HÖGSKOLAN
I SKÖVDE

Guidelines for Annual Follow-Up of Research Projects[1]

These guidelines were finalised by the Faculty Board on the 9th of June 2021, and take effect on the same date.

Registration number HS 2022/863

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[1] This is a translation of the Swedish version (Riktlinjer för årlig uppföljning av forskningsprojekt, registration number 2021/542). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail.

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1 Introduction

Quality assurance in research covers all research at the University of Skövde (the University). It takes place within the framework of improvement cycles, which are outlined in the Quality Policy for the University of Skövde [Kvalitetspolicy för Högskolan i Skövde]. To ensure and develop the quality of research, the University works according to a model of four clear, connected phases, namely planning, delivery, follow-up, and development.

The Guidelines for Quality Assurance Procedures in Research document states two activities for follow-up of research, namely annual follow-up of research projects and six-year follow-up of research environments.

Annual follow-up of research projects must contribute to:

- research reaching the desired quality.

- strengthening the education basis of research.

- increasing the benefits of research.

The purpose of annual follow-up is to use a systematic modus operandi to support project managers, and promote the development of projects. Annual, systematic follow-up with the same content across the University also contributes to providing comparable material, both for ongoing operational planning, and ongoing operational development. This applies particularly within schools, but also between schools and across the University. This is the case, for instance, as the documentation constitutes material for schools' self-evaluation when six-year follow-up of research environments (Guidelines for Six-Year Follow-Up of Research Environments at the University of Skövde) is performed. Heads of School can also use the material to formulate activities in the school's operational plan, for instance.

The status of projects is summarised in the annual follow-up. Follow-up may lead to activities in project plans being changed or postponed, or to new activities being added for the purpose of developing and improving the quality of projects. Any changes are made within the framework of the approved research funding.

Annual follow-up constitutes material for project managers in their work with:

- assessing whether the goals, as outlined in the project description, have been met, or if the conditions for them to be met are present

- making/proposing changes to how the project is run while it is in progress

- improving how future research projects are run (especially when it comes to the follow-up performed in connection with the end of the project)

2 Performance

Each school is responsible for ensuring that the annual follow-up is performed, and that its results are appropriately utilised. The follow-up is performed once per year, via the Operational Reports module in operations system ELIN. Each school decides when follow-up is to be performed. All research projects with their own cost objects are to be followed up[2]. The concerned Head of Division determines whether certain projects are to be excluded from the follow-up due to having been initiated much too recently. These projects are then to be included in the next follow-up round. The Head of School can, in consultation with the relevant Heads of Division, choose not to follow up projects that are deemed to be too minor in extent. There is a final follow-up of projects that come to an end during the year in question, around one month after the end of the project. This is also done in ELIN, in the same way as the follow-up of ongoing projects. The Service, IT and Security Office (SITS) develops materials for the school concerning what projects have ended during the year. These projects are then excluded from the annual follow-up of ongoing projects.

The follow-up process looks as follows:

- school management informs SITS as to when the follow-up in ELIN is to be performed, and which projects are to be included in the follow-up

- SITS administrates the process in ELIN

- the Project Manager performs the follow-up in ELIN

- follow-up conversations between the Project Manager and the concerned director[3]

The result of the follow-up, that is the finished report that the Project Manager documents in ELIN, is followed up through conversations between the Project Manager and the concerned director (the last point of the above list). Each school determines the structure of these conversations. If the school so wishes, further office holders can participate, such as research group leaders. If one person manages multiple projects, all projects should be dealt with at the same occasion

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[2] Research-related projects with their own cost object, that, for instance, only includes equipment purchases or staff recruitment are not followed up.

[3] The school determines who is to participate (Head of School, Deputy Head of School, Head of Division and/or Deputy Head of Division), and how to plan the conversation.

3   Follow-up Content

 The follow-up focusses on the project's scientific goals, and, when applicable, co-production goals, as per the project plan. The project's finances are also followed. The follow-up is to highlight to what extent the project is progressing towards the set goals. This means a brief critical reflection on the project. Any changes from the previous year's follow-up must also be commented on.

The following areas are included in the follow-up[4]:

- achieved results and effects in relation to the project's goals

- project staffing

- collaboration with external parties (when relevant)

- support operations and infrastructure at the University

- the project's contribution to the education and research environment at the University

- final, general reflections concerning the course of the project

In cases where the project is partially funded by external businesses, the Project Manager must attach a co-funding certificate from the business in ELIN. The Project Manager is responsible for contacting the business to obtain the co-funding certificate. A template for co-funding certificates can be found in the staff portal. The Project Manager only needs to contact the business concerning such a certificate if there isn't one from before, or if there have been any changes. The Research, Third-Stream Activities and Innovation Office (AFSI) is responsible for the general process for co-funding certificates, provides support to the Project Manager when it comes to co-funding certificate issues, and is responsible for the certificate template.

The following points are added to the follow-up in connection with the end of a project.

All projects:

- benefit of the research to society

- plans after the end of the project

- publications

Projects that involve external parties:

- the goal of the collaboration

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[4] ELIN includes instruction texts that provide guidance to the Project Manager concerning what is required for the respective headings.

- mutual knowledge transfer between the University and external parties

4 Utilising the Results of the Follow-Up

The results of the annual follow-up can be used in a number of different processes, mainly at the concerned school. In the first instance, the results of an individual project are to be used by the Project Manager, as a tool for ongoing development of the project. The Head of School may also use the combined results as material for formulating activities in the school's operational plan. The Vice-Chancellor and the school's management group must also address the combined results at a dialogue meeting. In addition, the school may also use the results when formulating their self-evaluation as part of the six-year follow-up of the research environment, which is performed based on the Guidelines for Six-Year Follow-Up of Research Environments at the University of Skövde.

5 Division of Responsibilities

The following responsibilities apply to annual follow-up of research projects:

School directors (each school determines which director is responsible for the points below):

- initiate the follow-up process

- communicate with SITS concerning the period during which the follow-up is to be performed

- participate in follow-up conversations with project managers and any further participants (such as research group leaders)

- ensure that the results of the follow-up are utilised by the school, the Project Manager, and in the school's internal quality assurance and operational planning

- ensure that the results of the follow-up are communicated to the Vice-Chancellor at an annual dialogue meeting

Project managers:

- perform the follow-up via operations system ELIN

- participate in the follow-up conversation

- work to further improve the quality of the project based on what the follow-up brings to light

Service, IT and Security Office:

- administrates follow-up in operations system ELIN

- provides user support for operations system ELIN

- ensures that the follow-up reports are stored correctly

Faculty Board:

- develops and ensures the quality of the follow-up process

- provides headings and instruction texts for the follow-up template in operations system ELIN

Vice-Chancellor:

- requests information concerning the results of the follow-up in connection with the dialogue meeting with the school

6   Communication

In the first instance, communication of the results of the annual follow-up takes place within the school. If necessary, the follow-up may be communicated to external providers of direct government funding who fund the project in question. Communication with the Vice-Chancellor also takes place at the dialogue meeting between the school and Vice-Chancellor.

7   The Document Applies from

The guidelines were finalised by the Faculty Board on 09-06-2021, and apply from the same date. The document replaces "Guidelines for Annual Follow-Up of Research Projects" from 02-02-2020 (registration number HS 2020/103).