UKÄ UNIVERSITETS KANSLERS ÄMBETET

Guidelines for Follow-up of Reviews of HEI Quality Assurance Processes for education and research

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Introduction

These guidelines apply to the follow-up of institutional reviews of higher education institutions' (HEI) quality assurance processes for education and research. The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) follows up all reviews regardless of the review outcome.

The purpose of the follow-up is both to verify that HEIs ensure high quality in their operations and to contribute to their quality enhancement.

HEIs that have received the rating of *Approved quality assurance processes* for education and/or research are followed up through dialogue approximately one year after the review decision.

HEIs whose quality assurance processes for education and/or research has received the rating *Approved with reservations* or *Under review* are followed up on the assessment criteria that were deemed not fulfilled. The HEI must submit to UKÄ, no later than two years after the decision, a report on the measures taken in response to the previous review.

Approved Quality Assurance Processes

HEIs whose quality assurance processes for education and/or research have been approved are followed up through dialogue concerning the recommendations and development areas described by the assessment panel in its original report. The follow-up takes place approximately one year after the decision and focuses on the institution's quality enhancement.

Assessment Panel

UKÄ appoints assessors to conduct the follow-up. The assessors have usually participated in the original review of the HEI. As a quality assurance measure, the HEI is given the opportunity to comment on the composition of the assessment panel.

Scope and Timing of the Follow-up

After the decision, UKÄ contacts the HEI to determine the date of a dialogue meeting between the institution and the assessment panel. Prior to the meeting, the HEI is asked to inform UKÄ which recommendations and development areas in the report it wishes to focus on. The assessment panel may also propose topics for discussion. Based on these inputs, UKÄ prepares an agenda that is shared with participants before the meeting. During the dialogue meeting, the HEI presents the measures it has completed, initiated, or plans to undertake. The assessors provide feedback on the institution's quality enhancement efforts.

In addition to the HEI and the assessment panel, UKÄ also participates in the dialogue meeting, which is conducted digitally and is expected to last approximately 2–3 hours.

Report and Decision

For follow-ups of HEIs with the rating Approved quality assurance processes, no decision is made and no report is produced.

Approved Quality Assurance Processes with Reservations

Scope and Timing of the Follow-up

The HEI must submit an improvement action plan to UKÄ within two years of the decision. The submission deadline is specified in the review decision. The focus of the follow-up is both to verify that the HEI ensures high quality in its operations and to contribute to quality enhancement.

Advance notification

UKÄ initiates the follow-up as soon as the HEI has submitted its improvement action plan. To allow UKÄ to plan the work of the assessment panel in good time, the HEI must notify UKÄ of its intention to submit the plan no later than **three months** before submission.

The follow-up process is expected to take 3–6 months from the date the action plan is submitted.

Assessment Panel

UKÄ appoints assessors to conduct the follow-up. The assessors have usually participated in the original review. As a quality assurance measure, the HEI is given the opportunity to comment on the composition of the assessment panel.

The assessment panel's task is to determine whether the measures taken by the HEI are reasonable and appropriate in relation to the shortcomings identified in the previous report.

Improvement Action Plan

The plan must describe the actions planned and implemented to remedy shortcomings in all assessment criteria deemed not fulfilled. It must clearly specify which concrete actions have been implemented or will be implemented, which shortcomings they address, and which assessment criteria they relate to. The HEI must explain why the actions are expected to remedy the identified shortcomings.

The plan may be structured in any way the HEI considers appropriate but must explicitly address all assessment criteria deemed *not fulfilled*.

Appendices

The improvement action plan must be self-evident and should not include supplemental links containing information. References to sources on which the analysis and plan are based must be included, and all sources must be available to the assessment panel upon request. Where actions involve new or revised documents relating to the HEIs' quality assurance processes, such as rules of procedure and delegation, quality policy, or other strategic documents, these must be attached to the plan. The date of adoption must be stated in the attached documents.

Basis for Assessment

The basis for the follow-up consists primarily of the HEI improvement action plan.

If the assessment panel considers the improvement action plan insufficient or if questions remain unanswered, it may request supplementary material. This may include responses to specific questions as well as additional documentation.

The assessment panel may also conduct interviews to further complement the plan. Interviews may include staff and board members, students, and doctoral students. Interviews are conducted remotely using digital tools.

Report and Decision

The assessment panel's conclusions are summarised in a concise report indicating whether the HEI fulfils the assessment criteria.

UKÄ makes separate decisions concerning quality assurance processes for education and for research. The decisions are based on two separate reports from the assessors.

Communication Procedure

Before UKÄ makes a decision, the HEI is given an opportunity to identify factual errors in the report. The HEI must respond within two weeks of receiving the report. The assessment panel then considers any revisions.

The HEIs' written response is appended to the report.

UKÄ:s Decision

The final report from the assessment panel forms the basis for UKÄ's decision. Based on the report, UKÄ decides on the status of the HEIs'

quality assurance processes.

In the follow-up, UKÄ may decide to award the assessment *Approved quality assurance processes* or allow the assessment *Approved quality assurance processes with reservations* to remain. No further follow-up is conducted before the next regular review.

Publication of the Decision

The decision and the assessment panel's report will be published on UKÄ's website.

Quality Assurance Processes Under Review

Scope and Timing of the Follow-up

The HEI must submit an improvement action plan to UKÄ within two years of the decision. The submission deadline is specified in the review decision. The focus of the follow-up is both to verify that the HEI ensures high quality in its operations and to contribute to quality enhancement.

Advance notification

UKÄ initiates the follow-up as soon as the HEI has submitted its improvement action plan. To allow UKÄ to plan the work of the assessment panel in good time, the HEI must notify UKÄ of its intention to submit the plan no later than **three months** before submission.

The follow-up process is expected to take 3–6 months from the date the plan is submitted.

Assessment Panel

UKÄ appoints assessors to conduct the follow-up. The assessors have usually participated in the original review. As a quality assurance measure, the HEI is given the opportunity to comment on the composition of the assessment panel.

The assessment panel's task is to determine whether the measures taken by the HEI are reasonable and appropriate in relation to the shortcomings identified in the previous report.

Improvement Action Plan

The plan must describe the actions planned and implemented to remedy shortcomings in all assessment criteria deemed not fulfilled. It must clearly specify which concrete actions have been implemented or will be implemented, which shortcomings they address, and which assessment criteria they relate to. The HEI must explain why the actions are expected to remedy the identified shortcomings.

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Appendices

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Basis for Assessment

The basis for the follow-up consists primarily of the HEIs' improvement action plan.

If the assessment panel considers the plan insufficient or if questions remain unanswered, it may request supplementary material. This may include responses to specific questions as well as additional documentation.

The assessment panel may also conduct interviews to further complement the action plan. Interviews may include staff and board members, students, and doctoral students. Interviews are conducted remotely using digital tools.

Report and Decision

The assessment panel's conclusions are summarised in a concise report indicating whether the HEI fulfils the assessment criteria.

UKÄ makes separate decisions concerning quality assurance processes for education and for research. The decisions are based on two separate reports from the assessors.

Communication Procedure

Before UKÄ makes a decision, the HEI is given an opportunity to identify factual errors in the report. The HEI must respond within two weeks of receiving the report. The assessment panel then considers any revisions.

The HEIs' written response is appended to the report.

UKÄ:s Decision

The final report from the assessment panel forms the basis for UKÄ's decision. Based on the report, UKÄ decides on the status of the HEIs' quality assurance processes.

In the follow-up, UKÄ may decide to award the assessment *Approved quality assurance processes* or *Approved quality assurance processes with reservations*, or alternatively to allow the assessment *Quality assurance processes under review* to remain. No further follow-up is conducted before the next regular review.

Publication of the Decision

The decision and the assessment panel's report will be published on UKÄ's website.

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (Universitetskanslersämbetet – UKÄ) evaluates the quality of higher education and research. We are responsible for official statistics and monitor compliance with laws and regulations among universities and university colleges.

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