

Faculty Board

System for quality assurance and quality enhancement of existing education leading to a degree in the first, second and third cycles at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology 2019-2024

This document describes the system for quality assurance and quality enhancement of existing education leading to a degree in the first, second and third cycles at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology for 2019-2024. Annual plans for follow-up and evaluation will supplement the document within the six-year period. The following policy documents addressing quality assurance of education at the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology are also available:

For quality assurance and follow-up of courses in the first and second cycles:

- *Instructions for first and second-cycle course syllabi* (STYR 2015/1422, STYR 2017/1454)
- *Regulations on course evaluations and course evaluation reports in first and second-cycle studies at the Faculties of Humanities and Theology* (STYR 2016/1429).

For quality assurance of courses in the third cycle:

- *Instructions for third-cycle course syllabi* (STYR 2016/1430).

When establishing new first and second-cycle education that leads to a degree, The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology adhere to the Vice-Chancellor's guidance in *Validation of New Study Programmes* (UE 2018/12). The following is available for validation of the main fields of study:

- From The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology: *Minimum requirements when implementing Lund University's guidelines for validation of non-programme-based education that can lead to a degree* (HT 2011/559).

The Vice-Chancellor's guidance is under revision. The guidelines for validation of main fields of study will be revised pursuant to the revised Vice Chancellor's guidance.

Establishing new third-cycle education:

- *Provisions for third-cycle studies within The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology* (STYR 2015/1345)
- *Template for General Syllabus for Third Cycle Studies for the Degree of Doctor* (25 January 2018).

Guidelines and documentation for establishing new third-cycle subjects will be produced during the six-year period.

Basics of the system

The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology system is based on the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, the Swedish Higher Education Authority's *Guidelines for reviewing the HEIs' quality assurance processes* (rev. 2018), *Regulations for quality assurance and quality enhancement of education at Lund University*, (Reg. no 2016/179) and *Policy for quality assurance and quality enhancement of education at Lund University* (Reg. no 2016/179). These policy documents define education quality and state the role that a system for quality assurance and quality enhancement is to play in relation to education activities.

Education quality

Lund University's policy states that quality "arises in the meetings between teaching staff and students" (LU, Policy: 1) while ESG describes quality as the "result of the interaction between teachers, students and the institutional learning environment" (ESG: 7). The focus when The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology follow up and evaluate methods, procedures and practices for teaching and learning within courses and study programmes includes an awareness of how crucial a well-functioning educational administration is for the students' perception of the courses and study programmes and their ability to finish their education on time and with good results. The system The Joint Faculties and Theology have in place for quality assurance and quality enhancement aims to maintain and develop education quality by supporting the reflections of teaching staff and students on teaching and learning.¹

Quality culture

ESG states that quality assurance supports the development of "a quality culture that is embraced by all: from the students and academic staff to the institutional leadership and management" (ESG:) 8). Lund University's policy manifests the content of quality culture and states that "Lund University is to be distinguished by its quality culture in which teaching staff, students and doctoral students feel involved, responsible and committed to quality in the organisation, and constantly strive to improve and develop the organisation" (LU, Policy: 1). However, research shows that in higher education, quality assurance commonly creates a divide between the formal rules and procedures for quality assurance initiated by management to support and follow up quality and the ongoing quality work related to education activities (Mårtensson et al. 2012, Cuthbert 2011, Morley 2001).²

The point of departure at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology is that the degree of mutual trust needed to create a constructive quality culture is established over time and through collaboration. Follow-up and development must be meaningful in relation to the needs of education activities and in relation to the amount of work the follow-up and evaluation entail. The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology act based on their ongoing quality enhancement work, and intercept common challenges faced by courses and study programmes and identify and share good ideas and practices among the learning environments. The follow-ups and evaluations highlight challenges that are both shared by and specific to a course or study programme. Common challenges form the basis of faculty-wide initiatives and development processes. When faced by challenges related to specific courses and study programmes, the faculties help and support the departments.

¹ This type of reflection can be defined as the ongoing quality work related to education activities (cf. Massy 1999 in Mårtensson, K., T. Roxå and B. Stensaker 2012. "From Quality Assurance to Quality Practices: an Investigation of Strong Microcultures in Teaching and Learning" in *Studies in Higher Education* (pp.1-12)).

² See Mårtensson et al. 2012.

Decisions on special measures and initiatives related to specific courses and study programmes are taken pursuant to the rules of procedure at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology.

Feedback and development

The Swedish Higher Education Authority's Guidelines for reviewing the HEIs' quality assurance processes convey that

“[t]he review focuses on the continuous improvement of the programmes and on whether the information generated as a result of follow-ups and evaluation leads to appropriate improvement measures. Furthermore, how well the HEIs' quality work systematically identifies strengths and ensures they are preserved and developed is reviewed as well as how areas for improvement are identified, followed up and resolved. It is considered a strength for a quality system to be capable of identifying and handling deviations and areas for improvement. How relevant stakeholders are informed of the results of the quality work is also reviewed” (Swedish Higher Education Authority p. 8. Underlining added).

The type of dialogue and trust-based follow-up sought by The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology calls for feedback and long-term, enriching follow-up.³ The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology, therefore, have a clear focus on feedback to the departments, students and doctoral students. This feedback is given in writing and in close proximity to the conducted activities, and it contains information on how the faculties plan to help the organisations develop their courses and study programmes. Information on implemented and planned activities will be available for all interested parties via the faculties' website.

At The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology, immediate feedback forms the basis for long-term and enriching follow-up of education activities. The planned thematic focus of quality work will facilitate these processes.

Mechanisms of the system

The document *Regulations for quality assurance and quality enhancement of education at Lund University* states that the faculty boards are to develop “routines for following up education quality and quality enhancement work” and implement “evaluation of education with an aim that all education leading to a degree is to be evaluated at least every six years, starting at the latest on 1 January 2019” (LU, Regulations: 2). The system for quality assurance and quality enhancement of existing education leading to a degree at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology consists of three mechanisms:

- Quality discussions
- Follow-up and information on governing laws and regulations
- Thematic evaluations

To best promote a constructive quality culture, The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology deem a balanced relationship between these three mechanisms in terms of time and focus to be important. Good planning and a systematic approach that ensure follow-up and evaluation are conducted according to a set yearly cycle help the departments integrate quality assurance in their ongoing quality work. Yearly planning is incorporated in the ongoing work of the boards and networks.

³ See also Memorandum of 4 January 2018 in Strut investigation (pp. 17-19) for reasoning on the requirement for dialogue and trust-based governance: <http://www.sou.gov.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Övergripande-modellförslag-180104.pdf>

Quality discussions

Since 2011, The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology have held quality discussions on first and second-cycle education with the departments. The discussions are not linked to the faculties' internal budget discussions. The discussions have had various characters over the years. General quality issues have been discussed some years, while other years the discussions have focused on specific themes or issues. The quality discussions for first and second-cycle education take place in March and are followed up prior to and during the annual education away-day for The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology in June. The quality discussions are documented and preceded by written information on the main issues for the discussions.

The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology will also introduce quality discussions for third-cycle education in autumn 2018. These discussions will follow the same model as for first and second-cycle education. The quality discussions for third-cycle education will take place in October and be followed up prior to and during a full-day workshop in January.

Follow-up and information on governing laws and regulations

Information on governing laws and regulations is provided on a continuous basis and adherence is followed up on the same basis. Follow-up and information provision can also be initiated by the faculties as needed. The faculties combine follow-up with information initiatives and revision of their own policy documents. The purpose of combining follow-up, revision and information is to ensure that the faculties can regularly confirm that their education activities are familiar with and adhere to laws and regulations and that the conditions needed for the organisations to comply with the faculties' own policy documents are in place. Combining these three aspects has been successful thus far through the organisations being informed about and involved in producing policy documents that can be complied with – resulting in a new way to organise and formulate the faculties' own policy documents.

During the six-year period, the follow-up of governing laws and regulations by The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology will be planned in relation to the quality discussions and the focus of the evaluations and/or as a follow-up of previous, extensive revisions of the policy documents.

Thematic evaluations

Programme evaluations are conducted thematically, with one theme per year during the six-year period. Thematic planning is described below. Each respective board specifies the theme for first and second-cycle education and third-cycle education in the detailed plans for each year in relation to the budget process.

Evaluations at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology are thus thematic and primarily based on an inventory of certain aspects of the programmes, and then form the basis for discussions and department-wide or faculty-wide initiatives. Participatory observations, in which external parties take part in the activities for the purpose of reflection and observation, constitute another foundation for the evaluations.

External expertise

According to the Swedish Higher Education Authority, the requirement for recurring external reviews as stipulated in ESG is satisfied through the reviews conducted by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (Swedish Higher Education Authority p. 7). Lund University stipulates, however, that "in a normal case the evaluation would involve collegial review, which includes external experts" (LU, Regulations: 2). The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology engage external expertise as part of the quality assurance system. The expertise relevant for each year's evaluation can have a subject-specific character, but it can also be thematic or focused on leadership, procedures or processes.

Division of responsibilities

The Faculty Board establishes the foundation and outer framework of the system and requests the submission of annual reports, which also entails planning measures and development initiatives based on the results of the follow-up.

The Working Committee discusses the annual follow-ups and approves annual plans for follow-up and evaluation. The Working Committee decides on any exceptions to the evaluations. The Working Committee appoints external experts.

Study Programmes Board and Board for Third-Cycle Studies produce the annual plans for evaluation and follow-up of each education cycle.

The director of studies network and the reference group for third-cycle studies serve as the boards' discussion partners and sounding boards for planning and following up the system.

The Student Union for Humanities and Theology and the Humanistic and Theological Doctoral Student Council serve as discussion partners and sounding boards for planning and following up the system.

Six-year plan for quality assurance and quality enhancement at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

The thematic division of the six-year period includes all forms of follow-up and evaluation for all education cycles and gives the departments the opportunity to truly delve into specific aspects of the courses and study programmes and focus departmental and subject-driven educational development in a common direction. In this way the thematic six-year plan also offers an overarching strategy for teaching and learning, which promotes cohesion within the departments and faculties and promotes quality enhancement and evaluation. The thematic six-year plan has been set in relation to the criteria for quality enhancement work found in the *Policy for quality assurance and quality enhancement of education at Lund University*. Namely that:

2019 Assessment and study results

The actual study results correspond to learning outcomes and qualitative targets.

2020 Internationalisation

Internationalisation and international perspectives are promoted in education.

2021 Study, learning and teaching environments

Education focuses on students'/doctoral students' learning.

Education is based on scientific and/or artistic foundations as well as proven experience.

Teaching staff, including supervisors, have appropriate expertise in terms of the subject, teaching and learning in higher education, subject-teaching and other relevant skills, and that the teaching capacity is adequate.

An appropriate study and learning environment with well-functioning support activities is in place and accessible to all.

2022 Relevance of education

Education is to be relevant for the students and doctoral students, and meet society's needs.

2023 Perspectives in education

Gender equality and equal opportunities perspectives are integrated in education. Subject-relevant perspectives regarding sustainable development are promoted in education.

2024 Follow-up of the six-year period's system

*Students and doctoral students have influence in the planning, execution and follow-up of education.
Continuous follow-up and development of education takes place.*