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Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

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Annex to: Vice-Chancellor's decision on systematic quality assurance of courses and programmes at SLU, SLU ID: SLU.ua.2018.1.1.2-501

## Instructions for systematic quality assurance of courses and programmes at SLU

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### 1. Introduction

This document provides guidance on how systematic quality assurance of courses and programmes is to be conducted at SLU. The instructions imply application of the university's chosen framework for quality assurance ([SLU ID: SLU.ua 2016.1.1.2-4643](#)). The instructions encompass programmes and courses at first-cycle, second-cycle and doctoral level.

### 2. Division of roles

The primary responsibility for the administration and promotion of SLU's systematic quality assurance process for education is in the Division of Planning, according to the [university administration's 2017–2020 strategy and the](#)

[operational plan for 2018.](#)

The faculty boards and programme boards are expected to do the following:

- Prior to the quality dialogues, and for each programme to be reviewed, provide documentation that is designed according to the instructions provided.
- Ensure that the staff that are involved in the educational process are provided with the opportunity to contribute to the work with the supporting documentation. The experiences and views of teachers/supervisors should be captured and taken advantage of in an appropriate forum (e.g. quality improvement seminars or workshops with supervisors and directors of studies/programme directors of studies, course coordinators and teachers).
- Plan the work so that student representative(s)/doctoral student(s) are provided the opportunity to participate in the work with the supporting documentation.
- Based on the given framework, appoint participants to the quality dialogues.
- Implement the developmental measures identified in the present-state analysis and in the quality dialogue, according to the decisions of the vice-chancellor and the Board of Education, and to report back according to planned follow-up.

Sluss/the Sluss PhD Student Council (DN) is expected to:

- Appoint student/doctoral student representatives to participate in the quality dialogues.
- Contribute to effective communication between relevant student/doctoral student representatives and the team leaders, as well as other participating groups.
- Provide comments on the respective reports submitted by the FN and PN.

The external reviewer is expected to:

- Provide an external perspective in the review of SLU's programmes.

The heads of division within the university administration are expected to:

- Prior to the quality dialogues, prepare supporting documents that are designed according to the instructions provided.
- Ensure that employees working with support for the educational process are provided with the opportunity to contribute to the work on the documentation.
- Based on the given framework, appoint participants to the quality dialogues.
- Implement the developmental measures identified in the present-state analysis and under the quality dialogue, according to the decision by the head of university administration, and to report back according to planned follow-up.

### 3. Six-year plan for systematic quality assurance of all programmes

According to the newly-developed national quality assurance system for higher education from the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UKÄ), each higher education institution must ensure that the quality of courses and programmes is assured, and a plan for this is to be reported. SLU's quality assurance is based on the six-year plans for the review of doctoral programmes and undergraduate/Master's programmes, as presented in figures 1 and 2, and again later in more detail in annex 6.1. The plan for examining undergraduate and Master's programmes is based on the following principles:

- Quality assurance is in itself quality-driving and should be seen as part of the regular development work.
- Programmes of the same type (long professional programmes, short professional and undergraduate programmes, Master's programmes, etc.) are examined simultaneously regardless of which programme board they belong to.
- Professional programmes are reviewed early in the process as it is important that high quality can be ensured, as the programmes are unique to SLU and important for the national skills supply.
- The programmes included in the 2017 pilot round are not to be reviewed again during the current six-year period – as long as follow-up shows that development measures are implemented according to plan.
- The programmes that have recently undergone an external audit are included in the regular quality assurance round, but do not need to develop new supporting documentation. In these cases, the quality dialogue has the results of the external audit as a starting point.
- Programmes offered jointly by SLU and other higher education institutions are examined primarily by the institution which issues the degree. In cases where another higher education institution issues a degree, the programme is not encompassed within a quality dialogue, however the results of the other institution's review are still being followed in the SLU quality assurance system (at the appropriate time within the SLU's follow-up cycle; see 4. point g).

	PILOT	ORDINARY OPERATION					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
SLU review	Quality area 4	Quality areas 1-2	Quality areas 3-4	Quality areas 5-6	Quality areas 1-2	Quality areas 3-4	Quality areas 5-6
SLU follow-ups		Previous year's dialogues	Previous year's dialogues	Previous year's dialogues	Previous year's dialogues	Previous year's dialogues	Previous year's dialogues
UKÄ audits		Legal - supervision of the HEI	Review of SLU's quality assurance efforts. Thematic evaluation.	Doctoral prg chemistry	Thematic evaluation		

**Fig. 1.** Six-year plan for quality assurance of SLU's doctoral programmes.

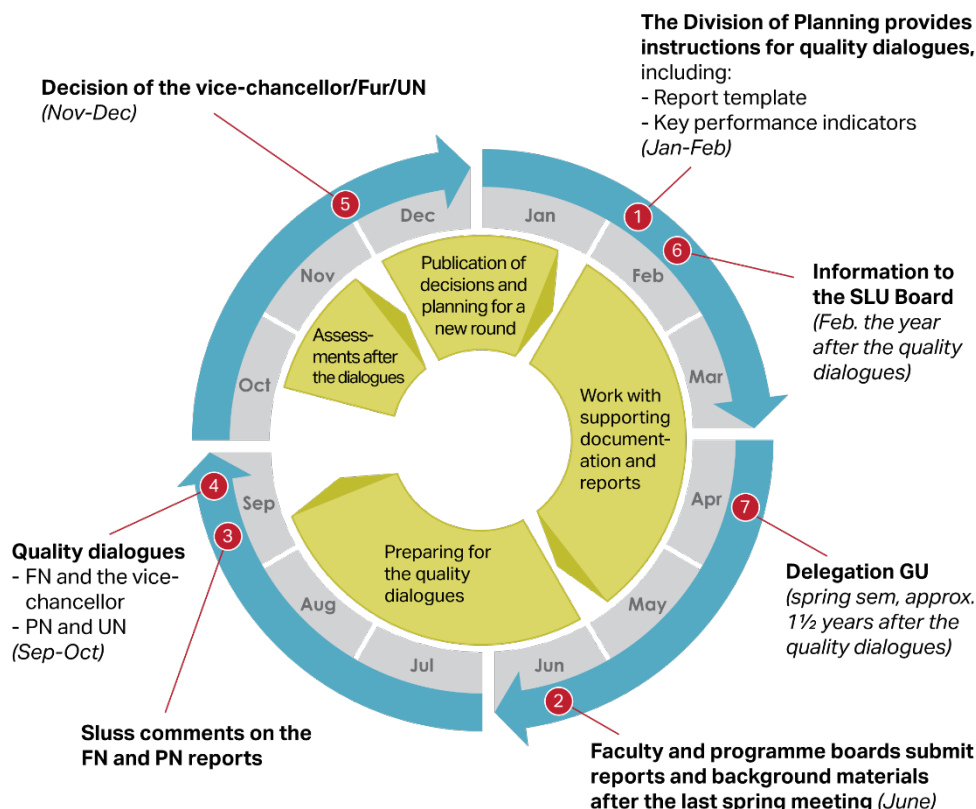
	PILOT	ORDINARY OPERATION					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
SLU review, program type	Mixed	Long professional prgs	Short professional and undergrad prgs	Master's prgs	Master's prgs	Master's prgs	Other (freestanding courses, foundation year prgs, contract edu., shared prgs, evaluation)
SLU follow-ups			Prgs in the pilot	2018 programmes	2019 programmes	2020 programmes	2021 programmes
UKÄ audits		Legal - supervision of the HEI	Review of SLU's quality assurance efforts. Thematic evaluation.		Thematic evaluation		

**Fig. 2.** Six-year plan for quality assurance of SLU's undergraduate and Master's programmes.

The university's quality assurance model is used in regular operations for the first time in 2018. It is important that there is a readiness in all relevant parts of SLU to make adjustments to the six-year plans, to the extent that adjustments may need to be made. Where appropriate, the Division of Planning shall discuss any proposals for changes with the educational organisation well in advance before the changes are decided and come into force.

#### 4. Annual process for systematic quality assurance of SLU's degree programmes

The annual cycle of the systematic quality assurance of SLU's programmes is summarised in figure 3 below.



**Fig. 3.** Annual cycle for quality assurance of SLU programmes at all levels.

FN = faculty board; PN = programme board; UN = Board of Education; Fur = Council for PhD Education; GU = undergraduate and Master's programmes.

The annual cycle for the systematic quality assurance consists of seven phases:

- a) **Initiation of this year's quality assurance** (January–February): The Division of Planning will provide and distribute via email and through web publishing instructions and other documents needed (see Appendix 6.2), as well as the dates for quality dialogues with faculty boards (FN), programme boards (PN) and the PhD Student Council/Sluss.

The long-term ambition is that the instructions will be distributed in early February each year. However, in 2018, it will not be done until March, after the pilot project has been completed.

- b) **Present-state analysis** (February–June): The FN and PN analyse the quality of the educational process, based on SLU's quality standards and in accordance with given instructions and supporting documents. The results are presented in questionnaires and as a brief summary report per programme.
- c) **Preparations for quality dialogues** (June–September): All involved prepare for quality dialogues, assuming that the faculty/programme boards, chairpersons of the Fur/UN and Sluss/DN at the beginning of the dialogue raise the results of the present-state analysis that they want to focus on during the dialogue (see agenda in annex 6.2). Sluss/DN submits written

comments to the submitted reports and appoints student representatives to participate in the quality dialogues.

- d) **Quality dialogues** (September–October): Based on the state of the present-state analysis and proposed development measures, the quality of the programmes is discussed. In order to promote a good and open dialogue, the number of participants is limited so that the dialogue is conducted in a relatively small group. Those present should therefore involve other interested parties, such as members of boards and others involved at the respective faculty, in both the preparatory work and subsequent work, and inform them of the results of the dialogue as conducted. The units that are expected to participate in the dialogues for each level are shown below.

- Undergraduate and Master's programmes (for each programme)
  - Programme board: chair, programme director of studies, teacher representative, faculty programme director and/or education officer.
  - Sluss: one student representative
  - UN: chair, secretary
  - External reviewer: perhaps UN's external member (a suggestion).
- Doctoral programmes
  - Faculty board: chair or vice-chair of the doctoral education committee, director(s) of studies for doctoral programmes, representative for supervisors, faculty programme directors responsible for doctoral programmes and/or education officers for doctoral programmes.
  - PhD Student Council: one doctoral student representative
  - Fir: chair, secretary.
  - External reviewer: may be the UN's external member.

The dialogues are chaired by the chairpersons of the UN and Fur. A UN/Fur secretary takes general memoranda notes, which are reviewed and approved by all participants. The faculties themselves decide if the dean is to participate.

- e) **Assessment** (October–December): Based on the quality dialogues and the present-state analyses, the chair of the Fur/UN assesses the programmes examined and, if necessary, proposes quality-enhancing development measures. The head of university administration participates in this work, focusing on the development needs of support activities. The preliminary assessment is then reviewed and approved by the respective faculty board/programme board, which is provided with the opportunity to comment before they discuss the quality reports in the Fur and UN.
- f) **Feedback** (December–February): The result of quality assurance, i.e. Fur and UN assessment and adopted development measures, are shared with

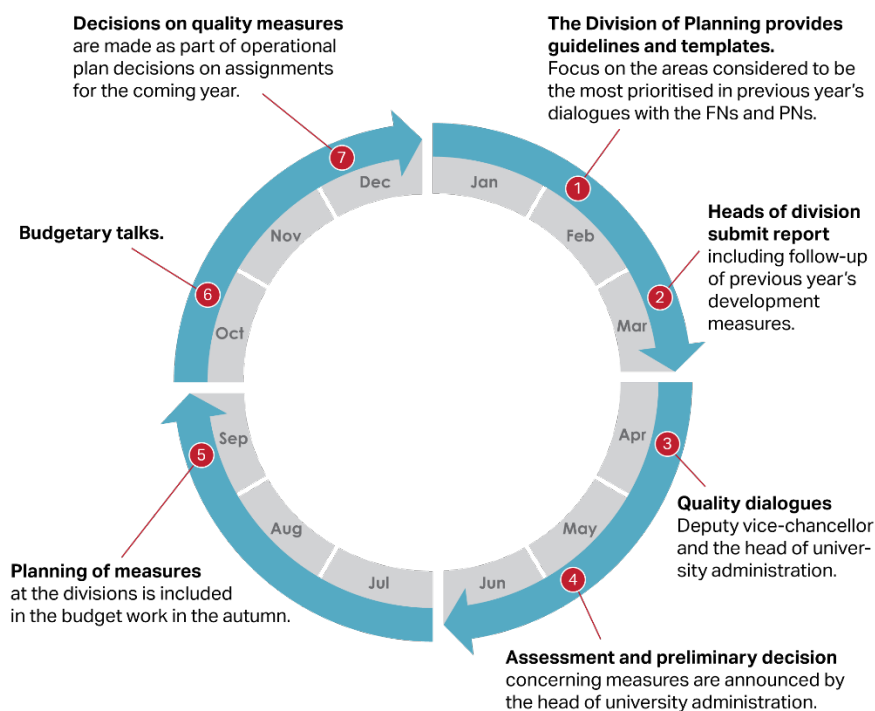
the education officers and published in a memorandum published on the web. Assessments and actions related to support activities are dealt with within the following year's quality assurance process within the university administration (see Section 5). The SLU Board is informed at its February meeting.

- g) **Follow-ups:** A summary check is made as below for the different levels.
- First-cycle and second-cycle courses and study programmes In connection with the UN's spring conference about 18 months after each quality dialogue.
  - Third-cycle courses and study programmes In connection with quality dialogues in subsequent years.

## 5. Annual process for systematic quality assurance of support for SLU programmes

In order to ensure good quality in the support for education processes and activities, quality dialogues are conducted with parts of the university administration. Initially, plans are made for annual dialogues with the Division of Facility Management, the Division of IT, the Division of Communication and the Division of Educational Affairs.

These quality dialogues will focus on issues and areas of audit identified in connection with previous year's reviews and other assessments such as, for example, internal audit reports.



**Fig. 4.** Annual cycle for quality assurance of support activities, i.e. support for SLU programmes at all three levels.

The systematic quality assurance of support activities includes the following phases:

- a) **Initiation of this year's quality assurance** (January–February): The Division of Planning provides and distributes instructions as well as the other documents required (see annex 6.2), as well as the date of quality dialogues with the relevant division managers. In March 2018, the instructions will be distributed after the pilot project has been completed, but the ambition is that it will be done in early February each year.
- b) **Present-state analysis** (February): Analysis of the activities based on issued instructions and supporting documents provided. The results are reported in questionnaires and as a brief summary report per programme.
- c) **Quality improvement dialogues** (March–April): Based on analysis and proposed development measures, the quality of the support activities is discussed. The participants are representatives of the Fur/UN (chair), the head of university administration, the division concerned and the Division of Planning (as secretary of Fur/UN).
- d) **Assessment** (April–May): Based on quality dialogues and present-state analyses, the head of university administration assesses the quality of the audited support activities. If there is a need for quality-enhancing development measures, they are proposed.
- e) **Feedback** (June–December): The head of university administration's assessments will be announced to the heads of division in June, for preparation of possible proposals for action, and will be made public by means of a memorandum posted on the web. In December, following the budget talks (Oct–Nov), when there is an opportunity to discuss major development measures, the head of university administration makes the decisions concerning specific assignments for each division as part of the regular decision about the upcoming year's operational plan for the university administration.
- f) **Follow-up**: Done in connection with subsequent year's quality dialogues.



## 6. Annexes

### 6.1. Detailed six-year plan for quality review of SLU programmes at undergraduate and Master's level

Undergraduate and Master's programmes: "Six-year cycle: Schedule to ensure that all degree programmes undergo quality assurance in accordance with the framework within a six-year period" (according to the project plan: Designing quality dialogues for courses and programmes, 28/02/2017; red text indicates that the programme was included in the 2017 pilot round).

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|--|--|--|---|
| <b>1. Long professional programmes</b><br>1.1. Agronomist - Economics & Management (PN-NJ)<br>1.2. Agronomist - Animal Science (PN-VH)<br><b>1.3. Agronomist - Rural Development (PN-NJ)</b><br>1.4. Agronomist - Food Science (PN-NJ)<br>1.5. Agronomist - Soil & Plant Sciences (PN-NJ)<br>1.6. Forest Science (PN-S)<br>1.7. Landscape Architecture Alnarp (PN-LT)<br>1.8. Landscape Architecture Ultuna (PN-LT)<br>1.9. Veterinary Medicine (PN-VH)<br>1.10. Energy Systems Engineering (PN-NJ)<br>1.11. Environmental & Water Engineering (PN-NJ) | <b>2. Short programmes, professional &amp; BSc</b><br>2.1. Biology & Environm. Science (PN-NJ)<br>2.2. Veterinary Nursing (PN-VH)<br>2.3. Economics - Sust. Developm. (PN-NJ)<br>2.4. Ethology & Animal Welfare (PN-VH)<br>2.5. Equine Science (PN-VH)<br><b>2.6. Landscape Engineer (PN-LT)</b><br>2.7. Agriculture & Rural Manag. (PN-NJ)<br>2.8. Forest Management (PN-S)<br>2.9. Companion & Sports Animals (PN-VH)<br>2.10. Horticultural Management – Garden Design (PN-LT)<br>2.11. Horticultural Managem. – Gardening & Horticultural Production (PN-LT) | <b>3. Master's Programmes</b><br>3.1. Agricultural Economics & Management (PN-NJ)<br>3.2. AFEPA (PN-NJ)<br>3.3. Agroecology (PN-LT)<br><b>3.4. Animal Science (PN-VH)</b><br>3.5. EnvEuro (PN-NJ)<br>3.6. Environmental Communication & Management (PN-NJ)<br>3.7. Environmental Economics & Management (PN-NJ)<br><b>3.8. Euroforester (PN-S)</b><br>3.9. Sustainable Urban Management (PN-LT)<br>3.10. Horticultural Science (PN-LT)<br>3.11. Landscape Architecture (PN-LT)<br>3.12. Landscape Architecture for Sustainable Urbanisation (PN-LT)<br>3.13. Management of Fish & Wildlife Populations (PN-S)<br>3.14. Outdoor Environments for Health & Well-being (PN-LT)<br>3.15. Plant Biology for Sustainable Production (PN-S)<br>3.16. Rural Development & Natural Resource Management (PN-NJ)<br>[3.17. Soil & Water Management (PN-NJ)]<br>3.18. Soil, Water & Environment (PN-NJ)<br>3.19. Sustainable Development (PN-NJ)<br>3.20. Sustainable Food Systems (PN-NJ) | <b>4. Freestanding courses, contract / commissioned programmes, foundation year programme, etc.</b> |
|--|--|--|---|

SLU review	LT: 1.7, 1.8 NJ: 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 S: 1.6 VH: 1.2, 1.9*	LT: 2.10, 2.11 NJ: 2.1, 2.3, 2.7 (3.19)** S: 2.8 VH: 2.2, 2.4	LT: 3.3, 3.10 NJ: 3.1, 3.7 S: 3.13 VH: 2.5	LT: 3.14 NJ: 3.6, 3.20 (1.10, 1.11)** S: 3.15 VH: 2.9	LT: 3.11, 3.12 NJ: 3.16, 3.18 S: VH:	Freestanding courses, contract. edu., foundation. year, Tu-vet, joint programmes***, general check/evaluation
SLU-follow-up (overall)		LT: 2.6. NJ: 1.3. S: 3.8. VH: 3.4.	LT: 1.7, 1.8 NJ: 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 S: 1.6 VH: 1.2, 1.9*	LT: 2.10, 2.11 NJ: 2.1, 2.3, 2.7, 3.19** S: 2.8 VH: 2.2, 2.4	LT: 3.3, 3.10 NJ: 3.1, 3.7 S: 3.13 VH: 2.5	LT: 3.14 NJ: 1.10**, 1.11**, 3.6, 3.20 S: 3.15 VH: 2.9
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023

↑  
UKÄ legal supervision of Higher Education Institutions

↑  
UKÄ review of quality assurance + thematic evaluation

↑  
UKÄ thematic evaluation

\* Quality dialogue based on the results of the external ESEVT evaluation..

\*\*Joint programme where Uppsala University issues the degree and reviews.

\*\*\*Joint programmes where SLU issues the exam. Others are followed up the appropriate year.

## 6.2 Documents to be submitted within the framework of the systematic quality assurance work

All documents are made available on the SLU staff web. FU = doctoral programmes; GU = undergraduate and Master's programmes

<b>Document type</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Key performance indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key performance indicators from the pilot round (<a href="#">FU</a> and <a href="#">GU</a>) are to be updated and supplemented with information about the number of registered students.</li> </ul>	Division of Planning
<b>Instructions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the work with the present-state analysis and report. <a href="#">The instructions from the pilot round</a> are reviewed and updated, and include instructions for the SWOT analysis and an invitation to report how the documentation has been developed and anchored.</li> <li>• Agenda for the quality dialogues. Same structure as during the pilot round:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction and presentation round</li> <li>2. FN/PN/Uadm present what they want to focus on during the dialogue (max. 15 min.)</li> <li>3. Sluss presents what they want to focus on during the dialogue (max. 5 min.)</li> <li>4. Dialogue on the quality of the educational process and the proposed measures: desired effect, timetable for implementation, etc.</li> <li>5. Conclusion</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<div>Division of Planning</div>     <div>Division of Planning</div>
<b>Document templates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire: Made in Excel or the equivalent until a web-based tool suitable for the purpose has been developed. The terminology and the wording, as well as formation and scope of the questions in the template for the pilot round, are to be reviewed (<a href="#">PhD</a> and <a href="#">GU</a>).</li> <li>• Template for the FNs/PNs and the summary report of the support activities. Templates for the pilot round are to be updated when necessary.</li> </ul>	<div>Division of Planning</div>     <div>Division of Planning</div>
<b>Documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memoranda notes from each dialogue</li> </ul>	Secretaries of Fur/UN
<b>Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary reports of the faculty/programme boards and the support activities.</li> <li>• Sluss/DN comments on FN/PN reports.</li> </ul>	<div>Faculty boards /programme boards/heads of division</div> <div>Sluss/DN</div>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality reports (Fur/UN/head of university administration assessments and proposals for development measures).</li> <li>• Memorandum (quality reports and Fur/UN decisions explained in context).</li> </ul>	Fur/UN/head of university administration  Division of Planning
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