

5. Quality assurance

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5.1 Starting points

Policy

Quality assurance procedures are systematic efforts to improve courses and programmes in every way in accordance with our values and strategy. The procedures concern educational content and academic levels, but also the conditions provided by the university to ensure that the students assimilate as much knowledge as possible when studying, i.e. both the physical and student welfare environment. For example, they can concern planning and implementing courses, access to equipment and rooms as well as an open, validating discussion climate where everyone gets to speak on their terms.

Working with quality issues gives the students the opportunity to practice developed approaches. This will benefit them in their future professional lives. From an early stage, SLU is responsible to clarify that the students are personally responsible for their education, which includes quality development.

SLU's quality assurance system monitors quality assurance procedures at the university. See below.

National regulations

"Quality assurance procedures are the shared concern of staff and students at higher education institutions."¹

A national system for quality assurance within higher education is being put into practice during 2017–2022. Within this framework, the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) is reviewing the following: quality assurance procedures at higher education institutions, course and programme evaluations, degree-awarding powers and thematic evaluations.

SLU rules

SLU's quality assurance procedures and quality assurance are described in the following documents:

[Framework for the quality assurance of courses and study programmes at SLU](#) (strategy document)²

[Instructions for systematic quality assurance at SLU](#) (instructions for applying the framework/strategy)³

SLU's quality assurance system can be summarised in the following way:

- SLU must offer high-quality courses and programmes. A necessary condition for this is ensuring that the educational process is of high quality.
- SLU follows definitions on what constitutes high quality of the educational process listed in national and international agreements as well as requirements stipulated by law. The

¹ Higher Education Act (1992:1434) Chapter 1, section 4.

² Decision by the vice-chancellor 21/12/2016 (SLU ID: SLU.ua 2016.1.1.2-4643).

³ Decision by the vice-chancellor 27/02/2018 (SLU ID: SLU.ua 2018.1.1.2-501).

definitions (quality standards) are based on the university's strategic objectives and values as well as guidelines, rules and policies relating to education.

- By using systematic quality assurance, we ensure that all aspects of the educational process meet the quality requirements listed in the quality standards.
- Quality assurance supports a culture where joint quality standards are the starting point in both educational work as well as support and control system development work.

Quality assurance consists of regularly recurring and systematic present-state analyses and dialogues on quality. The present-state analysis is carried out by the programme board in question. Quality dialogues are held between the persons responsible for education at university level (Board of Education) and the programme board in question. After the quality dialogues have been carried out, the Board of Education makes an assessment of whether the quality assurance procedures relating to courses and programmes are sufficient enough to ensure that the operation in question is of high quality. The Board of Education decides on cases where quality assurance inspires adequate measures to ensure continued high-quality development.

Course evaluations (see section [5.2 Course evaluations](#)) and the recurring student welfare survey (see section [5.4. Student welfare follow-up](#)) are important quality assurance tools. Through programme evaluations (see section [5.3 Programme evaluations](#)) and alumni surveys, other aspects of educational quality can be highlighted, but these methods are not used as much or as systematically as the above.

Who is responsible for what?

Different parts of the organisation are responsible for education quality at SLU.⁴ The main quality assurance procedures are the responsibility of the individual employees in their daily work: students, doctoral students and staff.

Links

[Quality assurance of courses and programmes](#)

[Student welfare surveys](#)

[SLU alumni activities](#)

5.2 Course evaluations

Policy

Course evaluations must be followed up and used as a tool in the quality development of courses. They must be handled in such a way that both student and teacher integrity is preserved. Therefore, students must have the right to be anonymous when writing course evaluations.

Good higher education presupposes well-designed and implemented course evaluations. This in turn presupposes reciprocity. The course evaluation system is based on enabling students to give constructive feedback on courses and teaching. Teachers must then use the evaluations as a valuable instrument for quality development. Students should feel that their opinions are met with interest and respect.

Student feedback is part of the course, and they are not reimbursed for their time. Since course evaluations are voluntary for students, it is important that the responsible department provides information on and organises course evaluations with the aim to receive as many responses as

⁴ Framework for the quality assurance of courses and study programmes at SLU.

possible. It is suitable to invite the student representative who takes part in compiling the results to also take part of the work described above as well as scheduling the course evaluation session.

National regulations

“Higher education institutions shall enable students who are participating in or have completed a course to express their experiences of and views on the course through a course evaluation to be organised by the higher education institution.”⁵

“The higher education institution shall collate the course evaluations and provide information about their results and any actions prompted by the course evaluations. The results shall be made available to the students.”⁶

SLU rules

Course evaluations results and conclusions must be reported in the joint electronic course evaluation system Evald. Where appropriate, information on course adjustments, and/or reasons to keep criticised content and design should be listed in the system. The results reported in the compilations are number responses for issues common to all courses, as well as summaries of student and teacher feedback.

Before the course is carried out again, the results from previous course evaluations must be presented, as well as information on any changes caused by previous course evaluations.

A student has the right to represent the student group and take part of the compilation of course evaluation feedback. This work is reimbursed with SEK 400 per course. This fee makes up some of the costs for course implementation, which means that the department in question does not receive special resources for this purpose. The amount is the same regardless of the credit amount or number of students.

Who is responsible for what?

SLU teachers and students are jointly responsible to ensure that course evaluations are carried out. The responsible department must:

- compile and follow-up their respective course evaluations unless the responsible faculty decides something else;
- report course evaluation results and conclusions in the joint electronic course evaluation system Evald;
- pay a remuneration, but only for one course date per student;
- archive compilations and course evaluations in accordance with [Annex 4: Archive course information](#).

Instructions

To receive their remuneration, student representatives who take part of the course evaluation compilation must fill in a form (see below) and submit it to the responsible department.

Links

[Evald](#)

[Student remuneration form](#)

⁵ Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) Chapter 1, Section 14.

⁶ Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) Chapter 1, Section 14.

5.3 Programme evaluations

Policy

Students who participate in, or completed, a degree programme are given an opportunity to express their experiences and views on the programme. An SLU objective is to carry out continual programme evaluations in connection when students apply for a qualification. Programme evaluations must be followed up and used as a tool in the quality development of courses and programmes. In addition, there must be procedures for following up programme students (student completion and non-completion).

Students who participate in, or completed, a degree programme are given an opportunity to express their experiences and views on the programme by completing a programme evaluation. Programme evaluations must be followed up and used as a tool in the quality development of courses and programmes.

Who is responsible for what?

The programme boards are responsible to carry out degree programme evaluations.⁷ Programme directors of studies are responsible to follow up student results, both qualitatively and quantitatively.⁸ The Division of Educational Affairs and the Division of Planning must provide system support of this follow-up.⁹

Links

[Lins \(management information system\)](#) (requires login).

[Programme evaluations](#)

5.4 Student welfare follow-up

Policy

SLU continually carries out a student welfare survey.

Who is responsible for what?

The Student Welfare Council (Strå) is responsible for the student welfare survey.¹⁰

Links

[Student welfare surveys](#)

5.5 Dialogues on quality

Important concepts

Joint quality themes and standards are specified in the [Framework for the quality assurance of courses and study programmes at SLU](#).

⁷ The SLU Board's delegation of authority.

⁸ The vice-chancellor's delegation of authority.

⁹ The university administration's delegation of authority.

¹⁰ The vice-chancellor's delegation of authority.

Who is responsible for what?

[The instructions for systematic quality assurance of courses and programmes at SLU](#) state, among other things, what is expected of all concerned parties before, during and following quality dialogues.

Instructions

[The instructions for systematic quality assurance of courses and programmes at SLU](#) list, among other things, planned review cycles at an annual or long-term basis (6 years), working methods and documentation.

Links

[Framework for the quality assurance of courses and study programmes at SLU.](#)

[Instructions for systematic quality assurance of courses and programmes at SLU.](#)