



A European and national perspective on quality assurance of higher education

The development of higher education in Sweden

Overview

- Higher education in Sweden
- The Bologna process
- European standard and guidelines
- The Swedish national quality assurance system
- The quality assurance system at KTH

Short overview of the Swedish higher education system

Short history of Swedish higher education

- The first Swedish university was founded in 1477. This was Uppsala University and to begin with it was mainly intended to train priests.
- The Scientific Revolution took hold in the 17th and 18th centuries. Reason and science took centre stage, interest in studying medicine and science grew.
- Sweden derived its ideals from the Humboldt University of Berlin, which stressed that education and research must go hand-in-hand and develop together.
- 1873 women were allowed to study at universities.
- During the 19th century, the practical-oriented institutions of higher education emerged parallel with existing universities. These would later be incorporated into the higher education system.
- Swedish higher education evolved at a rapid pace during the 20th century.
- The Swedish national union of students was founded in 1921.
- 1977 higher education reform
- 1993 higher education reform

Rules and regulation of higher education in Sweden

- The overall responsibility of higher education and research rests with the Swedish parliament (Riksdag) and the government.
- They determine:
 - What rules to apply in the sector
 - Its aims and guidelines
 - Allocate the resources for higher education
- The Higher Education Act
 - Basic provisions on the operations of HEI
 - Framework for their organisation and governance
- The Higher Education ordinance (linked to the act)
 - Regulations on course syllabuses, program syllabuses
 - Grading and qualifications
 - The descriptors for each qualification are listed in separate annexes

Higher education institutions (HEI)

- 50 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Sweden
- The largest university has 45 000 students, the smallest 100
- Majority are public authorities, accountable to the Ministry of education and research
- There is also independent education providers, that have been granted degree-awarding powers.
- HEI have considerable autonomy within a system of management by objectives. They decide in areas such as:
 - organization
 - internal allocation of resources
 - what research they conduct
 - educational offerings
 - educational content and design
 - number of admitted students

Higher education institutions task

- HEIs task:
 - is to provide education that is based upon scholarly or artistic foundation and proven practice,
 - conduct scholarly or artistic research,
 - and to collaborate with the surrounding community to make use of knowledge and competence acquired at the HEI.

Higher education

- All courses and programs are placed in one of three cycles:
 - First, Bachelor (3-year)
 - Second, Master (2-year)
 - Third, Doctoral studies (5-year)
- Universities provide third-cycle education, the others have to apply for entitlement to award third-cycle qualifications.
- The Swedish higher education authority (UKA) exercises supervision of the HEIs, which means ensuring compliance with the statutes and regulations that apply to the higher-education area.

Bologna process

Bologna process: background and purpose

- Launched in 1999 as an agreement between 29 European countries, including Sweden
- Now: 46 countries
- One fundamental element was to create a European area for higher education (European Higher Education Area – EHEA)

Bologna process: aims

The overarching aims of creating the EHEA was to;

- enhance Europe’s competitiveness as an educational continent
- encourage mobility between the European educational systems and labour markets,
- create a transparent and comparable qualification structure and,
- lay the groundwork for international recognition of different qualifications.

Concrete aims (most important):

- Clear and comparable qualifications. Joint reference frameworks that describe the level of a qualification in the educational system and the requirement to issue a Diploma Supplement as an annex to a qualification certificate.
- Three educational cycles that are based on and require each other.
- A comparable credit system to facilitate student mobility.
- Greater mobility for students and staff, for instance through mutual recognition of studies and professional practice.
- European cooperation on quality assurance, for instance through common standards and guidelines.

ENQA and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

- ENQA was established in 2000
- The aim is to contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education, and to act as a major driving force for the development of quality assurance across all the Bologna Process signatory countries.
- ENQA members are higher education quality assurance agencies based in the European Higher Education Area.
- One (of three) main goals for ENQA is to drive the development of external quality assurance
- To reach this goal ENQA has set up The European standard and guidelines (ESG).

The European Standards and Guidelines, ESG

- The ESG provide the framework for internal and external quality assurance. They were adopted at the EHEA Ministerial Conference in 2015.
- The Standards set out the agreed and accepted practice, while the Guidelines describe how the standards might be implemented.
- ESG are divided into three sections:
 - Part One, internal quality assurance, which is the task for HEIs to uphold and adhere to.
 - Part Two, external quality assurance, which, in Sweden, is the task for the government body UKÄ to uphold and adhere to.
 - Part Three, quality assurance agencies

Part 1: Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design and approval of programmes
- 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- 1.5 Teaching staff
- 1.6 Learning resources and student support
- 1.7 Information management
- 1.8 Public information
- 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

1.8 Public information

Standard: Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up -to date and readily accessible.

Guidelines: Information on institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, institutions provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer and the selection criteria for them, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students as well as graduate employment information.

Quality assurance at the national level: UKÄ

The national QA-system

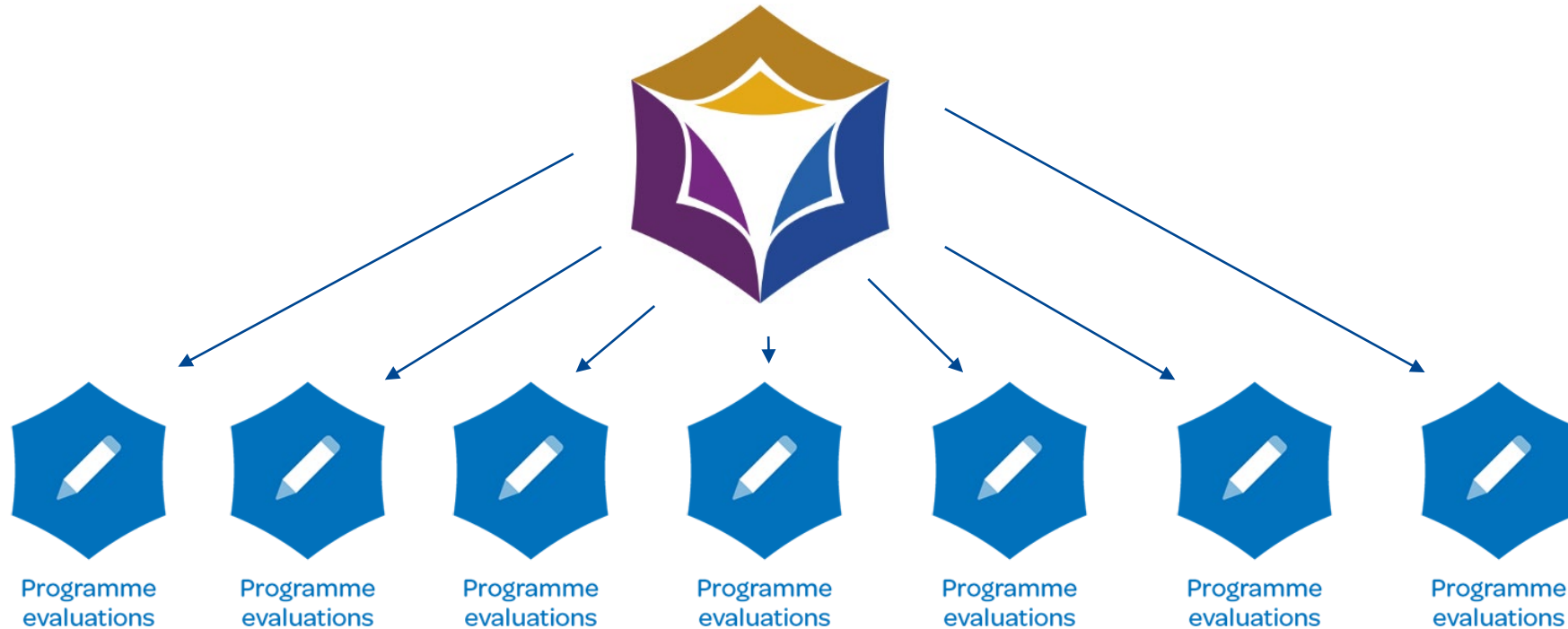


The Higher Education
Authority (UKÄ)

- The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) is an independent government agency .
- “Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) have a shared responsibility for quality assurance in higher education and research.”
- UKÄ emphasizes the importance of following international principles for quality assurance in the quality assurance system.

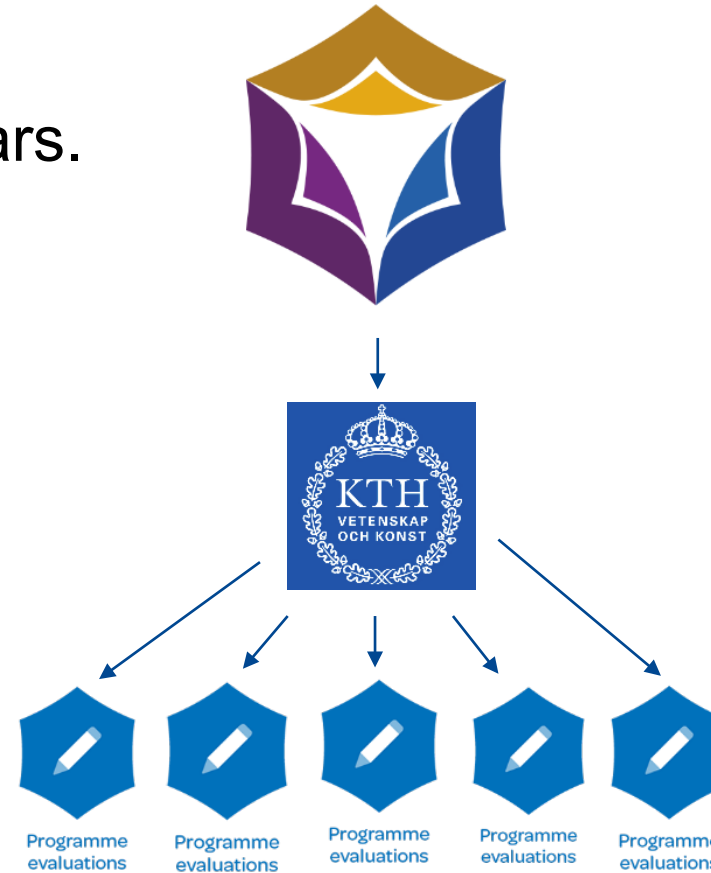
A transformed national QA system

- There was a shift in focus from program evaluations...



A new national QA system

- ...to institutional reviews every 6 years.



The national QA-system



The Higher Education
Authority



Programme
evaluations



Institutional reviews of the
HEIs' quality assurance
processes



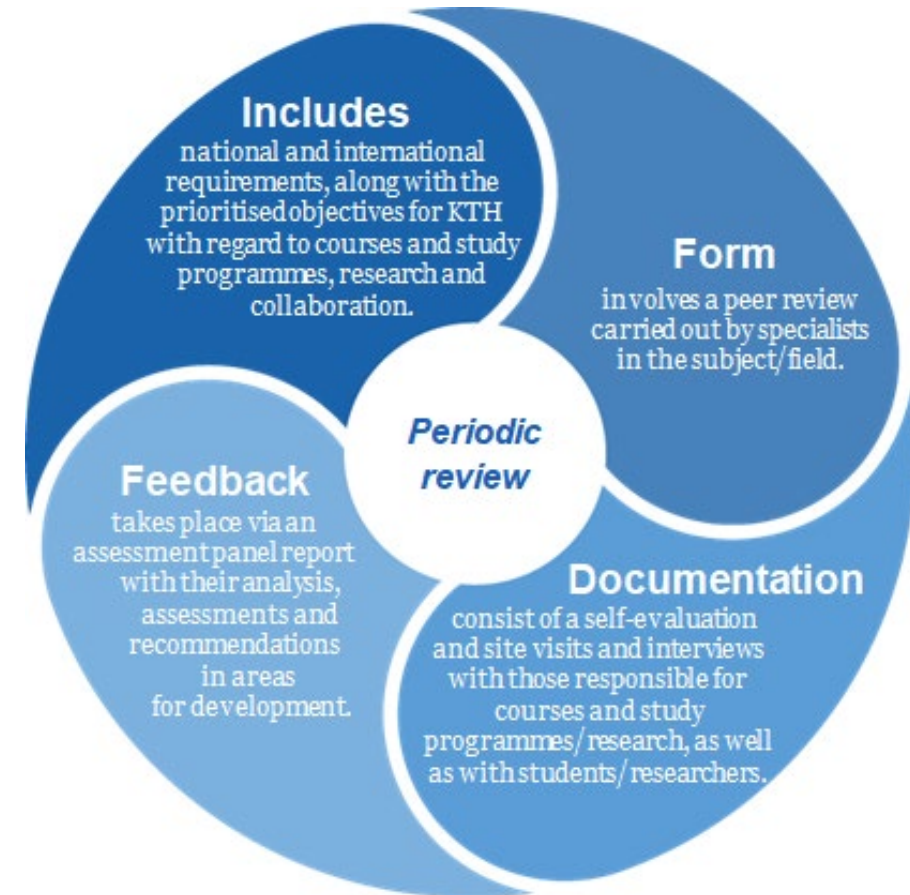
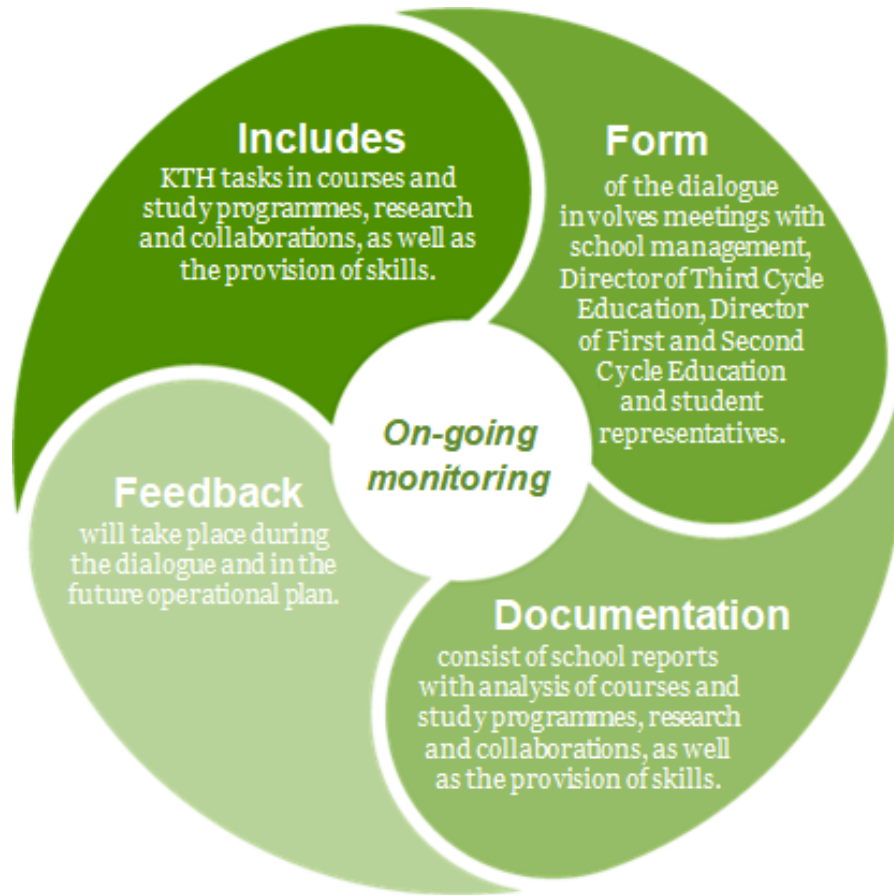
Appraisal of applications
for degree-awarding
powers



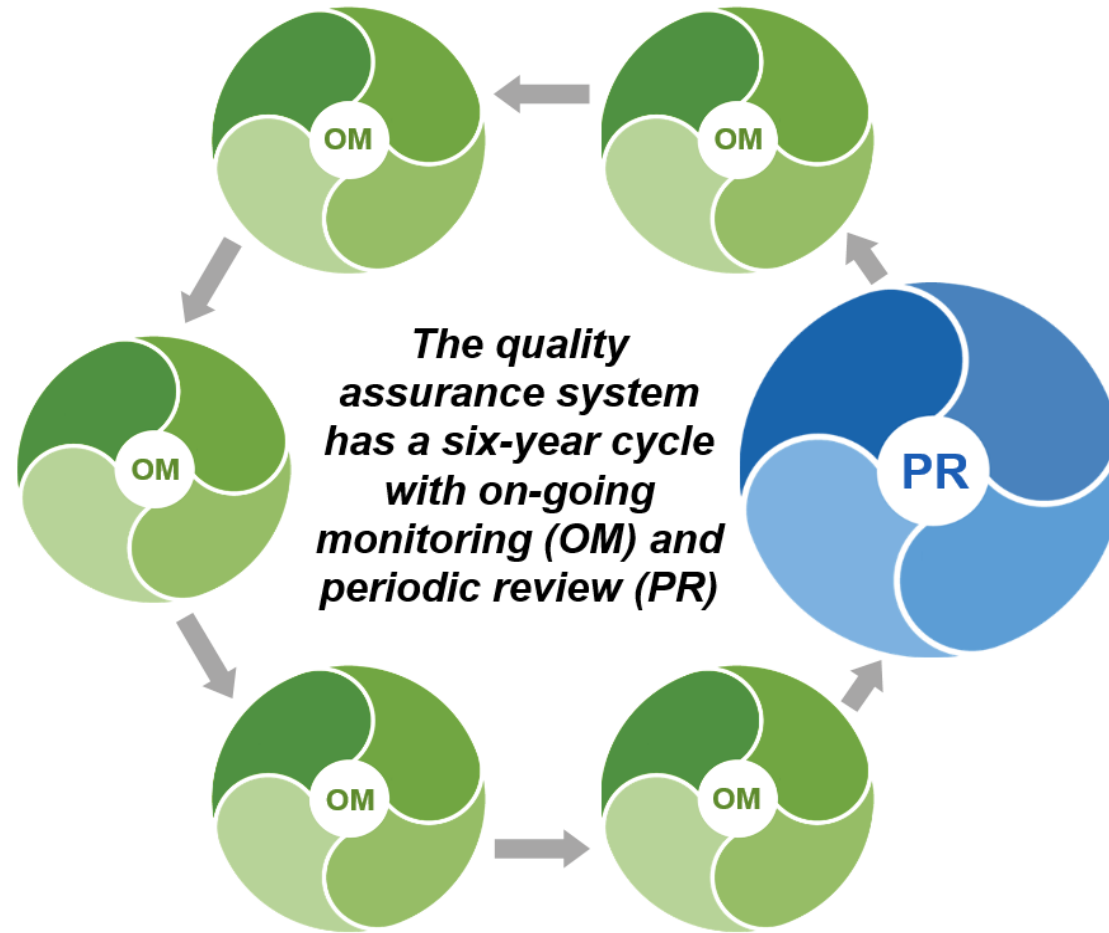
Thematic
evaluations

Quality assurance at KTH

Central components in KTH:s system



Six-year cycle



On-going monitoring (yearly)

- Includes education on all levels, research and faculty development.
- Analysis → aggregated report → internal experts' analyzes → quality dialogue → report from Dean/Vice Dean of Faculty → president's dialogue with school management → operational plan (?)

Periodic review (every sixth year)

- Pilot in 2021: program leading to a Degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering
- Self-evaluation and external peer-review with site visit and interviews
- Report from peer-review group leading to an action plan for each program
- Follow-up in on-going monitoring
- Actions on a strategic level

Assessment areas

- KTH uses the following assessment areas in the on-going monitoring and periodic review (the same as UKÄ uses):
 - governance and organization
 - preconditions
 - design, implementation and outcomes
 - gender equality
 - student and doctoral student perspective
 - working life and collaboration.

Review of the quality assurance system for education

Purpose and goals

- Driving forces:
 - the quality assurance and quality development activities are not optimal for the development of programs
 - a pilot of periodic review needs to be assessed
 - 2023 is the last year of the running the six-year cycle at KTH
 - UKÄ is revising the national quality assurance system
 - Overarching goals is, that the quality assurance system should be more
 - effective and appropriate
 - adapted to KTH:s activities and organisation
 - meet external demands
- More added value to KTH:s management on all levels, teachers and students

Some conclusions

- Clarification of the purpose of different quality assurance activities
- New assessment areas that support the development of courses and programmes and secures the fulfilment of goals
- Improved course evaluation and course development processes/system
- Increased student involvement in the quality assurance work
- Improved data basis for analyses about courses and programs
- More feedback throughout the organisation

Thank you for listening!

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Websites :

- The Swedish council for higher education, UHR:
[Start - Swedish Council for Higher Education \(uhr.se\)](http://uhr.se)
- ENQA
<https://www.enqa.eu/>
- The Swedish higher education authority, UKÄ:
[english.uka.se - Swedish Higher Education Authority](http://english.uka.se)