HÖGSKOLAN
I SKÖVDE

Guidelines for Six-Year Follow-Up of Third-Cycle Subjects[1]

These guidelines were finalised by the Faculty Board on the 13th of May 2020 and take effect on the same date.

Registration number HS 2021/313

[1] This is a translation of the Swedish version (Riktlinjer för sexårsuppföljning av ämne inom utbildning på forskarnivå, registration number HS 2020/227). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail.

Table of Content

1 Introduction

Quality assurance procedures in education are performed within the framework of improvement cycles, which are described in "Quality Policy for the University of Skövde". To ensure and develop the quality of education, the University of Skövde (the University) works according to a model of four clear and connected phrases: planning, implementation, follow-up and development. The improvement cycles always have operational development as their purpose.

The document "Guidelines for Quality Assurance Procedures in Education" states a number of activities for follow-up of education. Six-year follow-up of third-cycle subjects, which is outlined in this document, constitutes one of these activities.

2 General about the Follow-Up

All third-cycle education at the University is to be followed up within the framework of a six-year cycle (six-year follow-up). The follow-up refers to subjects that are included in the education, and may include multiple schools[2]. The Faculty Board is responsible for ensuring that follow-up takes place.

2.1 Assessment Areas and Assessment Grounds

The Swedish Higher Education Authority's (UKÄ's) "Guidance for Evaluation of Third-Cycle Education" [Vägledning för utvärdering av utbildning på Forskarnivå] is used as a starting point for the follow-up. This means that UKÄ's assessment areas and assessment grounds are used (see appendix 1). Thus, it is possible to make comparisons to national third-cycle education evaluations performed by UKÄ.

The Faculty Board may choose to supplement the follow-up with further assessment areas and assessment grounds. If this is the case, it will be communicated at the start-up of the follow-up (see part 3.1 below).

2.2 Materials

The materials of the follow-up consist of a self-evaluation with appendices, the general syllabus for the subject, a selection of individual study plans, and a selection of course reports (results from course evaluation).

This may be supplemented by other materials which the Faculty Board deems relevant for internal follow-up. Examples of such materials are previous internal and/or external evaluations, and documentation from applications for third-cycle degree-awarding powers, or establishment of third-cycle subjects.

[2] This means that when the document mentions the relevant Head of School or Head of Division, this may be Heads of School and Heads of Division at multiple schools and divisions.

The results of various instances of follow-up and evaluations are thus collected and utilised in continuous quality assurance procedures.

All materials are collected and made available digitally.

2.3 Timeframe

The timeframe of the follow-up itself normally comprises around nine months from the start-up meeting to the finalised report. In cases where follow-up results in one or more assessment areas being deemed ‘satisfactory with reservations’ or ‘not satisfactory’, there is feedback of planned and implemented measures[3]. This feedback is given after six or twelve months[4].

A schematic timeline is presented in appendix 2. A specific timeline is also finalised ahead of each instance of follow-up.

3 Process

Six-year follow-up of third-cycle subjects is performed in the following steps.

- Start-up
- Self-evaluation
- Group of assessors’ analysis and location visit
- Group of assessors’ statement
- Faculty Board’s report

- Further development of education
- Feedback of planned and implemented measures

Three to six months before the start-up meeting, the Faculty Board invites the relevant school to an information meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to spread broad knowledge at the school about the follow-up. At the meeting, a comprehensive plan of what is going to be followed up, how it’s going to happen, and a preliminary timeline are presented, so the relevant officeholders can plan and prepare for the follow-up.

The formal beginning of the follow-up is the start-up meeting. The different steps of the follow-up are described in more detail in the below parts.

3.1 Start-Up

The formal beginning of the follow-up is when the Faculty Board calls a start-up meeting for the representatives of the third-cycle subject (Subject Coordinator, the Director of PhD Studies, the relevant Head of School and Head of Division, as well as the relevant Coordinator of PhD Studies). Doctoral student representatives also participate at the meeting. In connection with the

---

[3] Information about the assessments used for follow-up can be found in part 3.4.
[4] Feedback is given after around six months if the result shows shortcomings that can seriously affect the quality of the education, see part 3.7.

meeting, templates, material from previous follow-up, and other relevant materials are made available in a joint storage space. The goal of the initial meeting is to gather all relevant persons and ensure that they have a good understanding of the follow-up process and ongoing work.

If the Faculty Board chooses to supplement the follow-up with further assessment areas and assessment grounds – in addition to those used by UKÄ (see part 2) – this is communicated at the start-up meeting.

3.2 Self-Evaluation

The Subject Coordinator, the Director of PhD Studies, and the Coordinator of PhD Studies are responsible for the collation of a self-evaluation with appendices. Collaboration with other officeholders who are involved in the third-cycle course or study programme, mainly Supervisors and Course Coordinator Teachers, and doctoral student representatives, is to take place.

In the self-evaluation, the third-cycle subject is described, analysed and valued in relation to the assessment areas and the assessment grounds. The focus of the self-valuation should be more on valuation than description, and it's very important to use concrete examples to highlight how the assessment grounds are met. The purpose of this is to give the assessors an understanding of the course or study programme as a whole, and for how internal processes work in terms of driving quality.

The self-evaluation is to be collated as a written report, based on the stated template. The report should be no more than 30 pages (excluding appendices). The self-evaluation is handed to the Faculty Board by the relevant Head of School.

3.3 Group of Assessors' Analysis and Location Visit

The self-valuation and other materials are analysed by an external group of assessors which is appointed by the Faculty Board. The composition and remit of the group of assessors are outlined in appendix 2.

The group of assessors also performs a location visit, where they interview doctoral students and subject representatives (Subject Coordinator, the Director of PhD Studies, Supervisors, the relevant Head of School and Head of Division, and the Coordinator of PhD Studies). The interviews can, if needed, be held partially or entirely in English. The purpose of the interviews is to supplement the information given to the group of assessors in the self-evaluation.

3.4 Group of Assessors' Statement

The group of assessors create a statement which highlights the subject's strengths and provides recommendations for developments of the subject. In the statement, the group of assessors provides an assessment of each area included in the follow-up (see appendix 1), and provides the grounds on which the assessment is based.

The following three assessments are used:

- Satisfactory: No development areas that risk affecting the quality of the education have been identified. Development areas may have been identified, however, that could strengthen the education further.
- Satisfactory with Reservations: Development areas that need to be addressed to maintain the education's quality have been identified.
- Not Satisfactory: Shortcomings that can seriously affect the quality of the education have been identified.

The statement is to be handed over to the Faculty Board in accordance with the agreed timeline. It shall follow the special template that is provided. Before the statement is completed, the Faculty Board and the representatives of the subject who have participated in the follow-up are given the opportunity to read the statement and comment on any factual errors.

3.5 Faculty Board's Report

The Faculty Board creates a report in which the results of the follow-up are documented. The report is based on the group of assessors' statement.

The results of the follow-up are communicated to the relevant parties within the University and externally (such as external parties who participate in graduate schools). The follow-up report is also published on the University's external website.

3.6 Further Development of the Education

The results of the follow-up are to constitute the foundation of the relevant school's and the University's work with further development of the education. The goals and measures related to the results of the follow-up are to be documented in operational plans and other documents connected to quality assurance procedures in education.

3.7 Feedback of Planned and Implemented Improvement Measures

In cases where the follow-up has resulted in the assessments 'Satisfactory with Reservations' or 'Not Satisfactory' in one or more of the assessment areas, the representatives of the course or study programme (Subject Coordinator, Head of School and Head of Division) are to report planned and implemented improvement measures to the Faculty Board. Feedback is not given for assessment areas deemed 'Satisfactory'.

In assessment areas where follow-up has resulted in the assessment 'Satisfactory with Reservations', feedback is given around a year after the end of the follow-up.

If the assessment 'Not Satisfactory' is given, feedback for these assessment areas is given after around six months[5]. If implemented and/or planned measures aren't deemed sufficient to ensure the quality of the education, the case is passed on to the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor decides, in consultation with the Faculty Board, whether further time is to be given for work with measures, or whether the subject is to be closed.

4 Division of Responsibilities

In the follow-up process, the following responsibilities can be gleaned.

Head of School and Head of Division at the Relevant School

- set aside resources for follow-up at the relevant school and division, mainly in the form of working hours
- participate actively in the follow-up process by participating in the start-up meeting with the group of assessors, contributing to and approving the self-valuation, etc.
- ensure that the results of the follow-up are taken care of and included in the work with developing the third-cycle course or study programme, the school's operational planning, and the school's internal quality assurance procedures
- ensure that planned measures are communicated to the relevant teachers and doctoral students
- ensure that the results of the follow-up and any planned measures for the course or study programme are communicated to the relevant external parties (such as external parties participating in graduate schools)

Subject Coordinators and the Director of PhD Studies

- collate the self-valuation and supply relevant material
- participate actively in the follow-up process by participating in the start-up meeting, interview with the group of assessors, etc.
- take care of and include the results of the follow-up in work with developing the course or study programme

Coordinator of PhD Studies at the Academic Affairs and Student Support Office

- participate in work with collating the self-evaluation, appendices to the self-evaluation, and other materials

[5] If the course or study programme is given the assessment 'Satisfactory with Reservations' in any assessment area, feedback is normally given after around one year. The Head of School and the Dean can, however, agree that feedback is to be given after six months, in connection with feedback for the assessment areas that resulted in the assessment 'Not Satisfactory'.

- contribute to the follow-up process by participating in the start-up meeting and interview with the group of assessors, etc.

Supervisors and Other Teachers in the Course or Study Programme

- participate actively in the follow-up process, for instance by contributing to the creation of the self-evaluation
- participate in interviews at the group of assessors' location visit if needed

Student Union

- participate actively in the follow-up process through their representatives on the Faculty Board, the Doctoral Student Council and the relevant Syllabus Committee
- appoint doctoral students from the course or study programme to participate in interviews with the group of assessors

Support Services Directors

- set aside resources at relevant offices for different kinds of support for the follow-up, such as producing statistics and other factual material, designing system support for producing statistics, and internal and/or external communication of the results of the follow-up

Faculty Board

- implement and document the follow-up
- administrate the group of assessors' location visit
- communicate and make the results of the follow-up available to the representatives of the course or study programme and the relevant doctoral students (also in English, when relevant), and other dissemination of the results of the follow-up in the organisation
- utilise experiences from the follow-up with the purpose of continuously improving the follow-up process

Vice-Chancellor

- include the results of follow-up in university-wide work with developing the University's education, operations and quality systems

Appendix 1: Assessment Areas and Assessment Criteria

The University uses UKÄ's assessment areas and assessment criteria for evaluation of third-cycle education. The Faculty Board may choose to include further assessment areas and assessment criteria.

The below assessment areas and assessment criteria are taken from UKÄ's "Guidelines for the evaluation of third-cycle programmes"[6]. More information about what information is to be provided for each assessment ground can be found in the template for self-valuation provided by the Faculty Board. A general template is available on the staff portal. A specific template is developed for each instance of follow-up in cases where the Faculty Board decides to include further assessment areas and/or assessment grounds.

Assessment Area: Conditions

Assessment Criteria:

The number of supervisors and their collective competence (scientific/artistic, pedagogical) are adequate and in proportion to the course or study programme's volume, content and implementation in the short and long term.

The research/artistic research at the higher education institution is of such quality and extent that third-cycle education can be run on a high scientific/artistic level, and with good educational conditions at large. There is relevant collaboration with the surrounding society, both nationally and internationally.

Assessment Area: Design, Implementation and Results

Assessment Criteria:

The course's or study programme's design and implementation, and assurance through summative assessments, enable doctoral students, once the qualification has been awarded, to demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding, both within the third-cycle subject, and of scientific methodology/artistic research methods in the third-cycle subject.

The course's or study programme's design and implementation, and assurance through summative assessments, enable doctoral students, once the qualification has been awarded, to demonstrate an ability to plan and use adequate methods to perform research and other qualified (artistic) tasks within given timeframes, and to, orally and in writing, in national and international contexts, present and discuss research and research results with authority, in dialogue with the scientific community and society at large. Doctoral students must also demonstrate potential to contribute to society's

[6] https://english.uka.se/download/18.305b44c9164124c6e2a226e/1530101497274/guidelines-evaluation-third-cycle-programmes.pdf (fetched 03-30-2021)

development and support other people's learning in both research and education and other professional contexts.

- The course's or study programme's design and implementation, and assurance through summative assessments, enable doctoral students, once the qualification has been awarded, to demonstrate intellectual independence (artistic integrity) and scientific probity/research probity, and an ability to make research ethical assessments. Doctoral students must also reach in-depth insight concerning science's/art's possibilities and limitations, its role in society, and people's responsibility for how it is used.
- An equalities perspective is taken into consideration, communicated and anchored in the content, design and implementation of the course or study programme.
- The course's or study programme's content, design, implementation and summative assessments are systematically followed up. The results of the follow-up are translated into measures for quality development if needed, and feedback is given to the relevant parties.
- The higher education institution works to ensure that doctoral students complete the course or study programme within the planned programme length.

Assessment Area: Doctoral Student Perspective

Assessment Criteria:

- Doctoral students are given the opportunity to take an active role in the work with developing the course's or study programme's content and implementation.
- The course or study programme ensures a good physical and psychosocial working environment for doctoral students.

Assessment Area: Labour Market and Collaboration

Assessment Criteria:

- The course or study programme is designed and implemented in such a way that it is useful and develops doctoral students' preparedness to meet changes in the labour market, both within and outside of academia.

Appendix 2: The Group of Assessors

The group of assessors consists of two external subject experts, one doctoral student representative, and one representative from the labour market. One of the two external subject experts is appointed chair.

The external subject experts' role is to assess the education from a subject perspective. They must be professors of an area relevant to the subject. The external experts should have good knowledge and experience of the design and implementation of third-cycle studies.

The role of the doctoral student representative is mainly to assess the doctoral student perspective in the subject. The doctoral student must be actively involved in third-cycle studies in an area relevant to the subject, or have recently successfully defended their doctoral thesis.

The role of the labour market representative is mainly to assess the third-cycle course or study programme's usefulness, and how the doctoral students are prepared for a changing labour market from a labour market perspective. The representative must have a Degree of Doctor in an area relevant to the subject. In addition, the representative should have experience of professional collaboration with higher education institutions within the framework of third-cycle education, or of collaboration with graduate Doctors who have been employed at the labour market representative's company, authority or organisation.

Assessors can be proposed by representatives of the third-cycle subject that the follow-up concerns. External assessors are appointed by the Faculty Board. The Board appoints the chair of the group of assessors. Aspects of bias and gender equality shall be taken into consideration when the group of assessors and its chair are appointed. The rules concerning compensation for the assessors can be found in a separate decision.

The collective knowledge and experience of the group of assessors should form the foundation for the joint assessment of the areas included in the follow-up.

The assessors' remit includes

- reviewing the various materials,
- preparing and performing a location visit to the University, at which interviews with doctoral students and representatives of the course or study programme take place,
- summarising their assessments and recommendations in a joint statement in accordance with the provided template and agreed timeline,
- correcting any factual errors after the statement has been shared with the University.

Appendix 3: Schematic Timeline

The below table outlines a schematic timeline for follow-up of courses and study programmes in third-cycle subjects. The timeline normally covers around nine months from the start-up meeting to the finalised report[7].

Date	Activity
Month 1	Start-up meeting is held
Month 1	Factual materials for the self-valuation (statistics, etc.) are collated and made available
Month 3	The external group of assessors is appointed
Month 5	Self-evaluation and other assessment materials are completed and handed over to the external group of assessors
Month 6	External group of assessors' location visit. Interviews with representatives of the course or study programme, doctoral students and relevant directors
Month 7	The group of assessors sends a preliminary statement to the University (for comments on any factual errors)
Month 8	The group of assessors sends a final statement to the University
Month 9	The Faculty Board finalises a report of the follow-up

6 or 12 months after the finalised report[8]	Feedback of planned and implemented measures (in cases where follow-up has resulted in the assessments 'Satisfactory with Reservations' or 'Not Satisfactory' for one or more assessment areas)

[7] Three to six months before the start-up meeting, the Faculty Board invites the relevant school to an information meeting with the purpose of presenting the overall follow-up plan. This meeting is not included in the schematic timeline.
[8] Feedback is given around six months later if the results show shortcomings that could seriously affect the quality of the course or study programme. Otherwise, feedback is given after around 12 months.