



Quality assurance policy

Revised and approved by the University Board of Governors for Halmstad University on February 23, 2009.
Register no. 19-2005-76

According to the Higher Education Act (HL), the university is obliged to conduct education and research, interact with the surrounding community and provide information about its activities. In addition, operations must be adapted to ensure that high quality in education and research is achieved¹.

Documents regarding the mission statement² and the research and education strategy describe the university's common goals. The university's quality assurance policy describes how work with quality assurance is organised and conducted to assure high quality in operations and the way(s) in which the mission statement and strategic goals are to be realised.

What characterises the universities' work with quality assurance?

Work with quality assurance is integrated into all operations at the university. It must be characterised by decisions based on a holistic view, facts, long-term planning, a conscious effort to improve and engaged leadership. Work with quality assurance is ultimately carried out in the daily work of each teacher, researcher, technical and administrative member of staff and student to create the prerequisites for good education, research and collaboration. The quality assurance system systematises and clarifies this work.

Halmstad University has the following overall objectives for work with quality:

- The university must have a well-functioning quality assurance system that is continuously revised.
- Work with quality assurance must lead to continuous improvement of the university's operations.

The system is based on interrelated sub-systems that together form a cohesive entity. The system's primary elements comprise controlling documents, reports and dialogues.

¹ HL 1 chaps. 2§, 4§

² The mission statement 2004-2008—*The multi-disciplinary university for innovation and creativity* is to be revised. At present, *Research and education strategy 2008-2012* serves as a controlling document.

Interrelated quality assurance systems

The university's quality assurance system consists of interrelated sub-systems (see figure 1). They are:

- The general quality assurance system for the entire university
- General systems for core operational areas (education, research, collaboration³)
- Quality assurance systems for the university's operative units (departments, Administration, Library and the Department of External Relations)
- General quality assurance systems for specific aspects (environment, equal opportunity)

The Quality Assurance Council is responsible for coordinating, following up and developing the university's general quality assurance system. Responsibility for the respective sub-systems is divided amongst committees, boards or operational units. The Education Committee is responsible for the general quality assurance system for education. The research boards are responsible for the general quality assurance systems in their respective research areas. The Board of Teacher Education is responsible for the general quality assurance system for teacher training. Through the Department of External Relations, the Vice-Chancellor is responsible for the collaborative efforts not included in research or education. The operative units are responsible for their systems and the councils have responsibility for the environment and equal opportunity for specific aspects.

The university's interrelated quality assurance systems

Controlling documents

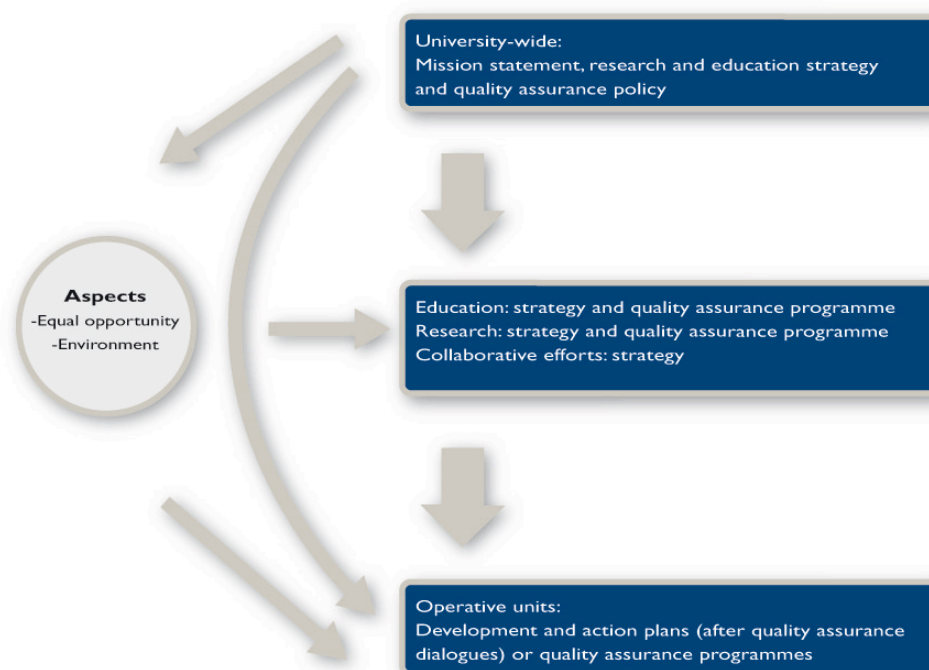


Fig. 1 The university's interrelated quality assurance systems

³ Only encompasses collaborative efforts not included in research and education

Controlling documents

There must be up-to-date (regularly revised) documents describing the university's interrelated quality assurance systems, including:

- Mission statement, the university's general research and education strategy and quality assurance policy
- Education strategy, research strategy and collaborative outreach strategy⁴ (if reification of the university's general strategy documents is necessary)
- Quality assurance programme for the Education Committee, research boards, Board of Teacher Education, Administration, Department of External Relation and the Library
- Policies and plans for specific aspects (Environment, Equal opportunity)
- Action plans for quality assurance dialogues (for the departments)

Decisions pertaining to the university's general controlling documents are made by the University Board of Governors as proposed by the Vice Chancellor. Decisions regarding the general strategy documents for core operational areas are made by the governing bodies responsible for the respective quality assurance systems. Policy document decisions for specific aspects are made by the University Board of Governors as proposed by the Vice Chancellor. The quality assurance programmes must be revised annually and are approved by the responsible committee, department board or by a senior administrator. The action plans for specific aspects are set by the Vice-Chancellor. Planned measures after quality assurance dialogues are set by the Quality Assurance Council after consulting the departments.

There must be measurable objectives for the respective sub-systems for core area operations and for Administration, Library and the boards. These systems must contain key figures that can be used to follow up the progress of the quality assurance work. In addition, the system may also contain descriptive key figures and key figures that can be used to quality assure operations.

The quality assurance programmes must describe the way in which follow up and improvement measures are carried out and the way in which various interested parties such as staff, students and external groups are involved. They must also state how the quality assurance programme is linked to the university's general quality assurance system, report on the primary guidelines and working procedures or refer to documents describing this and contain a clear mission statement of responsibility and procedures for revising the relevant documents.

⁴Only encompasses collaborative efforts not included in research and education

Reports

All committees and boards, the Vice-Chancellor's council(s), Administration, the Department for External Affairs and Library must submit annual quality assurance reports to the Quality Assurance Council. These reports must include proposals for revising the relevant controlling documents (policies, strategies or quality assurance programmes) if this is deemed adequate, key figures, action plans for the coming year and a follow up of the results of the previous year's action plan. See figure 2 for the quality assurance system's reporting channels.

The quality assurance system's organisation and reporting channels

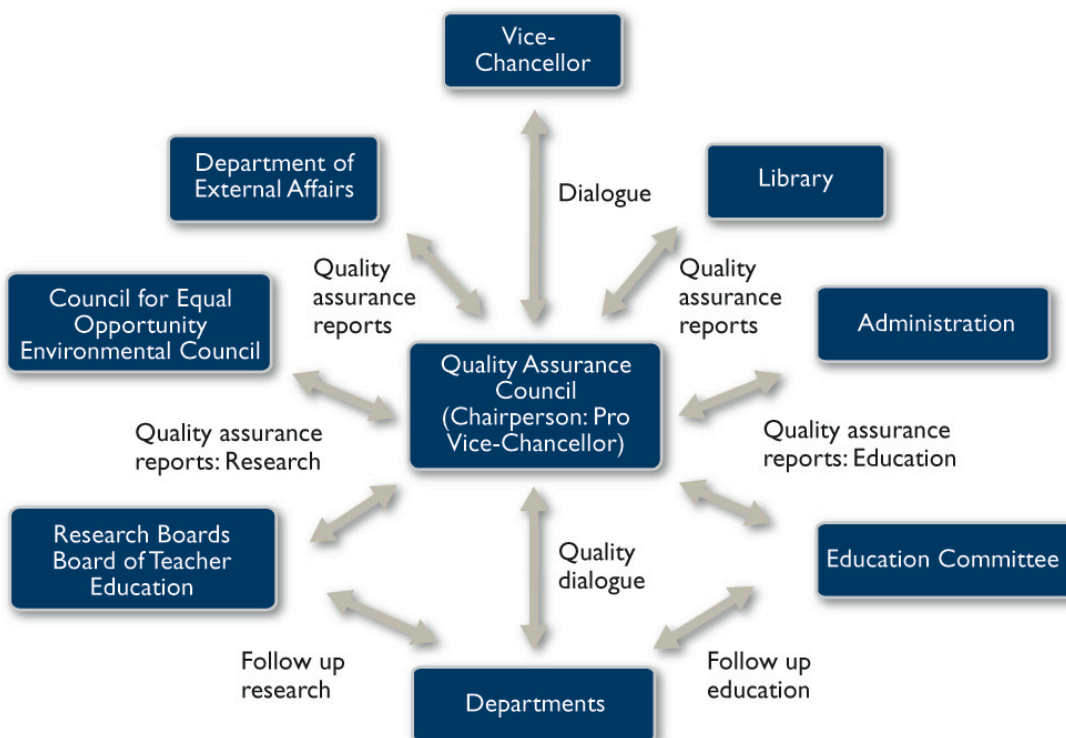


Figure 2: Quality assurance work at Halmstad University
Organisation and reporting channels

Dialogues

Annual quality assurance dialogues between the departments and the Quality Assurance Council must be held. These form the basis for mutual agreements regarding measures to improve quality and assessing the need for changes in the quality assurance system. See figure 3 for the university's general quality assurance system's annual agenda.

Agreements are reached in the dialogues as to what is to be done in the coming year. A great deal of the work is ongoing and long range.

Dialogues should be conducted⁵ in conjunction with the quality assurance reports from committees and boards, Administration, the Department for External Affairs and Library between the Quality Assurance Council and representatives for the respective areas.

Quality assurance follow up by the Quality Assurance Council is done through continuous dialogue with the Vice-Chancellor.

Annual agenda for quality assurance reports and dialogues

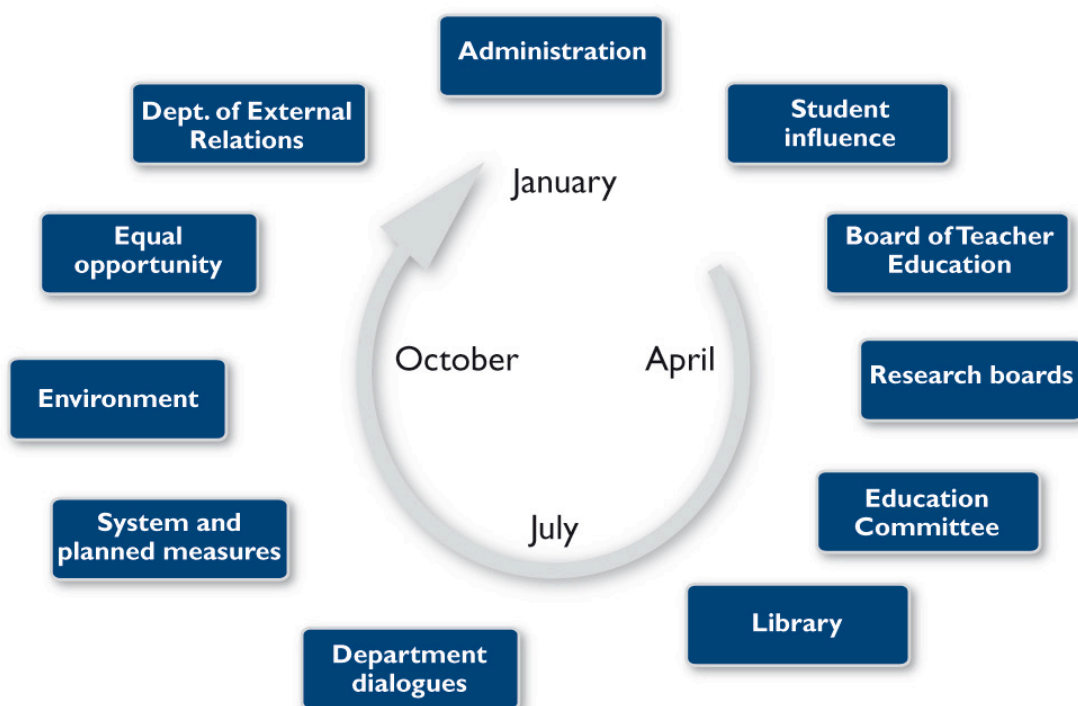


Figure 3: Quality Assurance Council's annual agenda for quality assurance reports and dialogues.

⁵ Initiatives for dialogues is also taken in the quality assurance system's sub-systems. For instance, dialogues are a tool in the research boards' review of the university's research environments and in the departments' internal quality assurance work.

The Quality Assurance Council

The Vice-Chancellor has appointed a special council, the Quality Assurance Council, that in addition to formulating proposals for a general quality development programme and policy, is also responsible for stimulating quality development at the university. The Quality Assurance Council consists of the chairpersons from the collegially elected boards, the Education Committee, the Research boards, the Board of Teacher Education, the president of the student's union and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, who is the chairperson.

The Quality Assurance Council's work with follow up and improvement is focused on the following main points:

- Developing the university's operations in relation to the university's mission statement
- Assuming responsibility for ensuring that the sub-systems interact to form a functioning cohesive entity
- Follow up and coordination of the quality assurance system for the core operational areas
- Follow up and coordination of the quality assurance system for the university's operative units
- Follow up and coordination of the quality assurance system for the specific aspects

The Quality Assurance Council receives annual quality reports and is a partner in the dialogues conducted in conjunction with them. The council also conducts quality dialogues with the departments.

General university tools for follow up

In addition to the follow up that takes place in conjunction with the quality reports and quality dialogues, a number of follow up tools are also used, such as:

- A student barometer, which is conducted every second year.
- A personnel barometer, which is conducted every second year.
- A doctoral candidate mirror, which is conducted every second year.
- Follow up of students two years after having completed their education.
- The strategic objectives as stated in the university's research and education strategy with respect to publication and the degree of external financing.

Relevant documents

In addition to the documents listed in this policy, the university's working plan and its decision-making plan are also relevant to the university's quality assurance policy.

Availability

Current controlling documents for work with quality assurance and the annual agenda for reports and dialogues are available at www.hh.se/omhogskolan/kvalitet.

February 2009

Tasks in the quality assurance system for the university's various organisational units

Tasks for which the University Board of Governors has primary responsibility

Mission statement

The university's general research and education strategy

Quality assurance policy

Policy for equal opportunity

Environmental policy

Tasks for which the Quality Assurance Council has primary responsibility

A functioning quality assurance system

Follow up of work with quality assurance: committees, boards, departments, Administration, Library

Conducting the personnel barometer

Conducting the student barometer

The university's general development processes ("themes")

Tasks for which the boards have primary responsibility

Strategies for the respective areas of responsibility if reifying the university's general strategy documents is called for

Quality assurance programmes for the respective areas of responsibility

Doctoral candidate barometer (research boards/Board of Teacher Education)

Quality report to the Quality Assurance Council

Tasks for which the Vice-Chancellor's other councils have primary responsibility

Plans for the specific aspects (Environment and Equal opportunity)

Quality reports to the Quality Assurance Council

Tasks for which the departments have primary responsibility

General

1. Documents describing the department's work with quality assurance that include the points listed below and anything else related to the department's work with quality assurance and quality development. The document must contain priorities for the future and explain how the work will be followed up systematically.
2. Quality dialogues with the Quality Assurance Council.

Education

1. Development of new areas of education (courses and programmes)
2. Develop/revise/phase out of existing courses/programmes

3. Quality assurance of courses and programmes
 - Curricula including learning objectives
 - How course objective are realised (teaching, teaching aids, exams, course evaluation, course development, teaching forms, examination forms)
 - Program council
4. Quality aspects of the training
 - Gender and diversity
 - Sustainable development
 - Collaborative outreach
 - Internationalisation
5. Issues related to students, student influence, etc.
 - Follow up of the student barometer
 - Follow up of the 2-year follow up
 - Rights and obligations for students and teachers relating to exams
 - Gender equality and diversity
 - Teacher and technical and administrative personnel support

Research

1. Possible objectives for the department's research
2. Information pertaining to the department's research environment(s) to the research boards/Board of Teacher Education
3. Follow up of research students

Staff

1. Competence (recruiting and competence development)
2. Staff evaluations
3. Working environment (physical and psychosocial)
4. Follow up of the personnel barometer

Tasks for which the Library has primary responsibility

Quality assurance programme (including certain general university-wide tasks)
Quality report to the Quality Assurance Council

Tasks for which the Department of External Relations has primary responsibility

Proposals for an interaction strategy
Quality assurance programme for the unit's work
Quality report to the Quality Assurance Council

Tasks for which Administration has primary responsibility

Quality assurance programme for operations in Administration's departments (including certain general university-wide tasks)
Quality report to the Quality Assurance Council

