluation also showed that the level demanded was considered to be too low and that the examinations set were too easy for students to pass. Forms of examination could therefore be seen to be an important area. The report *Examinations with quality - a survey of examination procedures at some Swedish higher education institutions* accounts for a study of examinations and examination procedures in four programmes – in medicine, psychology, engineering and the teacher training programmes. The study is based on an analysis of examination tasks and data from examination results as well interviews with teachers and students.

The four programmes differ in terms of the forms examinations take. In the programme in medicine individual written examinations predominate, in the teacher training programmes take-home examinations or their counterparts.

The programmes in psychology use a combination of both types and the programme in engineering mainly uses traditional written examinations together with a number of “quizzes”.

The researchers undertaking the study suggest testing different kinds of learning in different ways as one way of improving the quality of examinations. Factual knowledge, concepts and theories can be examined using individual written tests which offer great reliability. Learning that involves understanding, skills and application should be tested through different kinds of tasks, exercises and independent projects. The writers envisage examination in two stages where the first is a requirement for the second. Analysis of the current forms of examination reveal that the first category of testing predominates in the engineering programme whereas the teacher training programmes mainly makes use of the second. The programme in medicine involves both types of testing but the first type is considerably more usual. Greatest variation can be found in the psychology programme. The researchers also recommend the use of a variety of examination forms to increase reliability.

The evaluation of the teacher training programmes made it clear that the students needed thorough knowledge of testing and grading. The writers of the report claim that teachers in higher education also need knowledge of this kind. The writers also emphasise the importance of a broader view of the role of examination in the learning process.

Degree projects

Degree projects were defined as another problem area. It was asserted, for instance, that the main role of these projects appeared to be to impart knowledge of the methodology rather than develop “curiosity and a searching approach, disciplined formulation of problems and systematic enquiry”. It was also said that there did not appear to be adequate capacity for supervision. The large numbers of projects require both great capacity and advanced academic skills from the supervisors and the examiners. It was however pointed out that intensive efforts were being made to acquire qualified supervisors.

To provide a more detailed picture from a comparative perspective, a study was made during 2006 of the essays (degree projects) submitted in the third semester (C- level) of the teacher training programmes and programmes in nursing as well as C-level papers in business administration and psychology. The study *Degree projects in the new teacher training programmes* comprised a total 206 papers as well as additional material (syllabuses, course plans, study guides, grade criteria as well as details about the qualifications of the supervisors and examiners, grades awarded, number of co-authors).

It can be seen that the efforts to recruit qualified supervisors and examiners have borne fruit. The survey revealed that in the teacher training programmes today many of the examiners and no fewer than nine out of ten supervisors have PhD's).

Expert appraisal showed that the teacher trainees largely use qualitative methodologies compared to students on nursing and psychology programmes, mainly interviews and that tables and comparative diagrams rarely appear. The lists of references largely contain secondary material, usually in Swedish. It can, however, be determined that the use of language and the organisation are acceptable and the selection of problems relevant.

The experts graded the papers and in a number of cases awarded grades that were either higher or lower than those given in the programmes. The overall result of the grading was that only two of the 106 papers submitted in teacher training programmes were failed, although nearly 30 per cent were only passed with hesitation. The main criticism is lack of theoretical context, and of a critical approach and an independent stance.

The study's conclusion is that a number of measures have been adopted since the evaluation in 2005 to improve papers and improve the terms on which they are written. But further improvement of insight into research methodology and theory is needed as well as direct contact with scientific texts and current research in the field.

Links with research

The Higher Education Act states that higher education requires a scientific basis and that there should be a close relationship between research and teaching. The evaluations of subjects and programmes have also shown that the higher education institution consider it important for teaching to be linked to research.

The teacher training programmes was also greatly criticised for its lack of research links. In connection with the evaluation the National Agency launched a study, *Education based on science - voices from the field*, into research links which included the subjects of business administration, psychology, history, chemistry, nursing and the teacher training programmes.

Its results strengthen the impression that research links are considered to be important. This is because of the need to communicate current research findings and to ensure that students acquire a critical cast of thought, the ability to solve problems and other skills that characterise an academic approach. The importance of the scientific basis of teaching applies irrespective of the subject, the higher education institution or whether the teachers have completed graduate programmes or not.

The students have a more divided view of the importance of research links. Many claim that research is an important social activity and also appreciate contact with research and researchers. At the same time many know nothing about the research undertaken in their own departments or if their teachers have PhD's or not. Nor do the students have any clear impression of the importance of research for their own studies, in other words the link between the scientific basis and the teaching.

According to the teachers and the administrators, the main problems in maintaining research links in undergraduate courses are related to the shortage of funding and staff. Other obstacles to the establishment of research links are connected to student interests and background knowledge.

The study also reveals a clear difference between the research links in teacher training and nursing programmes. The nursing programmes have largely succeeded in solving the problem of the scientific basis of their teaching by introducing a core course in caring science which provides the obvious link with research in most elements of the programme. No similar strategy has been developed for teacher training programmes. However, in recent years the research field of educational science has emerged and offers scope for the development of research links in these programmes.

The report contains a number of proposals for enhancing research links. Some of these require augmentation of the resources for higher education, not least to raise the proportion of teachers with PhD's who are actively involved in research.

Teacher Training Programmes with distance teaching

The evaluation of the teacher training programmes revealed that 12 of the 26 higher education institutions were offering distance teaching. There was no scope in the evaluation to devote particular attention to distance studies. The National Agency therefore undertook a special methodological study of teacher training programmes using distance teaching.⁵ The study dealt exclusively with entire programmes, not shorter courses. The focus of the study was the distance method not the quality of the programmes themselves.

A preliminary survey revealed that in 2006 shorter teacher training programmes (for students who already had subject qualifications) were offered as distance teaching by nine higher education institutions and complete programmes at eight. The methodological study involved a web-based questionnaire addressed to the teacher trainees in Sweden who were taking distance programmes. Special hearings have also been arranged with students and with representatives of the higher education institutions.

There are certain differences between on-campus programmes and distance programmes that need particular attention when quality is being appraised. One is, for instance, the periods spent on individual study. Learning mainly takes place when students are carrying out their studies on their own. This affects the organisation of the studies and the work of the teachers. The contents of classroom sessions differ from those of traditional lectures and the role of the teacher is to act as a supervisor during the periods of individual study. This means that the terms on which individual study can be undertaken are decisive for the quality of distance programmes. What is particularly impor-

5. The report, Taking teacher training programmes as distance courses. Evaluation of teacher training programmes offered through distance teaching 2005–2006, will be published in 2007.

tant is the planning and structure of the programme, interaction between students and between teacher/supervisor and student, choice of technological solutions, use of technology, infrastructure and organisational conditions, teaching resources and teachers' qualifications as well as adaptation to the target group.

Review of certain central elements in the new teacher training programmes

The evaluation of the new teacher training programmes also resulted in a decision by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education to review within a year the way in which the higher education institutions guaranteed that central core areas of knowledge, such as the development of reading and writing skills, testing, grading, assessment and evaluation were dealt with in their programmes. An overall analysis was carried out on the basis of reports requested from the higher education institutions.

Their descriptions, which often cover entire programmes, make it clear that teaching is offered on testing and grading more often than on the development of reading and writing skills. In some cases the reports are succinct and it can be difficult to determine how relevant descriptions of future changes actually are.

Most higher education institutions seem to have made some form of major or minor change as a result of the National Agency's observations. These may involve modifications of objectives or syllabuses, the introduction of new courses or components, mainly in the acquisition of reading and writing skills as well as mathematics in many cases. Alternatively new components are introduced which deal with the importance of the acquisition of reading and writing skills. In some cases teaching on the acquisition of reading and writing skills is offered in compulsory special courses.

Växjö University is one example of a higher education institution that has made radical changes. Dalarna University College has made a thorough three-stage revision of its programme, with the third and most extensive stage planned for the autumn semester of 2007. University West has also modified this general area of study but strikingly little has been introduced about the development of reading and writing. The report from the Jönköping University Foundation admittedly includes an extensive plan of action but the account of changes that have been adopted is vague. At first sight the situation at Malmö University College, which differs substantially from other teacher training organisations, is not immediately clear. However, its report implies stimulation at the thought of further innovations and quality assurance of the programme in different ways.

The reports of the higher education institutions will form part of the material that will be produced before the site visits to be made during the renewed evaluation of teacher training programmes that will begin during the year. This will reveal what impact the changes may have had.

Five studies of teacher training programmes – summing up

Five studies have been undertaken in connection with the evaluation of teacher training programmes. A sixth, studying how the special Agency for distance teaching is dealt with by the higher education institutions, is under way. The study of examination forms resulted in a proposal to improve the quality of examination by testing different kinds of knowledge in different ways. In the case of degree projects the researchers emphasised the need to develop research methodology and theory as well as direct contact with scientific texts and the research currently undertaken in the area. A proposal to establish firmer links with the research area of educational science was offered as one example of how this relationship could be enhanced.

What is important for teacher training programmes offered through distance teaching is that the conditions provided for the students' own independent study must be sound if their quality is to be good. Finally the follow-up of how the higher education institutions guarantee that certain core components are included in the new teacher training programmes revealed that most higher education institutions had made some form of major or minor improvement as a result of the National Agency's observations.

The renewed evaluation that has begun will provide information about whether the higher education institutions have taken account of the results of both the earlier evaluation and the one described here.⁶

6. Government Bill (1999/2000:28), Student influence and quality development in higher education

Part 2: Quality evaluations 2001–2006

In 2000 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education was directed by the Government to evaluate within six years all higher education programmes that led to the award of a general degree or a professional qualification.⁷ This involved a substantial augmentation of the scope of the evaluation required, which was now to be comprehensive and organised in regular six-year cycles. Future evaluations were to focus on the quality of programmes and quality assurance procedures. The entitlement of all the programmes to award degrees was to be reviewed. At the same time the National Agency was to continue to appraise applications for entitlement to award degrees. In its bill the Government announced that it would later submit a proposal to the Riksdag with more details about how the review of entitlement to award degrees was to take place. This was one stage in the clarification of the sanctions open to the National Agency, in other words its powers to question the entitlement to award degrees of programmes that did not meet quality requirements.

Another element in the bill involved student influence. An increase in the formal influence of students and obligatory course evaluations were proposed as important ingredients for the improvement of the quality of programmes. The Government emphasised the importance of increased student influence by proposing amendments to the Higher Education Ordinance. Gender equality and ethnic diversity were other examples of aspects that the higher education institutions were expected to work with to raise the quality of their activities.

All of the proposals in the Government bill were adopted by the Riksdag and the first evaluation cycle began in 2001.

During the last six years the National Agency has undertaken an extensive project that is summarised in what follows. The results of the evaluations have been supplemented by results from other forms of evaluation conducted by the National Agency during the same period.

How has the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education dealt with its task? How has the Agency fulfilled expectations? What results and effects have the evaluations had? What experience has been gained and how has this affected the implementation of the evaluations?

The six years are summarised below. The emphasis is on the evaluations of subjects and programmes but the Agency's other appraisals of quality in higher education are also accounted for.

7. The table indicates the year in which the reports were published except for 2006 when evaluations were still taking place.

An overall view of the National Agency's quality appraisals

Quality audits

To begin with a brief digression is offered here to provide background information on why quality audits at higher education institution level were dealt with as they were during the six-year period.

The Office of the University Chancellor (Kanslersämbetet) was established in 1993 and its evaluation task was to develop and implement a quality audit system that was linked to international developments in this area and at the same took into account the increased autonomy of the higher education institutions. The approach adopted meant that audits focused on the quality assurance procedures of the higher education institutions (quality audits). With the watchwords “audit to encourage” and “quality is a journey not a destination” the audits dealt with the strategies, objectives, approaches, plans, systems, methods and organisation used by the individual higher education institutions to assure the quality of all that they did.

The quality audits also attracted no little attention outside the higher education sector in Sweden. But with time they were also subject to internal criticism in Sweden as they were considered far too “gentle” or “kind”. Similar comments were made about the follow-up conducted by the University Chancellor one year after completion of the audits. The critics of the quality audits claimed that they could neither determine the quality of what was being done nor provide information about quality for students. This latter concern had gradually become an increasingly important question in European cooperation, which was intended, among other things, to facilitate the free movement of students and employees. EU law, particularly the general directive on mutual recognition of degree certificates, is based on reciprocal respect for and reliance in the quality of the educational systems of the member states. The need of periodically repeated quality evaluations can be seen in the context of the recommendation issued by the Council of Ministers on European cooperation on the quality assurance of higher education.

In retrospect it can be seen that this “slow start” with its emphasis on quality audits was probably a sensible approach at the time, in view of the fact that the 1993 reform involved something of a “culture shock” for the higher education institutions. In this situation it was important to use an evaluation procedure that the institutions could accept. But the shortcomings of these audits soon became apparent as more and more information was demanded about the quality of programmes. The quality audits could provide few answers to questions about whether the new resource allocation system had contributed to the erosion of quality in higher education. The benefits of the audits were

that they helped to increase awareness of the importance of quality issues at local, national and international level.

Less emphasis on quality audits at institutional level

The conditions for the continued future of the quality audits altered with the change of University Chancellors at the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education on 1 January 1999. A second round of quality audits was completed in accordance with an earlier decision but this form of evaluation was then, with the Government's consent, not conducted during the remainder of the six-year period. The reason for deciding to abstain from further quality audits during this period was that results clearly demonstrated that another round using the same format would not be fruitful.

The table below presents only the quality audits conducted during the last six years.

Number of quality audits/higher education institutions per year

Year	Number of quality audits	Number of HEI's
2001	7	13
2002	9	14
2003	3	3
2004	0	0
2005	0	0
2006	1*	1*
Total	20	31

* Refers to renewed audit and appraisal of quality assurance procedures. Certain audits included only one higher education institution, others several.

** Refers to a pilot study of quality assurance procedures at Södertörns University College using the model for institutional evaluations that will begin in 2007.

Thematic evaluations

A few years before the six-year cycle of subject and programme evaluations began, there was a brief but intensive discussion of ranking in connection with the publication in 1999 of the ranking list drawn up by the publications Moderna Tider, which has since closed down. "Stockholm University best in Sweden" was the conclusion of the study, which aroused strong feelings in the higher education sector and massive criticism of its methodological shortcomings. Even though the journal had encountered great difficulties in obtaining information about the varying contents of the programmes and only twenty or so major subjects in the humanities and social sciences were included in the study, the conclusions drawn about higher education as a whole were far too far-reaching.

It was in the context of the debate about ranking that the National Agency started its thematic evaluations. These focus on specific aspects of quality, such as gender equality and student influence, and how well the higher education institutions are dealing with them. Experts in each area nominate the higher

education institutions that are working most effectively. A minor distinction has been linked to this nomination, which enhances the explicit developmental purpose of the evaluations. The evaluation report is supplemented by an anthology of examples of good practice. The thematic evaluations are followed-up after three years.

One merit of the thematic evaluations is that certain comparisons can be made between higher education institutions. The thematic evaluations encountered some resistance when introduced, resistance based on the concept of choosing “winners”. At the same time there were also higher education institutions that endorsed this element as they claimed it had greater relevance to a focus on excellence. After a number of thematic evaluations had been conducted the opposition waned. The Vice-Chancellors of the higher education institutions that have attracted positive mention have come to the National Agency for the award of a simple diploma and these have also been displayed at the institutions themselves.

The quality aspects on which the thematic evaluations have focused concern gender equality, student influence, social and ethnic diversity, cooperation with the surrounding community, internationalisation and also study and career guidance and student health services. In addition another three thematic evaluations have been carried out in connection with the appraisal of teacher training programmes, which were examination forms, degree projects and links with research. Follow up of the evaluations dealing with gender equality, student influence and social and ethnic diversity has taken place. The follow up of the evaluations of internationalisation and cooperation with the surrounding community is taking place at the moment.

Number of thematic evaluations and follow-ups/evaluated HEI's per year⁸

Year	Number of thematic evaluations and follow-ups	Number of HEI's evaluated
2001	0	0
2002	0	0
2003	1*	39
2004	1**	39
2005	1***	39
2006	4****	55
Total	7	172

* Refers to one follow-up of the National Agency's evaluation of the work of the higher education institutions with gender equality, student influence as well as social and ethnic diversity.

** Refers to thematic evaluation of cooperation with the surrounding community.

*** Refers to thematic evaluation of internationalisation.

**** Refers to studies of examination forms, degree projects and research links and also the thematic evaluation of support for students.

8. The table indicates the year in which the reports were published except for the evaluation of support for students conducted in 2006 and for which the report was published in 2007.

Evaluations that lead to distinctions

In the first thematic evaluations in 2000 interest focused on the quality aspects of gender equality, student influence and social and ethnic diversity. A follow up took place in 2003⁹

Two thematic evaluations have concentrated on the aspects of internationalisation and cooperation with the surrounding community.¹⁰ What are the higher education institutions working on, to what extent and what have been achieved were the questions answered in the evaluation of internationalisation. In the evaluation of the cooperation of the higher education institutions with the surrounding community this aspect was divided into three areas, which were the development of democracy, development of knowledge and growth as well as educational improvements.

A thematic evaluation completed recently focuses on the way in which the higher education institutions work with study and career guidance and their student health services.¹¹ Even though these activities generally function well and are in the hands of a large number of competent and committed individuals, the assessors suggest a number of ways in which they could be developed further.

The follow up of the evaluations of gender equality, student influence and social and ethnic diversity showed that advances had been made after three years, particularly where social and ethnic diversity were concerned. Perhaps the most gratifying thing, the assessors reported, is that the higher education institutions for fine arts subjects had made considerable efforts to pinpoint new methods of enhancing social and ethnic diversity among their students and staff since completion of the previous evaluation.

It also turned out that many of the higher education institutions that were assessed extremely positively in the initial evaluation now found themselves surpassed by others.

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9. The work of the hei's with gender equality, student influence as well as social and ethnic diversity (2000), as well as The work of the hei's with gender equality, student influence as well as social and ethnic diversity – a follow-up of the National Agency's evaluation 1999/200 (2003) Examples of good practice. How higher education institutions can work with gender equality, student influence and social and ethnic diversity, (2000).
 10. Cooperation with the surrounding community in higher education, (2004) as well as Borderless higher education - On the internationalisation of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, (2005). Cooperation with the surrounding community - examples of good practice, (2005). Examples of good practice in internationalisation, (2005).
 11. Studies – career – health. An evaluation of the work of the higher education institutions with student counselling, career guidance and student health services (2007). A report containing examples of good practice will be published in 2007.

Thematic evaluations – the most successful HEI's

Quality aspect	Evaluation	Follow-up
Gender equality	Linköping University, Umeå University	Linköping confirms its placing, Umeå drops slightly
Student influence	Linköping University, Lund University	Lund still pre-eminent
Social and ethnic diversity	University College of Malmö, Södertörns University College	Karolinska institutet, University College of Malmö
Cooperation (development of democracy)	Göteborg University, University West, University College of Mälardalen	In process
Cooperation (development of knowledge and growth)	Chalmers, Linköping University, Blekinge Institute of Technology	In process
Cooperation (educational improvement)	Linköpings University, University College of Mälardalen	In process
Internationalisation	Uppsala University	In process
Study guidance, Career guidance and student health services	Linköping University best, Lund University, Göteborg University, Umeå University, Royal Institute of Technology, University College of Halmstad share second place.	

The University College of Dance was the only fine arts institution to receive a mention for its work with gender equality and student influence in 2000. It enhanced this position in the follow-up.

Appraisal of entitlement to award degrees

Today accreditation of programmes all over Europe has become an increasingly frequent form of evaluation to ensure that programmes meet certain quality standards. The appraisal of entitlement to award degrees that takes place in Sweden, which is a form of accreditation, can largely be linked to the introduction of the master's degree into the degree system in 1993. A decision was made that meant that universities, but not university colleges, were awarded a general entitlement to award this degree. In this decision the Government expressed hesitation about whether the university colleges could provide the conditions required to be able to offer the more advanced and qualified master's programmes. An application procedure was introduced that involved an appraisal in which the university colleges were required to demonstrate some form "quality guarantee".

Appraisal of entitlement to award a degree comprises an assessment of the quality of the conditions in which a higher education institution can award a specific qualification, a general degree or a professional qualification, or degrees in an entire disciplinary area. The quality aspects take the student perspective into account on the assumption that students can make justifiable demands of the higher education institution, which must be able to offer some degree of stability and assume responsibility for the long-term commitment involved in setting up new degree programmes. The proposal to grant or withhold entitlement is made by the external assessors. Appraisal of entitlement to award degrees is a question of quality control with the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education ensuring compliance with certain demands before entitle-

ment can be granted. Formerly all entitlement awards were monitored after three years. Nowadays this takes place within the framework of the evaluation of subjects and programmes.

These appraisals were later extended to include the entitlement of the university colleges to award graduate degrees in one or several disciplinary areas. The aim of the university colleges with their applications was to attain Government acknowledgement of their university status.

The outcome of each appraisal is a proposal to grant or withhold entitlement and it therefore provides a clear basis for a decision. The decision rests, however, with the Government, which has in one or two cases decided differently. The first case concerned the appraisal of the applications for university status submitted by Karlstad, Örebro, Växjö and Mid-Sweden University, when according to the assessors only Karlstad attained the quality standards but the Government awarded university status to all but Mid-Sweden University. The second case involved the renewed and intensive appraisals of Mid-Sweden University, which was eventually granted university status even though in the final review the assessors still considered that it failed to meet the quality standards completely.

Quality enhancing effect

Critical opinions have been expressed of the appraisals of entitlement to award degrees both by the higher education institutions and their local communities when the results of the appraisals have been negative. It can be alleged that the wrong experts were selected or their methods were unreliable. When it comes to the appraisal of disciplinary areas, local politicians and other stakeholders have been among the most vociferous critics of appraisals that led to negative decisions.

It is perfectly clear that the appraisals have hastened quality enhancement measures. Another positive effect has been the awareness it has generated in the outside world of the many good educational environments that exist at university colleges that do not offer graduate programmes. Another effect has become clear through the appraisal of disciplinary areas. A university college that aspires to develop can, within the parameters of the current funding system, only be allocated specific resources by gaining entitlement to award graduate degrees in the relevant disciplinary area. More and more university colleges have also opted for this possibility. For economic reasons the Government is not currently appraising any new applications.

The table below shows the number of appraisals of the entitlement to award degrees divided in terms of the numbers granted and those rejected. As can be seen the number of appraisals has declined significantly during the years, a trend that would have been even more visible if the figures for the years prior to 2001 had been included in the table. During the years before 2001 the number of rejections was also considerably higher.

Applications for entitlement to award degrees appraised and their outcomes

Appraisals of entitlement to award degrees	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
State university colleges	57	28	13	15	10	7	130
<i>Of which application granted</i>	49	25	12	13	7	6	112
<i>Of which application rejected</i>	8	3	1	2	3	1	18
Independent programme providers	9	8	5	0	2	2	26
<i>Of which application granted</i>	8	8	4	-	2	2	24
<i>Of which application rejected</i>	1	0	1	-	0	0	2
Total number of appraisals	66	36	18	15	12	9	156

Reflecting changes in the degree ordinance

The appraisals of entitlement to award degrees reflect changes in the degree ordinance. Before 2002 the appraisals conducted by the National Agency mainly involved applications to award master's degrees with various major subjects. When the Agency then made it possible to apply for entitlement to award general master's degrees the number of applications involving major subjects declined drastically. Today all state university colleges, apart from the specialist institutions, are entitled to award general master's degrees. Subsequently appraisals have mainly involved professional qualifications in the caring sciences area, such as specialised nursing diplomas and qualifications in radiology nursing. The decision to abolish the degree in social care is reflected by an increase in the appraisals of entitlement to award qualifications in social work. The introduction of the two-year master's programmes and the degree of Master of Science in business and economics has again led to an increase in the number of entitlement appraisals.

Applications from independent programme providers have in nine cases involved entitlement to award qualifications in psychotherapy. Earlier as well, prior to 2001, appraisals of involving the award of psychotherapy qualifications were made. In a number of cases these appraisals led to rejection with the specification of a number of shortcomings. The programme providers have subsequently submitted renewed applications and then been granted entitlement. Appraisal of entitlement to award degrees involves assessment of the qualitative circumstances in which a programme can be offered. The evaluations of programmes in psychotherapy undertaken in 2006 now show, a few years later, that the independent programme providers in particular fail to meet the quality standards required of a higher education programme. The evaluation called into question the entitlement to award degrees of 14 out of the 18 programme providers. This demonstrates the importance of follow-up and of recurrent review of the quality of higher education

Subject and programme evaluations

Part of the preparatory work for the evaluations of subjects and programmes involved timetabling when the different programmes were to be evaluated during the six-year cycle. On the basis of the breakdown of research subjects

made by Statistics Sweden and an inventory of all programmes that led to the award of a general degree or a professional qualification, the “six-year plan” was devised. This was discussed and agreed with the higher education institutions before the cycle started and has since been reviewed each year before evaluations began. Wherever reasonably possible the National Agency has revised the plan to comply with the wishes of the higher education institutions. One particular desire was for evaluation of personnel and labour market programme which was not officially part of the evaluations of subjects and programmes. This evaluation has also been undertaken.

One of the principles behind the allocation to different years was the attainment of an even distribution of subjects and disciplinary areas. The caring sciences, an area that had been evaluated relatively recently when the six-year cycle began, were therefore postponed to the end of the cycle, in fact until 2006. The postponement of the evaluation of Linköping University’s thematic programmes as a specific group to 2006 opened up a possibility of arranging evaluation of a number of multidisciplinary programmes in the same year. For these reasons 2006 has been most the intensive evaluation year in the cycle. Altogether almost 1,700 appraisals were conducted during the year. Annex 1 accounts for the total number of appraisals per evaluation. Here it can be seen that the largest number of appraisals have involved undergraduate programmes in the caring sciences and medicine with 136 appraisals and shorter degree programmes in engineering which have numbered 100. The smallest evaluations have dealt with programmes offered at only one higher education institution, such as specialist translation and physical planning.

Important conclusions based on the experiences of the past six years have been taken into account in drawing up the new six-year plan. One is that thematic programmes should not be treated as a specific group but should be evaluated at the same time as similar subjects. Another is that short programmes and master’s programmes in engineering should be evaluated together. Yet another is that subjects in the same disciplinary areas should be combined to a greater extent.

Inspection, development, information

The evaluations of subjects and programmes, appraisals of entitlement to award degrees and thematic evaluations have often been intended to enable inspection, enhance development and provide information, albeit with slightly differing focuses. The evaluation approach adopted for subjects and programmes is an internationally recognised model that comprises three phases: a) a critical and self-reflective self-evaluation, b) external appraisal by a group of recognised experts that includes international assessors and student representatives, c) follow-up after three years. The student perspective is important in all that the National Agency undertakes and the evaluations always involve students as experts with the same standing as the other experts in the panels of assessors. In all of these evaluations both the conditions in which programmes

are offered, their process or implementation and their outcomes have been appraised.

The central function of the evaluations of subjects and programmes is to monitor the quality of programmes. Quality has been assessed from a number of aspects based on interpretation of the Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance. These aspects have been selected in consultation with representatives of the higher education institutions, who have also been able to make some additions. The programmes have to attain certain minimum standards of quality. Where these lines should be drawn is proposed by the external assessors and this is later used by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education as the basis for its decisions to approve entitlement to award degrees or to question it. In order to fulfil the purpose of providing potential students with information about the programmes the National Agency's information department has revised and adapted the contents of the evaluations for the target group. This information is available on the web-site **studera.nu**. In addition all the evaluation reports are published on the Agency's own web-site.

Monitoring the attainment of minimum quality standards is of course not the only goal. The aim of the evaluations has also been to contribute to enhancement or development and in this context both the self-evaluations and the advice on proposed improvements from the assessors have played an obvious role.

Review and improvement

The six-year assignment was accompanied by the requirement to review previously granted entitlement to award degrees. This was a matter of surprise for the universities who considered their entitlement as more or less given. This kind of review highlights more clearly the possibilities of sanction contained in the Higher Education Act. The sanction process requires the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education to issue a "warning" to the higher education institution when a programme is seen to have grave quality deficiencies. If the shortcomings are not remedied within one year, the institution risks withdrawal of the entitlement to award the degree. It therefore became clear that programmes were being monitored to ensure that certain minimum standards were attained.

This possibility of sanction, which has been invoked for just over ten per cent of all the programmes, has been a cogent instrument. The improvements demanded have in virtually every case been implemented, which means that during the entire six-year period only one entitlement, for a programme leading to the award of a university diploma in engineering, has been revoked. On the other hand the action plans that the National Agency has asked for reveal that twelve higher education institutions have closed down a total of fourteen programmes, five at graduate level and nine undergraduate programmes, of which nine have been language programmes. In three of the fourteen pro-

grammes the degree titles have been changed so that they better match their contents. More programmes may have been withdrawn, but if no questions were raised about their quality, the National Agency will not necessarily have been informed.

In addition to this palpable form of improvement it is widely acknowledged that well implemented self-evaluations have contributed first and foremost to improvements and development. However, it should be pointed out that not all self-evaluations have been conducted in a way that enables them to fill this function completely. This is in itself regrettable as a skimpy self-evaluation offers the assessors inadequate material to base their work on and there is a risk that their evaluation will not be as edifying as it could have been. In retrospect the National Agency should perhaps have returned a larger number of self-evaluations to the higher education institutions involved with the request for more detailed amplification.

Examples of good programmes

Which higher education institution is best? This is a question that has been posed to the National Agency repeatedly during the years and the response each time is that the way it is worded makes it impossible to answer. On the other hand the National Agency has attempted to deal with the question by comparing higher education institutions in certain respects in the thematic evaluations described in detail above.

Most of the higher education institutions have during the six years been subject to a large number of evaluations of subjects and programmes, with the exception of the smaller institutions that do not offer many programmes and the institutions that specialise in the fine arts. For instance Stockholm University has been the subject of almost seventy evaluations, Ersta Sköndal University College only two.

One observation that can be made when analysing the evaluations programme by programme is that some panels of assessors have made very few positive comments in their evaluations while others have been more liberal. The assessors were not given the explicit task of identifying examples of good practice. This means that examples are identified in some evaluation reports but not in others. It would, however, have been just as possible to recognise particularly good programmes as to identify those whose entitlement to award degrees should be questioned. What is clear, however, is that certain higher education institutions stand out because they have been assessed very favourably on a large number of their programmes. This does not mean that these programmes have not been criticised at all. The panels seem to have argued that nothing is so good that it cannot be improved. Recognition can also be given to part of a programme or one of its elements. Positive judgement may also be made of the same programme at different higher education institutions.

Another observation is that the larger universities in Stockholm, Uppsala, Göteborg, Lund, Linköping and Umeå are judged favourably as learning envi-

ronments per se. Conditions there in the form of a wide range of programmes, a large number of teachers with PhD's and many who are active researchers are in most cases good, even though this can vary between them. Some examples of excellent programmes can also be found at the university colleges. It should also be pointed out that these assessments apply to the time at which the evaluation was made and that changes may have taken place since then.

Appendix 2 lists examples of good programmes at the different higher education institutions.

The higher education institution and withdrawal of entitlement to award degrees

If a programme does not meet the quality standards required, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education can question entitlement to award a degree. If this happens, the institution has one year in which to rectify the shortcomings. The measures have to be accounted for in an action plan. If the shortcomings persist, the National Agency revokes the entitlement. The Agency has questioned this entitlement for just over ten per cent, on average, of all the programmes evaluated. The number of times is accounted for in the table below. The allocation per higher education institution, subject and degree level is presented in annex 3. It should be noted that these figures cannot be used to rank the entire higher education institution as not all programmes that have been evaluated are offered at all higher education institutions.

Entitlement called into question by year¹²

Year	Entitlements in undergraduate programmes	Entitlements in graduate programmes	Total number of entitlements	Total number of appraisals	Entitlements as percentage of appraisals
2001	5	4	9	222	4.0
2002	38	0	38	264	14.4
2003	15	8	23	195	11.8
2004	9	3	12	339	3.5
2005	21	3	24	214	11.2
2006	68	3	7	437	16.2
Total	156	21	177	1 671	10.6

The numbers vary over the years. In 2002 entitlement was questioned in a large proportion of programmes. The reason for this is that in many cases the programmes led to the award of diplomas and bachelor's degrees in engineering. The largest proportion of questioned entitlements occurred in 2006. This is mainly the result of the many warnings issued with regard to entitlement to award degrees in programmes in nursing and psychotherapy.

It can be noted that Stockholm University, with the exception of the specialist universities, is the university where overall entitlement to award degrees

12. These figures should be interpreted with some degree of caution as the appraisals and decisions in the first year were made on somewhat different premises. The number of entitlements questioned is correct for each year, but the proportion of total appraisals may be somewhat lower.

has been questioned or warnings issued least often, Uppsala University most. Many of the entitlements questioned at the universities have involved what are known as the small languages. Because of their small learning environments, few students, few teachers and inadequate funding, over the years the National Agency has expressed doubts about the quality of many of these programmes.¹³ For instance virtually all the warnings issued to Uppsala University involved languages.

Among the university college Jönköping University Foundation stands out with 15 warnings about entitlement to award degrees. The relatively large number of warnings issued to Jönköping seems, judging from the evaluations, to be related to the adaptation of many individual subjects to its teacher training programmes, which on the whole have problems with far too few teachers with PhD's and the low standards required of the students. The subjects for which warnings have been issued are struggling with similar problems and have not therefore been considered to attain the quality required. At the same time it should be remembered that there are many higher education institutions with teacher training programmes that have nevertheless succeeded in maintaining standards in individual subjects.

How grave are the figures above? They provide serious signals that quality is in jeopardy, but the warnings have taken effect and improvements have been made within one year. The final conclusion of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's annual report has therefore been that on the whole the quality of higher education in Sweden is good.

The figures above can be supplemented by a number of what were called "serious admonitions" issued during the first year of the evaluations. These did not have the same status as the warnings but the higher education institutions were required to submit action plans to show how the shortcomings were to be remedied. However, the classification of "serious admonitions" was removed as the practical implementation was unclear.

What criticism is expressed?

In the same way as the question is posed of which higher education institution is best, questions are also asked about which is worst. This cannot be answered either on the basis of the evaluation results. In one sense it can be said the questioning entitlement to award a degree suggests that a programme in an example of one that is not very good. At the same time there are a relatively large number of programmes that have attracted serious criticism even though this has not led to the issue of a warning that entitlement may be revoked. Examples of the kind of things that have been criticised are offered below.

The most frequent criticism is that the educational setting is inadequate and cannot provide critical and creative learning environments. This may involve

13. In this sense the 'small' languages include all languages but English and the Nordic languages.

lack of qualified teaching staff in certain areas or far too small or divided an organisation.

Another frequent criticism concerns lack of research links in the sense that the relationship between undergraduate programmes and research is vague or not very sound. This may also refer to reading lists that are not sufficiently academic or that may need updating.

A third criticism focuses on the progressivity of a programme, as an element may come too late or lack clarity about requirements at different levels. This in its turn may mean that the level demanded in the programmes is considered to be low.

There are relatively frequent observations about shortcomings that refer to too one-sided a choice of methodology and that the number of classroom hours per week is low.

Professional programmes and those with a clear focus on some specific section of the labour market are often criticised for their lack of academic rigour or alternatively poor cooperation with the labour market.

A less frequent observation is that recruitment to graduate programmes is far too internal.

Student information without ranking

The evaluations of subjects and programmes were also expected to provide information that could rapidly be processed to offer practical benefits for students. It turned out to be a difficult task for the National Agency's information department to sift information out of the evaluation reports that could be used by potential students when choosing their course of study. The students were and are mainly interested in "consumer advice" in the form of ranking lists that tell them which are the best programmes in Sweden. The evaluation results cannot, however, be used to rank the higher education institutions but on the other hand they do contain information about what works well or less well in the programmes. Even though a great deal of work has been devoted to continual improvement of the information there is always some risk that it can be misleading instead of illuminating when taken out of context. The text is therefore provided with a "sell-by date" pointing out that it is perishable and should be supplemented from other sources.

With the knowledge that when making their choices students both look for and acquire information from many different sources, the information from the evaluations can be seen to provide one of the sources they can turn to.

Monitoring effects

One important element in evaluations is monitoring their effects. This has been accomplished in various ways, partly through the feed-back conferences arranged a few months after completion of an evaluation and also after about three years. The feed-back conferences have offered the higher education institutions an opportunity to share their experiences of evaluation as such and

have also functioned as national subject conferences. Not least the latter function has been appreciated at a time when these conferences were more or less in abeyance. For the National Agency the feed-back conferences have functioned as one element of its own quality assurance. On these occasions the higher education institutions have been able to express their opinions about how the Agency has discharged its own responsibilities during the evaluation process, opinions that have resulted in improvements. To emphasise the significance of the evaluations the University Chancellor has participated in most of the start-up meetings and feed-back conferences.

The follow-up undertaken after three years, of which two rounds have now been organised by the National Agency, has involved the submission by the higher education institutions of written accounts of how they have dealt with the recommendations in the evaluations as well as what the effects have been.¹⁴

Different types of recommendations and effects

Sometimes many recommendations have been made, sometimes few, at times general but most often concrete. Not infrequently the reaction from the higher education institutions has been that these recommendations pinpoint shortcomings of which they were already aware. But it seems to be the case that it is not until things are expressed in black and white on paper that it becomes obvious that remedies are required. When entitlement to award a degree has been involved the National Agency has demanded the submission of specific plans of action. The situation of the teachers has been a recurring issue in all the evaluations, particularly observations on the lack of sufficient numbers of qualified teachers but also their teaching loads and scope for research. More teachers, enhanced research environments and augmentation of the subject content are examples of the measures adopted by higher education institutions. Improvements of this kind are possibly those that are most apparent to the students and also those they find easiest to appreciate.

The question of effects is not totally simple to answer as they can be both long-term and difficult to identify. Effects may also be unconscious. What long-term effects, for example, are likely to ensue from the great emphasis in the higher education institutions on the significance of self-evaluation for reflection and identification of potential developments and problem areas? Will it continue to result in self-evaluations launched on their own initiative as one aspect of their responsibility for continual improvement and development? This is at least one of the expectations of the National Agency and it has influenced the design of the impending quality assurance system.

One outcome of the relatively great interest in the evaluations displayed by the media in presenting their results, unfortunately usually the negative ones,

14. A report on one follow-up has been published *Follow-up of the National Agency's evaluations of subjects and programmes in 2000 and 2001* (2006). The second report on follow-up will be published in 2007.

is that public awareness of the question of the quality of higher education is very different from what it once was. On many occasions higher education institutions have criticised this information and feel that it is unjust as they are afraid that it will create a negative image that will make it difficult for them to recruit students.

Comparisons and the basis for decisions

The higher education institutions point to the importance of the evaluations in enabling comparisons with each other, “benchmarking”. The national overview provided by the evaluations will probably lead to endeavours to attain at least the same level as the programmes with which they compare themselves. More international comparison may provide additional leverage.

The evaluations have also produced great quantities of information that has been useful for politicians in making decisions at different levels. With the support of evaluation results it has been possible to make awkward decisions that would otherwise have been impossible. Research on evaluation has shown that evaluation results can also be used to abstain from making decisions or postponing them on the grounds that evaluation is taking place or planned. It is not unlikely that certain evaluations have been used in this way but for natural reasons this has not been brought to the National Agency’s attention. In some cases, moreover, a positive assessment from the assessors has improved the standing of a specific subject at a higher education institution.

A few reflections on the evaluation system

Do quality assurance procedures have any impact on the quality of programmes?

In the best of all possible worlds one can assume that quality assurance procedures that function effectively at a higher education institution will mean that the quality of its operations will be good. The underlying belief is that the institution’s quality assurance procedures will help to remedy quality shortcomings and continual evaluation will identify the improvements required.

Now that two rounds of quality audits have been completed and the first six-year cycle of subject and programme evaluations has come to an end, there is, in retrospect, a wealth of informative material to analyse. One question is whether there are any links between quality assurance procedures and operational quality.

It turns out, not totally surprisingly, that the answer to this question is that no unambiguous pattern can be discerned in the relationship between how well quality assurance procedures function at a higher education institution and the quality of its offerings. Stockholm University was criticised, for instance, for the lack of any firm connection between responsibility for its quality assurance measures and its highest administrative level and its lack of strategies. Despite this, Stockholm University received many favourable

assessment of a number of programmes. Uppsala University is an example of a higher education institution that has an extremely effective and strategic approach to quality assurance. Even so, doubts were expressed about its small languages. A similar argument applies to Lund University.

Jönköping University Foundation, at which the entitlement of 15 programmes to award degrees was questioned, was also criticised sharply in the first quality audit. The follow-up three years later showed clear improvements but the conclusion was that further improvement measures were required. It may well be that in this case there is some degree of linkage between the lack of development of its quality assurance procedures and the number of entitlements that were questioned.

It is generally acknowledged that quality assurance procedures play a significant role in the operation of the higher education institutions. They have contributed to greater awareness of quality issues and improvements of different kinds. A cautious conclusion that can be made is that without effective quality assurance procedures a larger number of warnings would probably have been issued.

Guaranteeing quality versus the risk of fossilisation

Certain fears have at times been expressed that the evaluation of subjects and programmes could lead to conservatism and uniformity. These fears have been put to the test many times, not least when the National Agency has issued a 'warning'. In such cases the Agency has been criticised by the higher education institution for its conservatism and opposition to development. The Agency's response has been that the minimum quality standard required for entitlement to award a degree has no effect on the possibility for programmes to differ in various ways. In the instructions for the self-evaluations and the dialogue with the higher education institutions they are urged to give prominence to their specific profiles and the improvements and developments they have introduced. The interdisciplinary programmes were afraid that they would be forced into the same mould by the form and content of the evaluation of subjects and programmes. For this reason they were evaluated separately at the end of the six-year cycle.

Is there any substance to the fears of conservatism? Obviously there is always a risk that a major evaluation system may have a conservative effect. To counter this, the evaluations and the organisation around them have been the subject of continuous quality assurance and development. This has also comprised receptiveness to improvements that have been proposed in discussions with the world around the Agency.

Seen from another perspective, it is also necessary for higher education programmes to possess some stability, for one reason to enable students to move from one higher education institution to another. Another argument put forward by many in the sector is that if there is to be any difference between

higher education and other forms of education, it must not give in to transient fashionable impulses.

Evaluation as a learning process

The summing-up that took place after two rounds of quality audits gave a fairly gloomy picture. Seven years had elapsed since the implementation of the 1993 reform in which the higher education institutions were expected to take responsibility for their own quality assurance procedures. Very few evaluations of entire programmes had been undertaken on the whole by the higher education institutions themselves. There may be a number of explanations for this, but one is that expertise in and experience of evaluation was limited at most higher education institutions. Many teachers also considered that they undertook many evaluations. What they were referring to were their students' course evaluations, although these cannot provide any overall image of the quality of a programme. In this context the evaluation model implemented in the evaluation of subjects and programmes by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education can be considered to have made a substantial contribution to the development of expertise and may be compared to a massive exercise in popular education.

As a result of the evaluation of all undergraduate and graduate programmes during a period of six years there are now many teachers and administrators who have been given concrete experience and knowledge of what it means to use a certain evaluation model. The elements of self-evaluation, external appraisal and follow-up included in the model provide an appropriate basis that can be used by the institutions for their own improvements and development of their activities. The model can be varied in a number of ways with different types of external assessors. It can also be extended to include several higher education institutions, if they desire to compare themselves with each other in one or several respects.

This model with self-evaluation, external appraisal and follow up is moreover the evaluation approach that ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) requires its members to adopt and is recommended by the Ministers of Education within the framework of the Bologna Process.

The national picture

One difference between the way in which evaluations are undertaken in Sweden and in other countries is that before the start of the six-year cycle the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education decided that all programmes offered in a specific subject/degree programme were to be included in the same evaluation. This approach possessed many advantages even though it has also involved some drawbacks. One of the positive aspects has been the possibility of comparing programmes at different higher education institutions. Another positive feature has been that it has provided the institutions a basis on which

to set their own “benchmarks”. What is most positive, however, is that national picture it has offered of the state of certain subjects or degree programmes. It has revealed their individual strengths and weaknesses and at the same enabled conclusions to be drawn about changes that are needed. This has made it possible for the National Agency to communicate evaluation results to the level that is best equipped to deal with problems. A number of proposals have been submitted to the Government during the period.

One drawback in including all programmes in one evaluation is the magnitude of some of them, for instance in business administration, engineering, teacher training and the caring sciences, which has made them difficult to administer. When a programme is offered at about 25 higher education institutions in Sweden organising its evaluation is considerably more complicated than for one offered in only one or two places. The panels of assessors have to be augmented and site visits shared among their members. This means that many more meetings of the panels have to take place both before and during the evaluation as well as when the report is being written. In addition time is limited when many programmes are involved. These disadvantages have, however, been outweighed by the benefits.

Student participation in evaluations

In 1997 the Government Bill on *The administration of higher education, teachers and organisation*, already emphasised the importance of greater student influence and student participation in all the activities of higher education institutions. In this context in 1998 an evaluation of student influence was undertaken and a follow-up conference arranged. The student perspective was then given greater prominence in connection with the Government’s introduction of a comprehensive quality assurance system in 2001.

What then has the student perspective meant for the National Agency’s evaluations? As has already been pointed out students have been recruited to participate in the evaluations on the same terms as the other experts. This was something that initially surprised one or two participants, above all the international experts in the panels of assessors. But as collaboration in the European quality assurance organisations has grown it has become more usual for students to participate. This is also explicitly recommended to countries applying for membership in ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).

In retrospect it can be seen that the students have been important and that their input has contributed greatly to the evaluations. It is of course in their interest to ensure that programmes are as good as possible and they have participated with great interest and made constructive proposals. Many of the students have also appreciated the value of acquiring some degree of knowledge of how evaluations can be undertaken, something which they consider they will find useful in the future as teachers in higher education or in some other career.

The student perspective is involved not only through their participation in the evaluations and in various reference groups, as students are also interviewed during the site visits. The student perspective has also coloured the evaluations and attention has been paid for instance to student rights and obligations in relation to their influence and assumption of responsibility. Disappointingly enough, students often fail to take full advantage of the formal channels open to them to exercise their influence. Particularly when informal channels function effectively, the students see no reason to become involved. The National Agency has, however, attempted to stimulate greater commitment by indicating the weakness when only unofficial channels exist for student influence.

The importance of the quality evaluations

The extent of the evaluations during the years 2001-2006 clearly speaks for itself. In the course of the evaluations of subjects and programmes about 1,700 appraisals have been made in the 76 different projects. Almost 900 assessors from Sweden and abroad have been involved. Just fewer than 150 applications for entitlement to award degrees have been reviewed. There have been about 200 quality audits of higher education institutions. During the period 2001-2006 a genuine analysis of higher education in Sweden from the point of view of quality has taken place. These figures should be augmented by the number of self-evaluations undertaken by the higher education institutions as a result of the various quality appraisals. The staff involved have consisted not only of the large number of assessors but also employees at the higher education institutions and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education.

The extent of the system also raises questions about its cost and its cost-efficiency. There are no figures about how much the system has cost overall, in other words for both the higher education institutions and the National Agency, but here only expenditure and costs efficiency can be discussed. The Higher Education Act lays down that the higher education institutions are responsible for ensuring that teaching and research maintains a high quality. What proportion of their expenditure can reasonably be devoted to quality assurance procedures and improving the quality of their operations? The guideline in higher education in the USA is that five per cent of expenditure should be devoted evaluating operations. The operational expenditure of the higher education institutions and a number of central agencies in this area was SEK 45.3 billion during 2005.¹⁵ Five per cent of this would amount to SEK 2.3 billion per year for evaluation procedures. An estimate of the actual expenditure at the higher education institutions and the National Agency suggests that the costs of the evaluation system must be considered very moderate. The Swedish model for evaluating both undergraduate and graduate programmes

15. Universities and university colleges. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's annual report 2006

in a subject by one and the same panel of assessors is also a cost-effective evaluation method.

During the years the evaluation of programmes and subjects has led to questions about the entitlement of just over ten per cent of the programmes to award degrees. The programmes concerned have been offered by both universities and university colleges in established subjects as well as new ones. One programme has had its entitlement to award a degree withdrawn. Is this a good or bad outcome? The figure is of course high, the aim should have been zero. The evaluations have, however, demonstrated the importance of recurrent quality appraisals. The evaluation system has not only identified the poor programmes but also made a significant contribution to the development of quality through the measures adopted by the higher education institutions, the Government and the National Agency.¹⁶

16. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2005).

Practising what you preach – assuring the quality of an evaluation system

Launching and implementing a comprehensive project of the magnitude of the evaluation of subjects and programmes during the period 2001-2006 has required both continuous quality assurance procedures and specific measures while the work was in progress. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has an internal quality assurance system for its evaluations and has also taken pains to avail itself of external input in assuring the quality of its implementation of its task. Practising what it preaches has been important in acquiring legitimacy for the Agency's evaluation activities. Observations, recommendations and advice have come from various quarters and have been taken into account in different ways in developing the evaluation process. One important principle in this quality assurance has been the avoidance of uniformity and standardisation.

Widely representative panels of assessors

The National Agency assembles panels of assessors on the basis of a number of guidelines. A panel should consist of subject experts and undergraduate and graduate students. For programmes that lead to the award of a professional qualification the panel should also contain at least one labour market representative. The panels used in the evaluation of general degree programmes have also often included labour market representatives. International expertise, preferably in the form of assessors from abroad, should be represented in each panel. When the panels are composed attempts are made to attain as even a gender balance as possible. A similar balance is sought in the affiliations of the assessors. It is also important that not only current experience of teaching in graduate programmes is represented but also experience of teaching at undergraduate level and that the panel comprises different approaches to a subject. The assessors should enjoy legitimacy in the sector and possess personal integrity. Other requirements are that they must have an academic or artistic professional reputation and teaching experience. The higher education institutions to be evaluated are invited to propose assessors, but the actual composition of the panel is determined by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education.

During the six-year evaluation period 2001-2006 a great deal of work has been devoted to ensuring that the composition of the panels of assessors complies with the guidelines and is as good as possible. From an international perspective Sweden has been a pioneer, for example, in the inclusion of undergraduate and graduate students in the panels of assessors and also in terms of the large proportion of international assessors. The "standards" for the com-

position of panels of assessors now laid down by the European organisation ENQA have been fulfilled in Sweden for many years.

Between 2001 and 2006 a total of 76 evaluation projects were undertaken. These have involved 866 assessors, 47 per cent of them women. A large number of international assessors have been members of the panels. Just over half of the subject experts (excluding undergraduate and graduate students, labour market representatives, as they almost always come from Sweden) came from countries other than Sweden.

Panels of assessors 2001–2006

Year	No of evaluation projects	Number of appraisals	Total number of assessors	Number of women	% men	% women	International assessors (subject experts)*	
							Number	Percentage
2001	9	222	101	36	65	36	40	67
2002	11	264	130	49	81	38	42	57
2003	10	195	99	40	59	40	38	63
2004	15	339	164	81	83	49	55	62
2005	12	214	108	53	55	49	32	56
2006	19	437	264	144	120	54	63	42
Total	76	1 671	866	403	463	47	270	55

* Neither undergraduate and graduate students nor labour market representatives have been taken into account in the calculations for international representatives. The percentage of international subject experts is based on the total number of subject experts.

The table above presents a survey of the composition of the panels of assessors during the period 2001-2006. 2006 stands out with more evaluation projects than earlier as well as with a considerably larger number of assessors. During the same year the proportion of international assessors was lower than in previous years. This is because of the extensive evaluation of programmes in the caring sciences and medicine where only a small number of assessors came from any other country than Sweden. Most of the international assessors came from the other Nordic countries. During the cycle they have been recruited from as many as 65 different higher education institutions

Future employers

Overall during the period 2001-2006 about ten per cent of the total number of assessors in the panels have been labour market representatives. They were mainly involved in the evaluations of programmes that led to the award of a professional qualification but several panels evaluating general degree subjects have included labour market representatives.

One experience from the last six years is that difficulties can arise in recruiting labour market representatives for the panels. Often they are unable to devote the time required to act as an assessor, sometimes the fees requested were impossibly high. In order to involve the employer perspective the National Agency has often invited labour market representatives to the feed-back conferences that are held three to five months after publication of the evaluation

report. Sometimes labour market representatives have been included in the reference groups linked to an evaluation.

What do future employers think?

Future employers have contributed their opinions on the contents of programmes, mainly in relation to the labour market. The mid-term report on the National Agency's quality evaluations *How Did Things Turn Out? A mid-term report on the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's quality evaluations 2001–2003* (2004) drew attention to the importance of placement study in professionally oriented programmes and need for the higher education institutions to endeavour to ensure that it functioned effectively. The cross-fertilisation of theory and practice was required. Several evaluations discuss the issue of subject learning vis-à-vis professional orientation or vocational training and maintain that it is also possible for research-linked programmes to contribute to the development of professional practice.

The evaluations undertaken since then confirm these conclusions. For example the evaluation of programmes in special education asserts the importance of a dialogue between professional practitioners and the programmes. The report on teacher training programmes raises the issue of classroom practice and contacts between the higher education institutions and the school system.

Evaluation of the programme in dietetics pointed to the necessity of some kind of analysis by programmes of the world around them to determine, for instance, labour market needs and the demand both for those with undergraduate qualifications and research degrees. Analyses of this kind may lead to the conclusion that the scope of programmes needs to be extended. The evaluation of the master's degree programmes in engineering cites examples of the kind of content required by the labour market that is largely lacking or dealt with far too scantily today, among them work environment issues, economics and entrepreneurship.

The opinions of the future employers and labour market demands will become increasingly important through the focus required by the Bologna process on employability. In this context it is worth repeating that the higher education institutions must undertake systematic monitoring of their alumni to acquire information about how their knowledge and skills can be used in the labour market. In the same way finding out what employers think about programmes should also be a matter of course.

What do the international assessors think?

The importance of finding out what outsiders think about what is being done can hardly be exaggerated. From the start, therefore, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has taken pains to recruit foreign assessors for its panels. As has been shown above they comprise just over half of the assessors (if the undergraduate and graduate students are excepted, together with

the labour market representatives). It is admittedly true that the vast majority of the international assessors come from the Nordic countries but there are considerable variations in both the educational systems and the conditions that prevail for teachers and students in these countries. Even though they are beginning to converge through the implementation of the Bologna process both Denmark and Norway have a tradition of long undergraduate programmes in single subjects and Finland too makes different demands in its subject programmes. Academic teachers, particularly in Denmark and Norway, have considerably more time for research within the framework of their posts than is the case in Sweden. This is something that surprises the Nordic and other international assessors in virtually every evaluation.

Many evaluation reports contain a large or less extensive section comparing conditions in Sweden with the other Nordic countries for the subject or programme concerned. Here prominence is given, for instance, to differences in the subject content or structure (for example where the subject of statistics is concerned). Here too comparisons are made of quality. This is the case for journalism, where it is asserted that the programmes compare well with programmes in journalism in Europe and the USA in terms of actual practical skills and a basic introduction to the work of a journalist.

One theme that recurs in most of this year's evaluation reports is the (lack of) adaptation of the Swedish programmes to the Bologna process. This is not particularly surprising in view of the fact that adaptation processes could hardly begin before 2006 and the new Higher Education Ordinance and Degree Ordinance.

It should also be pointed out that the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has initiated other international comparisons. One of these was the international mirror for doctoral students, a study based on a major questionnaire survey of the situation of graduate students in Catalonia, Finland, Ireland and Sweden.¹⁷

Advisory Board

During the past six years the National Agency has taken pains to ensure that its evaluation procedures benefit from international experiences. This has been arranged through the participation of foreign experts in its panels of assessors, through cooperation with other European evaluation organisations and participation in ENQA, and also through the Advisory Board it has created. This group has followed the evaluation process throughout the entire period. This has been important, not least from the point of view of its legitimacy.

In 2001 five members were appointed under the chairmanship of Professor Martin Trow, University of California (Berkeley), who has for a long time been

17. International Postgraduate Students Mirror (2006)

pre-eminent in research and debate about higher education and possesses a great deal of knowledge about the higher education sector in Sweden.¹⁸

At the end of this first period a new group was appointed under the chairmanship of Paul Ramsden, head of the British development Agency, the Higher Education Academy.¹⁹

The Advisory Board has met annually to discuss the National Agency's experiences from its evaluations and their continued development.

In their discussions throughout the years emphasis has been placed on basing the Swedish evaluation model on an approach to goals and implementation shared by the higher education institutions and the Agency. The board has endorsed this approach and emphasised its potential for development. However, this requires both sides to take advantage of this trust. It means, for instance, that the role and quality of the self-evaluations is fundamental and that they have to be undertaken in a way that is both developmental for the programmes and able to provide a basis for the work of the assessors.

In addition the board has continually emphasised how important it is for the evaluations to result in mutual learning through circulation of the results and examples of good practice. The Agency has attempted to follow this advice, for instance in its thematic evaluations, through special publications with examples of good practice in the respective areas.

Through the years the Advisory Board has expressed opinions comparing the National Agency's evaluations with those of other European countries and on the risk of too far-reaching standardisation. Here too, the National Agency in its participation in the Board of ENQA and in the Standards and Guidelines drafting group has advocated the attainment of reasonable agreement about the organisation of evaluations within the framework of the Bologna process.

Both the original Advisory Board and the newly appointed one have supported the development of the new evaluation system with its five different components that will come into effect in 2007. International experience has shown that the two new elements, thematic studies and distinguishing centres of educational excellence, can be considered able to stimulate the development of knowledge about higher education institutions and improvements in the quality of higher education.

Studies and follow-up

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has initiated a number of studies of evaluation activities undertaken by external researchers. Already during the first year of the cycle a number of researchers studied the evalua-

18. In addition to Martin Trow its members were Bente Kristensen, Copenhagen School of Economics, Ernie House, University of Colorado at Boulder, Mary Henkel, Brunel University and Guy Neave, International Association of Universities, IAU.

19. The other members apart from Paul Ramsden are Frans Leeuw, Maastricht University, Jennifer Greene, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Hanne Foss Hansen, Copenhagen University.

tion model, for instance using questionnaires to the higher education institutions and to the panels of assessors. Another study focused on the aspect of evaluation outcomes. The evaluation process has also been the subject of two external reviews in which the model itself, with self-evaluation, site visit by external assessors, report and feed back, has been applied. The most recent external appraisal provided the basis for the National Agency's application to ENQA and as a result Sweden was one of the first countries to be acknowledged by ENQA.

Questionnaires to the assessors and to those responsible for quality assurance at the higher education institutions and to the Vice-Chancellors have made it possible to gather even more opinions.

Consultation and discussions in different forms

Consultation with the higher education institutions has been an important consideration and provided a basis for the process of evaluation. The National Agency has organised consultation and discussion not only with the Vice-Chancellors but also with those responsible for quality assurance at the higher education institutions. Before the evaluations, consultation has taken place with those responsible for the programmes. Every year the National Agency has also gathered the students who participated as assessors in the evaluations to find out about their opinions of the evaluation process. The national quality conferences regularly hosted by the National Agency together with one of the higher education institutions have also provided opportunities for discussion of the quality evaluations.

The evaluation model undergoes development

The quality assurance follow-ups, both external and internal, undertaken by the National Agency have led to a number of modifications of the evaluation process and development of the model. A few examples will be cited here.

The directives for the self-evaluations have been revised every year. One important change at the beginning of the evaluation period was to stress each department's own evaluation and reflections over its programmes. Fewer questions were posed in the directives and departments were urged to make their own analyses and evaluations. The amount of statistical information required has also been reduced and clarified.

The three focuses of the evaluation model, conditions, process and outcome have been made more explicit, for instance by refining the questions about the outcomes of programmes.

In its work with the evaluations the National Agency has endeavoured to highlight examples of good practice.

During site visits the National Agency now requires the panel of assessors always to meet the Vice-Chancellor or the appropriate faculty Dean.

Different special studies have been conducted in a few evaluation projects, for instance on the focus of PhD theses. The evaluation of teacher training programmes also involved different special studies.

In one or two cases dialogue meetings with the higher education institutions have replaced the site visits. In a few other cases special hearings have been arranged with student representatives or with representatives of the labour market.

One evaluation project involved not only undergraduate and graduate programmes but also research, undertaken in collaboration with the Research Council. Focus in one evaluation was on faculty level rather than departmental level. In the technological sciences and in medicine evaluation of undergraduate programmes was separated from the evaluation of graduate programmes.

The National Agency's international commitments

In addition to placing different forms of emphasis on international comparisons with regard to the quality of higher education the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has also participated in European and Nordic cooperation in the field of evaluating of higher education. In 2006 the National Agency became the second of the European quality assurance organisations to gain full membership of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), the European Agency for cooperation in this field, after conducting its own self-evaluation and undergoing an external appraisal by foreign experts. The University Chancellor is a member of its board.

Various members of the National Agency's staff have participated within ENQA in the drafting of *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education Area* and in various cooperative projects on a European basis. One member of its staff has led the two-year European project developing methods for the evaluation of joint trans-national European educational programmes (Joint Master's Degrees). The title of this project is the Transnational European Evaluation Project II and a report on its work has been published in the ENQA report series (www.enqa.eu).

The National Agency takes part in the meetings of the Nordic network of quality assurance organisations, NOQA (www.noqa.net), and takes an active part in the joint projects carried out each year. During the last six years these have comprised:

- A comparative analysis of accreditation in the Nordic countries (2001; also published as an ENQA report)
- Development of a method for mutual acknowledgement of quality assurance organisations (2002; also published as an ENQA report)
- Student participation in Nordic evaluations (2003)
- An analysis of quality assurance procedures at some Nordic higher education institutions. This project resulted in the nomination of the higher education institution considered to have the best quality assurance process in the Nordic countries (2004)
- Interpretation from a Nordic perspective of the European *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2005; also published as an ENQA report)

All of the projects are accounted for on NOQA's web-site.

This year's project is a comparative study of quality audits in the Nordic countries.

The staff of the National Agency regularly participate in conferences and workshops arranged by the Nordic, European and international organisations in the sphere of higher education, often to make their own contributions.

One important means of taking advantage of international experience is also provided by the National Agency's Advisory Board.²⁰

20. For a closer description see National quality assurance system for the period 2007-2012 (2006).

A new six-year cycle takes shape

If quality assurance is to be able to contribute to continual development, follow-up and regular evaluations are required. At the same time experience shows that repeating exactly the same form of evaluation leads to conformity and undesirable effects. Now that a six-year cycle of subject and programme evaluations has been completed, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has therefore, in consultation with various stakeholders, developed a new model for the next six years that takes into account experience from the previous cycle and combines the benefits of different forms of evaluation. This model presupposes the assumption of greater responsibility by the higher education institutions for the quality of their operations and that their own quality assurance systems will guarantee and develop programmes at every level.

The system that will apply for the period 2007–2012 comprises five components that function together as a whole and at the same time supplement each other:

- Audits of the quality assurance procedures at the higher education institutions,
- Evaluations of subjects and programmes,
- Appraisal of entitlement to award degrees,
- Thematic studies, and
- Distinguishing centres of educational excellence.

Auditing quality assurance procedures

The audits of quality assurance procedures will be based on both experience from previous audits and also international experience. They will focus to a greater extent than previously on the results and outcomes of the institutions' quality assurance procedures and on more manifest aspects and criteria for appraisal. In addition an overall judgement will be made by the University Chancellor which will either imply 'great confidence in ...', 'confidence in ...', or 'limited confidence in ...'. Insofar as grave shortcomings come to light the higher education institution will be urged to remedy them and a follow-up will be arranged after about one year.

As previously the audits will be carried out by panels of assessors, which will publish their conclusions, based on the institution's own self-evaluation and a site visit, in a report. On the basis of a number of predetermined factors, the panel will appraise how well the institution's quality assurance procedures function.

So that the results and impact of quality assurance procedures can be assessed the audits will include faculty and departmental level or their counterparts. After consultation with the higher education institution the panels

will select a number of learning environments for in-depth review, these may be faculties, departments or some aspect of the infrastructure.

All higher education institutions will be audited during a six-year period. Institutions operating on similar conditions will be audited in the same year.

The first round of institutional audits will begin in the autumn of 2007. However, a quality audit already began in 2006 of Södertörns University College. This serves two purposes: on the one hand it forms part of the first round of audits and at the same time it is a trial run of the method developed for this kind of evaluation. This method, which is described in the National Agency's report on the national quality assurance system, will therefore be modified in the light of experiences from this pilot evaluation.

Evaluations of subjects and programmes

The appraisals of subjects and programmes that lead to the award of at least a bachelor's degree will be conducted in three stages. The first stage will involve drawing up a national picture of the subject areas surveyed that will describe the programmes evaluated during a specific year on the basis of simplified self-evaluations and key data.

With the assistance of subject experts the National Agency will then make a selection of subjects or programmes, either overall or at specific institutions, which the material suggests may not attain adequate standards. These will undergo in-depth appraisal according to the current evaluation method involving a panel of external assessors and a site visit. The panel of assessors will produce a report in which each programme is evaluated on the basis of predetermined aspects and criteria. This report will provide the basis for the National Agency's decision. Where appraisals reveal grave shortcomings in quality the Agency will, as it does now, question the entitlement of the higher education institution to award a degree in the subject or programme concerned.

Appraisal of entitlement to award degrees

Appraisals of entitlement to award degrees will be carried out using the previous model but will be adapted to the changes resulting from the Bologna process.

This means that programmes will be appraised in terms of the conditions offered to enable students to attain the learning outcomes specified in the degree descriptions.

Thematic studies

The thematic studies (of gender equality, for instance, student influence as well as social and ethnic diversity) that have been undertaken during the last six years have resulted in positive experiences and they will continue. In addition thematic studies will be made during the coming period in order to produce new knowledge about higher education in Sweden. The thematic studies

should be viewed as an integral component of the quality assurance system in the way in which they follow up and problematise the results of the institutional audits and the subject and programme evaluations.

Distinguishing centres of educational excellence

Distinguishing centres of educational excellence will be new for Sweden and is intended to stimulate the development of quality by highlighting examples of good practice. Applications are voluntary and the higher education institutions themselves may determine which departments or centres they wish to nominate.

The appraisal will be based on an application submitted in English from the higher education institution containing a description and analysis of the centre's operation and how it enhances student learning. An international panel of highly qualified experts will be responsible for the evaluation, which will be based on a number of aspects laid down by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, and after studying the applications and making site visits it will nominate the centres that can be considered for this distinction.

The future quality assurance system in an international perspective

Today two main approaches can be found in the quality assurance of higher education at a national level. One relates to attitudes to the role of the higher education institutions. In a number of countries they are now taking greater responsibility for assuring the quality of their offerings through their own quality assurance procedures. The other approach involves accreditation, which has found expression for instance in the creation of an organisation for European cooperation on accreditation – ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation (www.eaconsortium.net)). The evaluation model that will be used by the National Agency contains elements of both, partly through the reintroduction of institutional audits as well as the appraisal of entitlement to award degrees and the right to withdraw this entitlement in the evaluations of subjects and programmes.

The European links can above all be seen clearly in the compliance of the National Agency's evaluation system with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* that have been drafted by ENQA in collaboration with three other European cooperative organisations. This applies both to the evaluation methodology and the Agency's own internal quality assurance.

These Standards and Guidelines are continually being developed in connection with the ongoing Bologna process and the adoption of new measures at the meeting of the European ministers of education in London in May 2007. In this context these mainly concerned the introduction of a European register of quality assurance organisations.

Money and quality

The Government has recently commissioned an enquiry into the allocation of resources for higher education and research. In this connection the possibilities are now being discussed of linking some degree of funding to quality evaluation for both educational programmes and research. Where undergraduate programmes are concerned during discussions with the Ministry of Education the National Agency has proposed that elements in the quality assurance system described above could provide a basis for political decisions on the allocation of funding. For instance there would be no major obstacle to linking funding to the distinction as a centre of educational excellence.

With regard to the other components, with the exception of appraisal of entitlement to award degrees, it would also be possible to group programmes or higher education institutions with some degree of precision. In the subject and programme evaluations a selection will be made of programmes to undergo in-depth appraisal. Those that fail to meet the quality standards for higher education will, as before, risk losing their entitlement to award degrees. In a similar way, it would be possible to identify the best programmes.

In the quality audits three categories of higher education institutions will be identified, those that attain high quality, those that maintain acceptable quality and those that fail to do so. The thematic evaluations could also be organised in a similar manner. In all these cases grouping could provide a basis for decisions about funding.

One important issue in this context is the proportion of resources that could be allocated on the basis of quality evaluations. When the current allocation system was to be introduced in 1994 the Riksdag decided that no more than five per cent of the funding for undergraduate programmes could be linked to quality.²¹

It should finally be pointed out that decisions on resources must be made by politicians. The role of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education can merely be to provide a basis for these decisions through its evaluations.

21. This decision was made by the Riksdag during its spring session but rescinded after a change of Government in the General Election in September of the same year.

What has the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education found ? What has it led to?

General observations

Six years of evaluation have shown that the quality of higher education in Sweden is good even from an international perspective. During the years, however, a number of problem areas have been discerned. In principle many of them are shared, irrespective of the subject or the professional programme evaluated.

The dearth of economic resources is referred to in most reports. This affects both the teachers' workloads and the number of classroom teaching hours students can be offered. Rising numbers of students combined with the current funding system and declining resources mean that on the whole the teaching staff bear a burdened with heavy load of many diverse tasks as well as heterogeneous student groups. One strategy for dealing with this is to reduce the number of teaching hours by offering only large-scale lectures in the first and second semesters. This has led in its turn to student timetables that include as little as four hours of teaching a week. There is a manifest risk that quality will be eroded.

The teachers' workloads are highlighted in virtually every evaluation. They are teaching more and more students in ever-growing groups. Enhancement of their own qualifications through their own research has to take second place. More and more time has to be devoted to applying for external research funding.

The declining knowledge of newly-enrolled students is referred to repeatedly. To begin with this mainly concerned mathematics and technology, but more recently also in subjects such as languages (including Swedish), chemistry and history.

Gender equality issues are always in focus. Most frequently this involves subjects where there is a major predominance of women at the earlier levels which then transmutes into a predominance of men among the teaching staff. There are many examples of the adoption of effective measures. These have been demonstrated not least through the thematic evaluation of gender equality and its follow up.

The precarious situation of the language subjects has been a consistent issue. Small populations of students, few teachers and poor funding can be seen as characteristic for most languages. From this point of view, all of these subjects except English and Nordic languages can be categorised as small languages.

Internationalisation, or rather the lack of internationalisation, is also a recurrent subject. It has become increasingly clear that the participation of Swedish students in exchange programmes is poor.

The various conditions on which graduate programmes are offered have attracted attention in a number of evaluations. These have revealed great differences in the ratio of taught courses to thesis work in the same subject. The terms that apply for individual graduate students may also vary, depending for instance on the way in which their studies are funded.

Shortcomings in student influence in the form of an effective system of course evaluation is also a factor that has been observed in many evaluations. Course evaluations are carried out but the students are often not informed of their results.

Proposed measures

The measures proposed to remedy many of the above problems that have recurred every year and which have been pointed out by panel after panel are the adoption of profiles, collaboration and concentration. These concepts represent an injunction to reverse the disturbing developments that have been taking place in higher education in Sweden during the last fifteen years.

Competition for students has led to the establishment of many new programmes, often with similar contents, at many higher education institutions in Sweden. When, as is often the case, they attract few students the programmes cannot sustain their own costs, and in the long run are unviable.

The recommendation to adopt profiles, collaborate and concentrate is advice on how to deal more effectively with the situation that has arisen. During the last two years certain attempts have also been made to collaborate and the 'small' languages seem to be in the process of concentrating to specific higher education institutions. If enduring changes are to be made, the National Agency has, however, recommended the Government to make fundamental changes in the system for allocating funding.

What happened with the results? Cases arising from the evaluations

The evaluations have led to the adoption of measures of different kinds and from different quarters. In cases where the evaluation has raised questions about entitlement to award degrees, the higher education institutions have in most cases remedied the deficiencies. Follow up of the impact of the evaluations shows that even the recommendations made relatively frequently by the assessors have often been complied with at the higher education institutions. The results of the evaluations have also led to the adoption of measures by the National Agency or the initiation of further studies. The evaluations have also had a political impact in the form of Government decisions of various kinds. Some examples will be given here of different types of actions based on the evaluations.

As pointed out above, some of the evaluation results have led to the initiation by the National Agency of further studies. One example can be found in what

was a recurrent observation referring to the lack of course evaluation routines. These comments prompted the National Agency to produce an anthology of examples of good course evaluation practice.²² Another recurrent observation involved teachers' workloads. As a result, in 2007 the National Agency has launched a thematic study dealing among other things with teachers' workloads and academic management. Another recurrent theme has been the lack of prior knowledge among students. During 2007 the National Agency will conduct two studies of student's prior knowledge. Another repeated comment during the years concerned the support provided for students during their programmes. A thematic evaluation of support for students was undertaken during 2006. The evaluation of teacher training programmes led to several in-depth studies, which attracted a great deal of attention. These are accounted for in the first section of this report and concerned, for instance, examination forms, degree projects, links with research, certain areas of core knowledge as well as the special agencies. In addition during 2007 a follow-up evaluation of teacher training programmes was undertaken.

Cases that involve the quality of programmes can concern the National Agency both in its inspection role and as an evaluator. During 2006 the National Agency undertook an evaluation of undergraduate programmes in media and communication studies at Luleå University of Technology. The evaluation was prompted by a case involving the National Agency's inspection role. This is one example of how cooperation can take place between inspection and evaluation functions.

The National Agency has also addressed other authorities as a result of evaluation results. The evaluation of chemistry drew attention to the serious recruitment problems experienced by chemistry as well as training programmes for chemistry teachers. The National Agency wrote to the Swedish National Agency for Education about the need for an enquiry, inventory and analysis of the qualifications of teachers in the compulsory and upper-secondary schools.

On the basis of results from evaluations the National Agency has in several cases had reason to recommend measures to the Government. One issue related to the division into the various disciplines in which the National Agency questioned the usefulness of the current division. This document has been referred by the Government to the Enquiry into Resources. On a number of occasions the National Agency has recommended review of the funding system, which has been one reason for the establishment of the enquiry. The observations of the National Agency on the problems faced by the 'small' languages contributed to the establishment of the Small Languages Enquiry, which the Agency was asked to undertake, as well as the subsequent actions by the Government on this issue. The board of the National Agency has written to the Government about the need for follow-up studies of alumni. As a result of the evaluation of

22. Course assessment of student influence and quality development. An anthology containing examples taken from eleven institutes of higher education (2004)

teacher training programmes, the National Agency recommended the Government to review the degree ordinance where teaching qualifications were concerned and clarify the contents of the common core of these programmes. This has now taken place. The results of the evaluations have also indicated specific problems when it comes to size of intakes, an issue that the National Agency was requested to study. Another case arose from one of the evaluations of the programmes offered by the Swedish University of Agricultural Science. This evaluation led the National Agency to recommend that the Swedish University of Agricultural Science should be accountable to the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Agriculture.

What needs to be done?

The section above shows what measures have been adopted by the National Agency as a result of the quality evaluations and also their outcomes, in the form of funding for different activities, for instance. The overall picture of the results of last year's evaluations lead on to the question of the various measures that should still be adopted.

To the Government

Clarify the distinctions between programme providers

The distinction between higher education and other forms of post-secondary education is that it should be based on scientific findings and tried and tested experience. This means for instance that there should be a close link between undergraduate programmes and research. One important requirement if this is to be achieved is that there are adequate numbers of qualified teachers for the programmes and that they are given scope to link their subject teaching to current research in the area. Implicitly or explicitly this should preferably be the result of active research carried out by the teachers in parallel with their teaching activities. If this is not practicable, teachers should, however, unquestionably be up to date with front-line research in their disciplines. The evaluations have revealed that this often does not function very effectively, which is said to be the result of a far too limited supply of qualified teachers and the lack of economic resources and time.

The teaching role has also changed and become increasingly burdensome during the years. Heterogeneous and, in many subjects, large groups of students together with shortcomings in their prior knowledge means that the higher education sector has to devote a great deal of energy to basic courses in the natural sciences and technology. Remedial teaching is also offered in mathematics and elementary classes in modern languages that should be studied in the compulsory and upper-secondary schools. In addition a number of short, vocationally oriented programmes are offered in which the academic basis is not always explicit or perhaps even desirable. While some vocational programmes undoubtedly have their place in higher education, for instance in nursing and teaching, there are others that could perhaps best be organised by other programme providers.

The question is whether the current allocation of roles between different programme providers is the optimal one. The National Agency believes that an enquiry into the entire post-secondary educational sector is urgently needed. An enquiry of this kind should be characterised by its overall perspective and it should define the roles and main tasks of higher education institutions and

other programme providers. In this context it is important to place the Swedish system in an international and perhaps above all European context.

Time to divide roles?

Today higher education has many different tasks to fulfil in education, research and development. A review of the number of tasks over time reveals that there has been a palpable increase in the number for which the higher education institutions are asked to account in the directives issued to them.²³ Vice-Chancellors who have been asked for their opinions on developments claim that the belief in what higher education can achieve is exaggerated and focuses on the wrong outcomes in relation to its primary purpose – teaching and research based on scholarship. Even if the attention paid to higher education and its exposure is considered positive, there is a negative attitude to the increase in responsibilities and tasks that has not been matched by any increase in funding to enable them to be discharged. The autonomy of the higher education institutions is felt to be increasingly restricted and it is difficult to give priority to core activities and their development.

The evaluations have revealed major differences in the conditions that apply for large, research intensive institutions and the smaller higher education institutions with small and often vulnerable circumstances. Despite the difference in their conditions, however, all the institutions are formally required to cope with a great many tasks.

It is in this context that the National Agency is raising the question of whether some differentiation should be introduced in the focus, programme contents and tasks of the different universities and university colleges. Some higher education institutions could concentrate more on research while others could for example focus more on professional qualifications.

Introduce a funding system that enhances quality

The results of the almost 1,700 appraisals conducted by the National Agency during the six-year period speak for themselves. Apart from workloads of the teachers, which are felt in many cases to be far too high while the scope for enhancement of their own qualifications is limited, the teaching hours given to students are not infrequently inadequate. The ongoing Bologna process and an amended degree ordinance will also require extensive changes and development work in the higher education institutions for several years to come. In this context the resources available are often considered to be far too scanty. The resource allocation system itself has also been shown to have a number of effects that have a negative impact on the quality of what is done. The recommendations given by the assessors in the evaluations that have been undertaken to raise the national level of quality in higher education can be summarised with the three concepts of adopting profiles, collaboration and

23. More tasks for higher education institutions? - Development in recent years and the viewpoints of the Vice Chancellors, (2006).

concentration. The current resource allocation system militates against this kind of development.

A new system for allocating resources is at the moment the subject of an enquiry. In this context possibilities are being broached of linking some element of resource allocation to quality evaluation for both teaching and research. If a new system for allocating resources is created that in substance resembles the current one in allowing student choices to govern the allocation of funding, it is the National Agency's opinion that this is more than likely to lead to the higher education institutions following the path they have already chosen. A rich 'smorgasbord' of programmes will be offered to appeal to as many students as possible. Experiences from the last six years have, however, shown that this is a heedless and costly strategy that seriously threatens the quality of higher education.

Establish more national graduate schools

The evaluation reports have clearly shown that graduate programmes are offered in Sweden on widely differing terms. This has applied to the number of credits awarded for theses and for coursework in the same subject, different conditions for graduate students, the failure to advertise studentships competitively, the many small groups of students, the absence of seminars and poor cooperation between the higher education institutions in arranging courses and seminars. To raise the quality of graduate programmes the panels of assessors have consistently pointed out in their evaluations the need to organise graduate teaching to a much greater extent than today on the basis of national graduate schools, as is the case in Finland, for example. The National Agency endorses this point of view.

To the higher education institutions

An internal quality assurance system that works – the responsibility of the board and the Vice-Chancellor

As has been pointed out already, one consequence of the current system of allocating resources can be seen, for instance, in the focus of the higher education institutions on increasing volume. However, there is no overall survey of the extent of the many new, short programmes offered at Sweden's higher education institutions. Nor is anything known about the quality of these short programmes as they are normally not included in the National Agency's evaluation commitments. At the moment the National Agency is conducting a survey to provide explicit information and enable a decision about potential appraisal. It is, however, important for the institutions themselves to assume responsibility for their quality and also to ensure that these programmes meet academic standards.

For the same reason that the Government is recommended to establish national graduate schools, a number of benefits could be gained by the higher

education institutions from greater cooperation in graduate programmes through local graduate schools.

The National Agency would also like to urge the higher education institution to take account of the overall national survey presented by the evaluations and seriously consider the import of their results. Taking them seriously would mean, for instance, that the boards and Vice-Chancellors would have to take a standpoint on issues relating to the adoption of profiles, collaboration and concentration. And in this context they would have to have the courage to set priorities and make disagreeable decisions.

Finally the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education would like to urge the boards and Vice-Chancellors, who are ultimately responsible for what is being done, to review and ensure that they have a functioning internal quality assurance system. A system that works well should be able to identify programmes or areas that need enhancement or development. This is just as important a feature of the six-year cycle of quality audits that has just begun as it has been in the past.

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åren och rektorernas synpunkter, (2006). Stockholm: Höskoleverket.
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Annexes

Annex I. Number of appraisals per evaluation 2001–2006

Evaluation	Number of appraisals
Agrarian programmes, equine studies	10
Classical antiquity, culture and realia, Egyptology	10
Work science	14
Archaeology	14
Archive studies, library and information science, history of the book and libraries, information and media studies, cultural conservation, museology	20
Astronomy, physics, hydrology, meteorology	38
Baltic and Celtic languages	4
Biology	33
Master's programmes in engineering	11
Computer and systems science, informatics	30
Computer science, computer studies	21
Design and applied art	22
Dietetics, household studies, nutritional economics, culinary studies, clinical nutrition, nutrition	16
Economic history	10
English	34
Ethnology	13
Specialist translation	1
Pharmacology, pharmacy, dispensing pharmacy	8
Film, art, music and drama	43
Philosophy	26
Finnno-Ugric languages	13
Public health science, rehabilitation studies, disability studies	17
French	19
Fine arts	10
Physical planning	2
Business administration	37
Gender studies	12
Earth sciences	20
History	29
Humanities-social sciences programmes	19
Bachelor's and diploma programmes in engineering, undergraduate programmes in technology subjects	100
History of ideas	14
Physical education	7
Interactive media /design	6
Italian, Portuguese, Romanian	11
Journalism	10
Law, LIB programmes, jurisprudence, commercial law, business law	24
Chemistry	26
Classical languages	23
Cognition studies	8
Cultural geography and geography	21
Cultural science, cultural education	3
Linguistics, sign language	12
Literature, rhetoric	31

Teacher training programmes	25
Mathematics	36
Media and communication studies	22
Environmental studies, environmental engineering, environmental and health protection	32
Music	34
Economics	29
Dutch	2
Oriental languages	31
Education, folk high school teacher training programmes	82
Personnel and labour market programme	12
Psychology, Psychiatry	37
Psychotherapy	18
Performance and production	34
Marine engineering, nautical studies	4
Slavic languages, East and Central European studies	9
Programmes as the Swedish University of Agricultural Science (forestry, forestry economics, horticulture, horticultural management, horticultural science, veterinary medicine)	9
Social anthropology, cultural anthropology	10
Sociology, criminology, Legal sociology, social psychology, work studies	40
Social work	27
Spanish	14
Special education	6
Statistics and demography	18
Politics, peace and development studies, developing country studies, European studies, Latin America studies, rural development	41
Study and career guidance	3
Swedish and Nordic languages	19
Dentistry, odontology	8
Graduate programmes in technological science	12
Thematic programmes	17
Theology, religious studies	22
German	18
Caring sciences and medicine (undergraduate programmes)	136
East Asian languages	12
Total	1 671

The table presents the programmes evaluated during the period 2001–2006. Appraisal of undergraduate and graduate programmes at the same higher education institution is counted as two appraisals. Evaluation of the graduate programmes in technological science was conducted at faculty level at twelve higher education institutions. Evaluation of graduate programmes in medicine will take place during 2007 and is not included in this table.

Annex 2. Examples of good programmes

A number of examples of programmes that were singled out for praise by the National Agency's panels through the years are listed below. This table is based on the overall impression of the programme concerned. It is important to point out that the examples should be taken as examples, in view of the task assigned to the assessors of determining which programmes did not meet minimum quality standards. Even so many panels expressed positive opinions of certain programmes while others have been more restrained with their praise. In some subject praise was also given to programmes at different higher education institutions.

Another observation relates to the time aspect. Evaluations have a short shelf-life, which means that conditions that applied at the time of the evaluation may have changed since then.

Chalmers Institute of Technology: Master's programme in engineering

Stockholm University College of Physical Education and Sports: Sport

Göteborg University: Astronomy, design and applied art, English, European studies, physics, business administration, School of Economics, journalism, chemistry, literature, politics, dentistry

Stockholm School of Economics: Business administration

University College of Borås: Nursing, textile design

University College of Gotland: Archaeology

University College of Gävle: Literature

Jönköping University Foundation: Business administration

University College of Kalmar: Biology

Kristianstad University College: Public health science

University College of Skövde: Computer studies, computer science, Spanish

Konstfack: All programmes were characterised by visionary, strategic and innovative work

Royal Institute of Technology: Master's programme in engineering, informatics, graduate programme in environmental technology

Karlstad University: undergraduate programme in physics, cultural geography

Linköping University: Work science, civil engineering, chemistry, politics

Lund University: French, graduate programme in business administration, history of ideas, religious studies, sociology of law, social geography

University College of Malmö: Sport, special education

Mid-Sweden University: Journalism

University College of Mälardalen: French, public health science

Södertörns University College: Rhetoric

Stockholm University: Astronomy, biology, computer science, computer studies, computer and system science, film studies, theatre and dance studies, physics, earth sciences, history, informatics, chemistry, cultural geography, Finnish, Latin, literature, meteorology, economics, Dutch, practical and theoretical philosophy, Spanish, statistics, politics, Swedish/Nordic languages

Umeå University: Biology, English, industrial design, economics, politics

Uppsala University: Archaeology, biology, English, history, informatics, chemistry, cultural anthropology, literature, economics, religious studies, politics

Annex 3. Number of degree entitlements questioned per HEI, subject and level 2001–2006

HEI	Number	Subjects
Blekinge Institute of Technology	5	Business administration (master's), bachelor's degree in engineering, public health science (bachelor's), nursing, specialist nursing
Ersta Sköndal University College		Nursing 160 p
Stockholm University College of Physical Education and Sports		Public health science (bachelor's)
Göteborg University	7	Hebrew (bachelor's, master's), conflict resolution (bachelor's, master's), Latin (graduate programme), audiology, radiology nursing
University College of Borås	2	Construction (master's), midwifery
Dalarna University College	4	Sociology (bachelor's), biology (bachelor's), engineering (bachelor's), nursing
University College of Gotland	2	Developing film scripts and concepts (bachelor's), film production, 3D-graphics and animation (bachelor's)
University College of Gävle	4	Cultural education (bachelor's), physics (bachelor's), electrical engineering (master's), specialist nursing
University College of Halmstad	5	Swedish (bachelor's), engineering, (B.Tech), biomechanics (bachelor's) art history (bachelor's)
Jönköping University Foundation	15	Physics (bachelor's), biology (bachelor's), chemistry (bachelor's), literature (bachelor's), politics bachelor's, master's, licentiate, PhD), engineering (bachelor's) (4), chemical engineering (bachelor's), computer engineering (bachelor's) radiology nursing
University College of Kalmar	7	Politics (bachelor's), social work (bachelor's), engineering (bachelor's) (3), BTech, biomedical analysis (master's)
Högskolan University College	5	Landscape studies (bachelor's), engineering (bachelor's) (2), computer system development (bachelor's), specialist nursing
University College of Skövde	8	French (bachelor's), engineering (2), BTech, film studies (bachelor's), midwifery, nursing, specialist nursing
University West	2	Nursing, specialist nursing
Karolinska institute	3	Nursing, specialist nursing, biomedical analysis
Karlstad University	3	Earth science (bachelor's), engineering (bachelor's), dispensing pharmacy
Royal Institute of Technology		Engineering (bachelor's)
Linköping University	15	Linguistics (bachelor's, master's), information and media studies (master's), Spanish (master's), literature (master's), economics (master's), commercial law (graduate programme), music production (bachelor's), nursing, Carl Malmsten timber techniques and design (bachelor's 5), psychotherapy
Luleå University of Technology	5	Engineering (2) (bachelor's), literature (bachelor's), dispensing pharmacy, vocational therapy
Lund University	10	Semitic (graduate programme), Japanese (bachelor's, master's), Latin (graduate programme), modern Greek (graduate programme), engineering (2) (bachelor's), theatre studies (bachelor's, master's), diploma in the fine arts (1)
Stockholm Institute of Education		Special education
University College of Malmö	4	Work science (bachelor's), engineering (2) (bachelor's), study and career guidance
Mid-Sweden University	3	Natural geography (bachelor's), literature (bachelor's, master's)
University College of Mälardalen	2	Physiotherapy, commercial law (bachelor's)

The Red Cross University College of Nursing	1	Nursing
Swedish University of Agricultural Science	5	Equine studies, engineering, (2), horticultural management, veterinary nursing
Stockholm University	1	Greek (graduate programme)
Gammelkroppa School of Forestry	1	Engineering (bachelor's)
Södertörns University College		French (bachelor's)
Umeå University	7	Spanish (master's, graduate programme), special education, journalism (master's), nursing, biomedical analysis, psychotherapy
Uppsala University	20	Hindi (bachelor's, master's), Kurdish (bachelor's, master's), Tamil (bachelor's, master's), Assyriology (graduate programme), Indology (graduate programme), Iranian languages (graduate programme), comparative indo-European language research (graduate programme), Semitic languages (graduate programme), Turkic languages (graduate programme), Italian (master's), Finnish (bachelor's, master's), Chinese (bachelor's, master's), nursing, specialist nursing, psychotherapy
Växjö University	7	Informatics (master's, graduate programme), politics (graduate programme), chemistry (bachelor's, master's), radiology nursing, specialist nursing
Örebro University	8	Physics (master's, graduate programme), English (graduate programme), Public health science (bachelor's), sport (graduate programme), jurisprudence (graduate programme), nursing, biomedical analysis
Chalmers University of Technology, University College of Dance, University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre, Erica Foundation Stockholm School of Economics, Konstfack, Royal University College of Fine Arts, Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Operahögskolan - University College of Opera, National Academy of Mime and Acting, Johannelund Theological Seminary, Stockholm School of Theology, Örebro Theological Seminary, Beckmans College of Design, Stockholms Musikpedagogiska Institut, University College of Music Education	0	
Beteendeterapeutiska Föreningen, Göteborgs Psykoterapi Institut, Linnéstadens Psykoterapi Institut, Otterhällans Institut, Psykoterapisällskapet, S:t Lukas, Stockholms Akademi för Psykoterapiutbildning, Svenska Institutet för Kognitiv Psykoterapi, The Swedish Psychoanalytical Society, Svenska psykoanalytiska sällskapet, Center för Kognitiv Psykoterapi och Utbildning	1	Psychotherapy

