

Evaluation of research and researchers in Sweden and at Uppsala University

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Evaluation of research in Sweden

National context



The national quality assurance system in Sweden (since 2017)

Higher education institutions

...develop and conduct research – and conduct evaluations of research and research environments



...in line with...



Swedish higher education authority

...reviews institutions' QA system for research (NEW!)



Swedish research council



...reviews quality and impact of research in selected areas (NEW!), and clinical research conducted in the ALF* regions

*) An agreement between central government and seven regions (= public health care providers), on medical education and clinical research

Joint framework for HEI's research quality assurance and enhancement (2019)



The Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF)

- The framework is:
 - a *lowest common denominator*, on which all the HEIs can agree, regarding QA and QE of research
 - based on what is known to be conducive to high-quality research, national regulation and international frameworks of research evaluation





Joint framework for HEI's research quality assurance and enhancement (cont.)

Basic components of a HEI's quality system for research:

- *Description of the system* - established and generally available
- *Continuous monitoring* - collect, analyse and use information on research quality and relevance, to serve as a basis for QE, prioritisation and strategic decisions
- *Periodic reviews* – research and research environments regularly undergo in depth assessment from both a national and an international perspective, through peer review

Themes to be covered by the quality system:

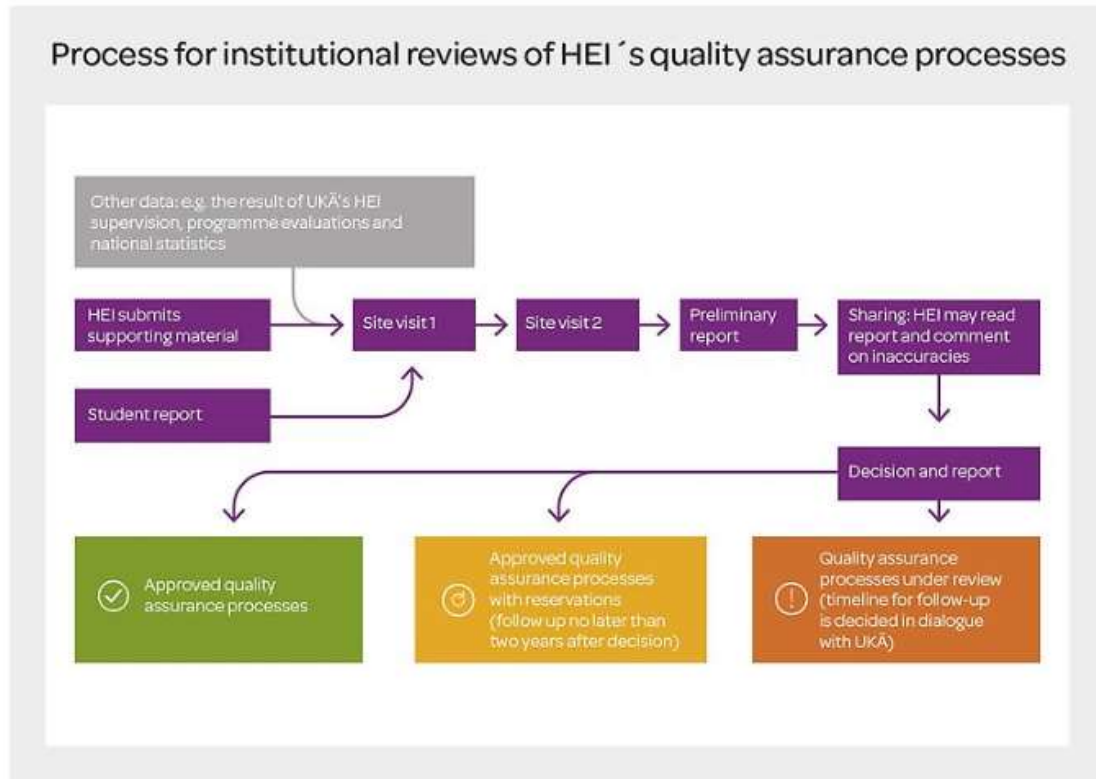
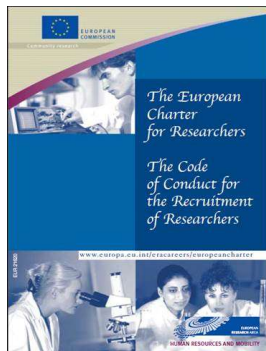
- Development and renewal of research
- Good research practice
- External collaboration
- Recruitment, career paths and career support
- Support activities and research infrastructure
- Connection between research and education





Swedish Higher Education Authority's institutional review of HEI's quality systems for research

- Assess how well HEIs' QA processes safeguard quality of research by highlighting strengths and areas in need of improvement
- Based on *Swedish Higher Education Act* and the *Swedish Higher Education Ordinance*, *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* and the *Joint framework for HEI's research quality assurance and enhancement systems*



Swedish Higher Education Authority's institutional review (contd.)

Assessment areas

1. Governance, organisation and implementation of the **quality system**

- Structure of the quality system
- Student and staff involvement at all levels
- Main processes for identifying and acting upon deficiencies
- Periodic reviews on research and research environments (incl. peer review and ability to act on recommendations)

2. Preconditions

- Capacity of the HEI to monitor, develop and maintain an appropriate environment for researchers
- Assessment criteria - promote/ensure/create:
 - good research practice
 - development and renewal of research/research environments
 - freedom of research
 - connection research and education
 - dissemination and utilisation of research results
 - competence provision
 - support for the research and research infrastructures
 - gender equality with regard to research conditions and implementation





The Swedish research council's evaluations

Evaluation of selected research areas

- AIM: National picture of **research quality and societal impact** (comparisons)
- Based on desk analysis:
 - Publication lists
 - Selected publications for peer review
 - Bibliometrics (where possible)
 - Quantitative data on personnel
- The HEIs' produce case studies for evaluation of impact
- International peer review panel evaluates based on the above

Evaluation of clinical research in the ALF regions

- AIM: Underpin allocation of government funds to the regions for contributing to medical education, clinical research and development of health care
- Elaborated evaluation procedure (grading):
 - Quality of research
 - Clinical significance and societal impact
 - Research conditions

Assessments of applications for competitive funding (biggest part)

Coordination by dialogue is everything

SUHF
Sveriges universitet- & högskoleförbund



Vetenskapsrådet

Other agencies
assessing
research



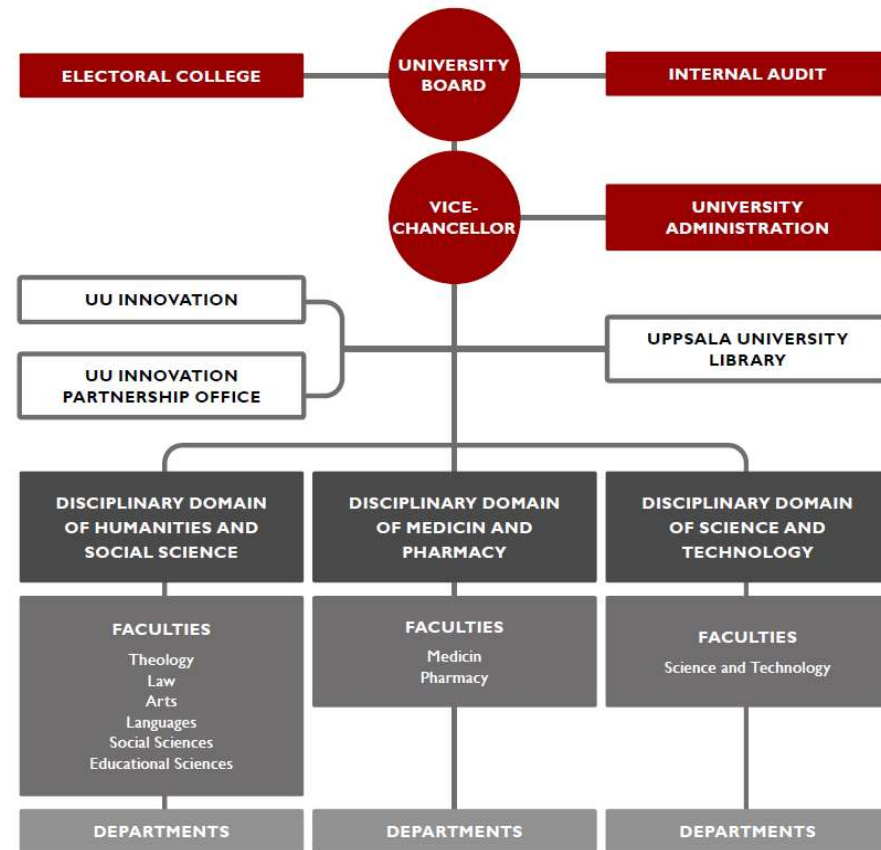
Evaluation of research and researchers at Uppsala University



QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AT UPPSALA UNIVERSITY



<https://www.uu.se/en/about-uu/quality-at-uu/>



- The University Board and the Vice Chancellor takes decisions on overall aims and strategies
- The disciplinary domains/faculties are responsible for quality in education and research

Point of departure

- All assessments are to be qualitative....
....but quantitative data are used to underpin assessments, and trigger interesting questions and discussions
- Do not burden faculty with too much assessments/evaluations – takes time from the research itself and there is a risk of control in an undesirable way
- Too much weight on evaluation of "past performance" can be too conservative



QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AT UPPSALA UNIVERSITY



ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENTS



- **Quality culture and collegiality – the most important “quality tools”**
- Strong research environments – most important precondition for high quality
- Teachers, researchers, students and leaders form the quality culture together with colleagues in their everyday activities
- Quality and relevance are continuously assessed in internal and external processes, nationally and internationally



SKILLS AND CAREER

Robust processes for recruitment and promotion

- The fundamental regulations for appointments are defined in the *Higher Education Act* and the *Higher Education Ordinance* – 2nd in Europe in staffing autonomy*
- *Appointment Regulations for Uppsala University* includes criteria for recruitment and promotion, which are designed to meet the needs of the University with regard to research and teaching
- Each disciplinary domain/faculty has more specified guidelines and criteria for recruitment and promotion
- As a general rule, lecturers and professors are recruited in competition after external expert assessment, which includes a careful assessment of:
 - Research and teaching skills (incl. 10-week course in T&L in HE/eq.)
 - Leadership-, development- and collaboration and outreach skills

*) According to the [University Autonomy Tool](#):

SKILLS AND CAREER

Continuous monitoring of employees by annual dialogues

- Employee dialogue
 - between manager and employee, focusing on current situation, the future, and development in relation to the University's expectations and employees own ambitions
 - culminate in a jointly agreed plan
- Salary dialogue
 - each employee is to be given the opportunity to have a salary dialogue with his or her manager, where the employee's work output is jointly assessed (manager has last say)
 - the salary is set according to the assessment

...there are criteria, but they are not always used...

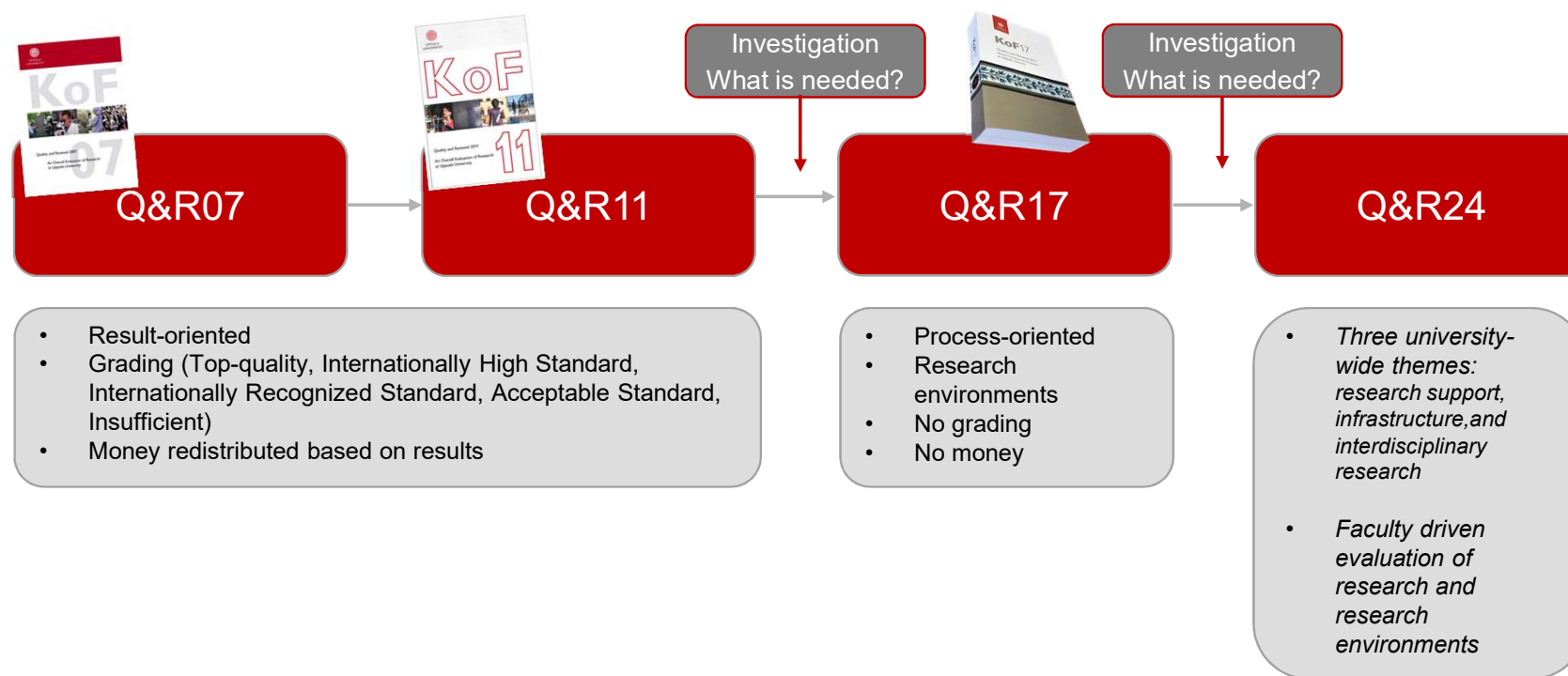
PEER REVIEW

Peer review of research

- In the local research environment and in the international academic community
- Integrated QA by peer review at seminars, when applying for grants, prior to publishing articles, at conferences etc.

REVIEWS AND EVALUATIONS

Quality & Renewal - approximately every 6th year - self-initiated university-wide research evaluation



Common to all:

- Self-evaluation
- Peer review - international expert panels
- Background material: basic data, bibliometric analyses, survey to e.g. researchers (KoF17 and KoF24)

Self-assessment KoF17



Themes

- Recruitment
- Leadership
- Academic culture
- Infrastructure
- Funding
- Collaboration
- Publication
- Career structure and mobility
- Feedback and evaluation
- Research-teaching linkages
- Internationalisation
- Campus Gotland
- Specific themes added by the faculties

- For every theme, following questions were considered:
 - How are you *currently working* to make the [key factor] contribute to high quality research and renewal?
 - What *strengths* and *weakness* do you see in your current approach?
 - In what way could your current approach be *further improved*?
 - Are there any on going or planned *new initiatives*?
 - Are you in need of further *support* (administrative support, removal of administrative barriers etc.)? If, so what?
- Departments were encouraged to:
 - Be self-critical and reflective in a nuanced way
 - Refer to the results from the internet-based survey, the bibliometric data, the basic data

ACTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

Annual process for planning and follow-up

- Integrates results and actions taken in relation to different in regular operational annual planning and follow-up processes at all levels within the University – including Vice-Chancellors annual quality dialogue with vice-rectors

Additionally...

- Preparatory study before next research evaluation with gathering of previous experiences
- Follow-up by external peer review of measures taken at University, faculty and department level



EU AGREEMENT ON REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

- UU comply with many of the requirements, e.g.
 - Qualitative assessment of research – Q&R, recruitment and promotion
- Challenges
 - Quantitative measures are to be entirely avoided – impact factors, H-index and ranking
 - Increased value when assessing research and researchers, e.g.
 - Open science and open data
 - Interdisciplinary research
 - Collaboration with surrounding society
 - Peer review assignments
 - Leadership skills





UPPSALA UNIVERSITET

Kvalitet, kunskap och kreativitet sedan 1477

Swedish Higher Education Authority's institutional review of HEI's quality systems for research(contd.)



Evaluation material

- Self-evaluation from the HEI
- Student and doctoral student report from the student and doctoral student unions
- Two site visits with accompanying interviews
- Documentation about audit trails

Documents to be included with the self-evaluation:

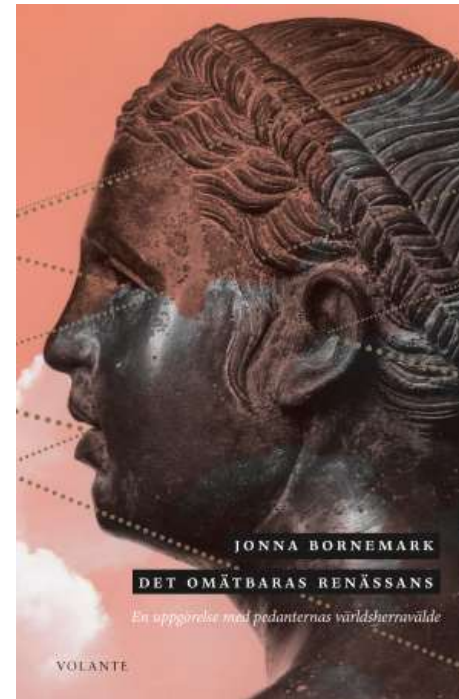
- Established procedure for quality assurance and improving the quality of research
- The HEI's strategy(s) for research
- The HEI's latest annual report
- Organizational chart
- Work plan and delegation of authority for quality work on research
- Compilation of the key steering documents for quality assurance work for research (such as action plans).

Beware the risk of...

- excessive measuring
- excessive documentation
- double realities
- evaluation fatigue



The renaissance of the immeasurable



...including professional judgement
and the unique context