

Guidelines for systematic quality enhancement work

Disclaimer: In case of a discrepancy between the Swedish and the English version of the decision, the Swedish version will prevail.

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1. Starting points for systematic quality enhancement work

Quality enhancement work, i.e. the work performed to develop and ensure the quality of our activities, at Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH) is conducted within the framework of a quality system that is common to all activities at the University. The quality system shall contribute to ensuring and developing the quality of the organisation through a systematic approach. A central element is the engagement and participation of all employees and students in the quality enhancement work.

SKH's quality enhancement work shall:

1. support the development of the University's activities towards SKH's goals and vision in accordance with the strategic plan,
2. ensure that SKH's activities are conducted in accordance with applicable laws, ordinances, regulations and SKH's vision and goals as well as governing documents, and
3. meet the requirements and expectations that the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF) and the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) place on universities and university colleges in the national quality assurance work.

The quality enhancement work is conducted in an enhancement cycle, in which activities are carried out to ensure and develop the quality of the organisation, enabling the University to develop towards its vision.

The work of ensuring and developing quality is a common concern for all employees and students at SKH and shall be a natural part of our activities. It is therefore important that the quality enhancement work is integrated in the organisation and that the quality system is transparent. The quality system must be known by everyone and be easy to understand and apply in the organisation.

The quality enhancement work shall contribute to the development of SKH as a learning organisation, where the pursuit of continuous development is a goal. A prerequisite for learning is collegial engagement, mutual trust and exchange of experience between the different parts of the organisation.

2. SKH's quality culture

SKH's quality culture is based on a consistent collegial approach, where both students and staff experience an environment that enables creativity, artistic risk-taking and positive change in a respectful, ethical and open learning and working environment.

SKH's quality culture is embedded throughout the organisation. This means that students, staff and leaders actively focus on processes that enable engagement, participation and development of potential at all levels.

3. SKH's quality system

3.1 Overview of the quality system

- The quality system clarifies and systematises the quality enhancement work conducted at SKH.
- The system identifies strengths and weaknesses in the organisation, leads to measures being taken and thus contributes to the further development of the organisation.
- The system specifies both the framework for systematic quality enhancement and how such activities are to be conducted.

3.2 Framework for systematic quality enhancement

- The framework consists of laws, ordinances, national (SUHF and UKÄ) and international requirements (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, ESG) with regard to quality assurance work and internal governing documents such as Rules of Procedure with delegations, quality policy and various guidelines.

4. How systematic quality enhancement work is conducted

Systematic quality enhancement work is conducted at all levels of the University through the enhancement cycle, through clear processes, in accordance with the governing and support documents and through structured, regular collection activities. All of these are prerequisites for conducting systematic quality enhancement work.

4.1 The enhancement wheel

The enhancement wheel involves structured quality enhancement activities in the phases *plan – do – follow up – adjust – feedback* as described below. The enhancement wheel means that activities are carried out to ensure and develop the quality of the organisation, enabling the University to develop towards its vision.

Clear processes and governing and support documents clarify what is to be done, by whom and when. All activities and all organisational initiatives that SKH plans and implements must be followed up in a structured manner so that measures can be taken to develop the activities. Feedback on development activities must then be given to relevant stakeholders. Decisions on measures may also mean that something, such as a study programme, will be discontinued.



4.2 Clear processes

Key processes need to be quality assured and developed in order for the organisation as a whole to maintain high quality. These processes are clarified and described. The quality system supports the work of identifying these processes.

4.3 Governing and support documents

Governing and support documents in the form of policies, guidelines, process descriptions, procedure descriptions, etc. are an important foundation for the quality system. The system must be able to identify when governing and support documents are missing or when an existing document needs to be revised.

4.4 Collection activities

Collection activities in the form of follow-ups and evaluations are carried out at different intervals in order to obtain data on the activities. The collected material is compiled and analysed. Based on this, proposals for measures are formulated and activities are established. This is intended to develop and quality assure the activities.

5. Operational planning and operational follow-up process, including follow-up of quality enhancement work

The operational planning process plays an important role in SKH's quality system. Measures that need to be taken as a result of systematic quality enhancement work,

and which need to be planned and budgeted for, are included in the regular operational planning process.

5.1 Operational plans

Every autumn, the departments, administration and library submit operational plans for the coming year to the Vice-Chancellor. The operational plans are based on the areas in the University's strategic plan. In the documentation, those responsible for activities also identify significant risks and propose measures to minimise these risks. Requests for budget allocations for development and investments for the next three years are also included. The documentation also contains operational follow-up, where measures taken and ongoing activities are specified. The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for drawing up an overall operational plan for SKH. The content of the overall operational plan is taken from the operational plans of the departments, subject units, the Board of Education and Research, the library and the archives, but also includes things that the Vice-Chancellor wishes to implement in addition to this. The Board decides on the overall operational plan for SKH.

The management group conducts a dialogue on the content of the operational plans during the planning process. The operational plans are an important instrument both for visualising the activities conducted at the departments, subject units, the administration and the library and for highlighting good examples. The operational planning process thus becomes an important element in the organisation's learning.

5.2 Operational dialogues

Every semester, the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Vice-Rector for Research, the management of Administration and the Quality Coordinator conduct operational dialogues with each department. The Head of Department and the employees invited by the Head of Department, including student representatives, participate. The Heads of Department also have the opportunity to participate in each other's operational dialogues, which enables an exchange of experience within the organisation. During the operational dialogues, the previous and current year's activities are followed up and planned activities are discussed. The action plan for work environment management, the need for administrative and technical support, as well as comments from the previous year are also discussed.

In the operational dialogues, there is a follow-up at an overall level of various issues linked to the systematic quality enhancement work. These include results from various follow-ups and evaluations, as well as quality-driving issues such as student influence, active conscious inclusion and gender equality. The results of this follow-up are documented.

If there are shared views from several departments or subject units that are at an overall level and need to be handled by the University's management or administration, these are passed on to the responsible function within the University for further handling. Implemented measures are communicated back to departments and subject units.

6. Systematic quality enhancement work within the different parts of the organisation

Within the core activities, i.e. education and research, there are a number of key processes that need to be developed and quality assured in order for the organisation as a whole to maintain high quality. In addition, there are support activities as well as management and support processes, such as competence supply, provision of premises, resource allocation and operational planning (see below). The quality enhancement work is based on the phases of the enhancement wheel, i.e. *plan – implement – follow up – adjust – feedback*. There are clear governing documents, process descriptions and procedures to support the work in the various phases.



During the *plan* phase, the quality assurance needed to ensure that there are conditions for conducting high-quality activities is carried out. If the assessment is that there are no prerequisites for conducting a high-quality activity, the person responsible can decide to discontinue or not start up an activity.

During the *implement* phase, the activity carried out as specified in the planning in order to meet the set goals.

During the *follow up* phase, the activity is followed up through measures to develop and ensure the quality. Data is collected systematically through follow-ups and evaluations. Collection takes place in writing or orally, e.g. through questionnaires, interviews, surveys, meetings and dialogues. Overall follow-up also takes place through the operational dialogues and when data for the annual report is

produced, compiled and analysed. The collected material is compiled and documented. The material is then analysed, and strengths, shortcomings and problems are identified. Proposals for measures are discussed and their consequences are analysed and evaluated before a decision on an action plan is made.

During the *adjust* phase, measures are taken either to develop the specific activity and remedy deficiencies and problems or to discontinue the activity that is not of satisfactory quality. The measures taken must be followed up in a systematic way.

For the activity to develop and for learning to take place, the experiences gained must be *communicated back (feedback)* to those involved, including the students and doctoral students. Exchange of experience and dialogue between the different parts of the organisation is a prerequisite for the development of its activities. The Vice-Chancellor's management group, the Board of Education and Research (NUF) and the Administration's management group are important formal platforms for the exchange of experience and dialogue. More informal meetings and discussions are also of great importance to the organisation.

The aspects of active conscious inclusion, gender equality, sustainable development, internationalisation and collaboration shall permeate the activities at SKH. This means that it needs to be ensured that the aspects are visible in the processes, e.g. in the admission of students, in the recruitment of staff and in the implementation of courses and programmes, and they shall therefore be followed up and evaluated.

Below is a description of the systematic quality enhancement work within SKH's study programmes and research, the key processes and support processes that are important for the overall management of the activities, as well as the various aspects.

7. Systematic quality enhancement work in education and research

For education at all levels and research to be of high quality, the quality must be developed and assured.

Quality enhancement work is done by developing and quality assuring key processes belonging to each area during the various phases of the enhancement wheel by those involved in education and research. This may include the Vice-Rector for Research, Head of Department, Head of Subject, teachers, Administrative Department Manager, officers and administrators. The key processes that are relevant include setting up programmes, admitting students and doctoral students, drawing up the course syllabus, and following up research through key figures. Each such process is clearly described, and for each process there are governing and support documents in the form of policies, guidelines and procedure descriptions.

To support the quality assurance work, descriptions of the relevant key processes are developed. The process descriptions state objectives, what is used as a basis for follow-up, when and where results from follow-ups are reconciled, who is responsible for follow-up and for implementing measures, and what documents exist to support the work. The process descriptions are to be available on SKH's website.

SKH uses collection activities to follow up the activities carried out in education and research. These activities are:

- Follow-up of key figures for education (quantitative) – annually
 - applicants and admissions
 - performance rate
 - full-year students in courses and programmes
 - degrees
- Follow-up of key figures for research (quantitative) – annually
 - staff
 - Published artistic (and scientific) research output
 - external funding
 - internal funding through calls for proposals
 - third-cycle courses and study programmes
 - research projects
 - collaborations
 - interdisciplinary collaborations (*under development*)
 - research data (*under development*)
- Course evaluation (evaluation of courses by students and doctoral students) – after each course
- Course evaluation (actions and reflections of Heads of Department, Heads of Subject and Vice-Rector for Research) – every year
- Study environment survey (study environment survey among students and doctoral students) – every two years
- Staff survey (questionnaire answered by employees) – every two years
- Programme evaluation (self-evaluation and collegial review) – every six years
- Research evaluation (self-evaluation and collegial review) – every six years (*under development*)

The activities provide information that is systematically analysed and followed up by the responsible manager or NUF. The analysis forms the basis for decisions on measures to develop SKH's study programmes. The Vice-Chancellor, Vice-Rector for Research and NUF may decide on further activities to develop and ensure the quality of SKH's study programmes and research.

The key processes are also followed up and evaluated externally through the reviews conducted by, for example, UKÄ.

8. Systematic quality enhancement work in support administration and support processes linked to the core activities

Linked to education and research are support activities in the form of administration and library as well as support processes. These are prerequisites in the form of resources for the core activities to maintain high quality. Competence supply, provision of expertise, and IT and technical support are included here. It also applies to student support in the form of student health services and educational support for students with disabilities, as well as support for researchers in areas such as research ethics, publication and applications for external funding.

Support administration and support processes that are directly linked to the core activities are followed up and evaluated through both the follow-up and evaluation of education and research as well as through investigations that are initiated and at an overall level in the operational dialogues.

9. Systematic quality enhancement work of processes linked to the overall governance of the organisation

In order for education and research to be conducted with high quality, processes that are directly linked to the overall governance of the organisation need to be quality assured. Such processes are the resource allocation process and the process for operational planning and follow-up. This also includes follow-up and evaluation of the quality system itself.

These processes are monitored and evaluated through regular reconciliation in the operational dialogues and within the Vice-Chancellor's management group and the Administration's management group. The processes are also followed up and evaluated externally through the reviews conducted by organisations such as the Swedish National Audit Office and UKÄ. The quality system is followed up through an annual quality report conducted by the Quality Coordinator at the University and reported to the University Board. The Vice-Chancellor, NUF and the management group are also informed about the quality report annually. Those responsible for activities and the Quality Coordinator are responsible for implementing measures and providing feedback to those concerned.

10. Systematic quality enhancement work of aspects

The aspects of active conscious inclusion, gender equality, sustainable development, internationalisation and collaboration shall permeate the activities at SKH. They are important for the organisation to maintain high quality and to ensure compliance with the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. The aspects therefore need to be included in various processes, e.g. in

the admission of students and doctoral students, in the recruitment of staff, in the implementation of courses and programmes and in calls for internal research funding. This is ensured through the collection activities that are carried out. The aspects also need to be made visible in governing documents.

The aspects are also followed up and analysed in connection with the operational dialogues and when the underlying data for the annual report is prepared. Based on this analysis, the manager or coordinator responsible for the matter develops proposals for measures, which are then analysed and decided on. The aspects are also followed up and evaluated externally through the reviews conducted by, for example, UKÄ and the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR).

11. Responsibility for quality enhancement work

SKH's Rules of Procedure state who is formally responsible for the quality enhancement work at different levels. However, SKH's way of working is based on staff being involved and engaged in this work. Everyone's participation is a prerequisite for continuous development of the organisation. Participation and engagement also include the students and doctoral students at SKH, as their perspective is a prerequisite for the organisation to maintain high quality.

The Vice-Chancellor decides on the overall quality system for SKH, and also decides on quality follow-up and quality development of education and research.

Those responsible for the core activities, i.e. for the departments, subject units and research centres, are responsible for ensuring that the activities are conducted with high quality and that quality follow-up and quality development are functional and follow SKH's consolidated quality system.

Everyone responsible for activities is also responsible for continuous implementation of operational and quality development as well as follow-up of their respective activities.

NUF is responsible for overall strategic quality development and quality follow-up of the collective core activities. NUF is responsible for the planning, development and follow-up of the systematic quality enhancement work. NUF decides on the priority areas for quality development and quality monitoring of education and research. NUF decides on the planning and implementation of quality reviews of education and research. The Board prepares matters for the Vice-Chancellor within the quality system for first, second and third-cycle education and research.