Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Division of Planning
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MEMORANDUM   SLU ID: SLU ua 2019.1.1.2-92

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Manual for the quality assurance of degree programmes at SLU 2019

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1   Purpose and target group

This document contains practical instructions for the implementation of SLU quality assurance of courses and programmes in 2019. The instructions describe how the overall governing documents Framework for the quality assurance of courses and programmes at SLU (SLU ID: SLU.ua 2016.1.1.2-4643) and Instructions for systematic quality assurance of courses and programmes at SLU are to be applied (SLU ID: SLU ua 2018.1.1.2-501). The target group is the faculty boards (FN), programme boards (PN) and Sluss as well as other employees and students participating in the 2019 quality assurance of programmes.

2   Programmes included in the 2019 quality assurance project

In 2019, the following programmes are included in the quality assurance project:

Third-cycle/doctoral programmes
- Quality areas 3–4

First-cycle and second-cycle programmes

PN-LT
1. Horticultural Management: Garden Design
2. Horticultural Management: Gardening and Horticultural Production

PN-NJ
3. Agricultural and Rural Management
4. Agricultural Programme - Economics and Management.
5. Biology and Environmental Science
6. Economics and Management – Sustainable Development

PN-S
7. Forest Management

PN-VH
8. Ethology and Animal Welfare
9. Veterinary Nursing

3   Important dates

13 June	Reports and questionnaires from the faculty boards (FN) and programme boards (PN) to be submitted (deadline)
14 June	Reports from FN and PN sent to Sluss for comments
13 Sept.	Sluss submits its comments (deadline)
23 Sept.	Quality dialogues (detailed information will be published here: Time frames 2019)
12 Dec.	UN decision about quality reports
12 Dec. (prel.)	FUR decision about quality reports

4   Supporting documentation which is to be submitted

Within the framework of quality assurance, please submit the following (send to helena.eklund.snall@slu.se):

4.1   Faculty boards and programme boards

- **Filled in questionnaire.** The questionnaire is a tool for faculty boards and programme boards to structurally assess various aspects of the programme, regarding both content and delivery.

  The overall goal is to support a total status analysis of the programme's strengths and weaknesses, where identifying needs for development measures is an important component. The status analysis is to be presented in the report which is discussed during the quality dialogues (see below). The completed questionnaire will be included as background material in the dialogues, but will not be discussed at the meeting unless the need arises.

  Faculty and other staff who participate in and influence how the programme is delivered should be given the opportunity to contribute experiences and views during the course of work. The experiences and views of teachers and supervisors can be captured in a suitable forum, such as a quality seminar or a quality improvement workshop. The work should

be planned so that student representatives/doctoral student representatives can also participate. Figures 1–2 below illustrate who should be included in the work. Every FN and PN are free to design their own work model/ a process that results in systematic and inclusive quality assurance.
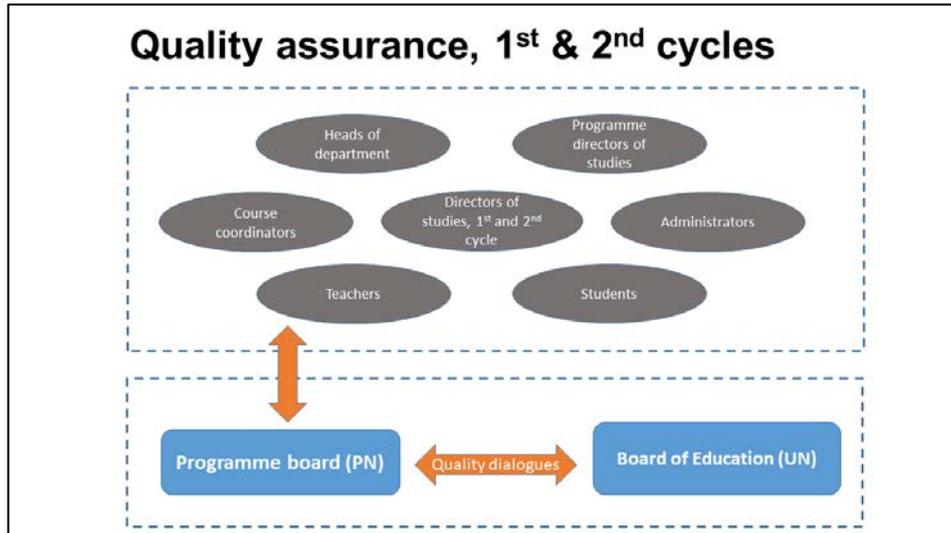

Fig 1. Illustration of who should be given the opportunity to contribute to the quality assurance of undergraduate and Master's programmes (1st and 2nd cycles).
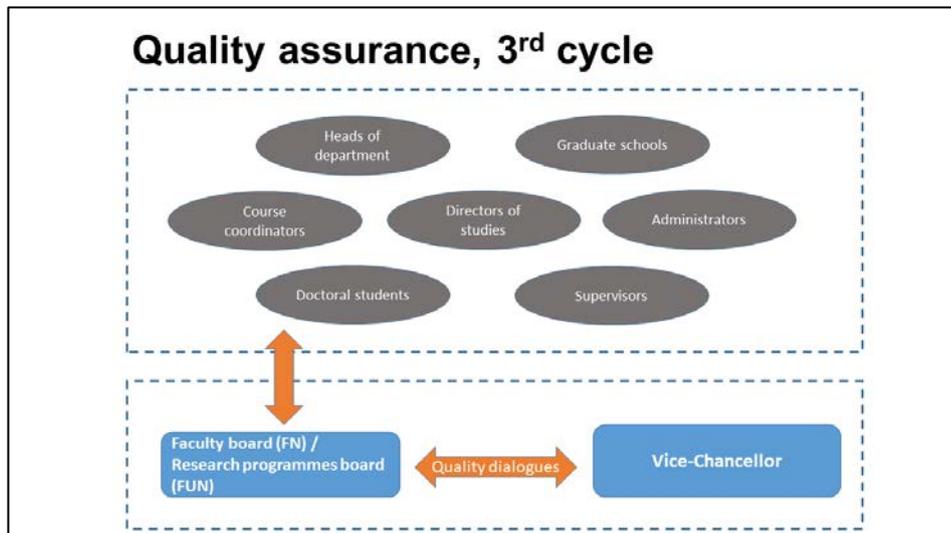

Fig 2. Illustration of those who should be given the opportunity to contribute to the quality assurance of doctoral programmes (3rd cycle).

The questionnaire is available as a Word template (can be accessed via this link) and in Netigate (can be accessed via the respective faculty programme directors/faculty officers).

Comments to the questionnaire:

- The questionnaire is based on SLU's established quality areas and associated standards (see Framework for the quality assurance of courses and study programmes at SLU).

- The programme should be assessed in relation to each standard. The assessment is written in a free text box and used for the status analysis presented in the report.

- To support the assessment, there are a number of indicators and questions for each standard. The questions are answered in checkboxes based on three fixed alternatives: [Yes (functions well); To a certain extent (could be improved); No (remedial measures are needed)]. The questions are only intended as guidance and other aspects may also be relevant to the FN's/PN's assessment.

- The questions are of both a general and a programme-specific nature. Some matters are outwith the remit of the faculty/programme boards. Instead, responsibility rests with another part of the university. However, the idea is that the faculty and programme boards should take into account general issues as well, from their own perspective, as the answers can provide valuable information about how such things are working or not from the perspective of the boards. During the spring semester 2020, parts of the university administration will also be covered by the quality assurance work, and this work will be based on areas and development needs identified by faculty and programme boards.

- As background material for the questionnaire, there is a compilation of statistics (key performance indicators) for doctoral and undergraduate/Master's programmes respectively. These indicators should be used for the analysis work and give those involved a common view of the programme from different perspectives. There is no specific link between all key indicators and questions to be answered.

- **A short report** on the programme with a present status analysis. The report should be concise (max 5 pages) and include three parts as outlined below. A special Word template will be used and can be accessed via [this link](#)).

   i. A concise present status analysis[1] of the programme that includes a SWOT analysis[2]. The analysis should be based on the assessments in the questionnaire and the statistics, and FNs/PNs are expected to present an overall evaluation of the quality of the programme in question. Any needs for development and improvement should also

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[1] This is called "present status analysis" (*nulägesanalys*) in order not to be confused with the Swedish Higher Education Authority's (UKÄ) more comprehensive "self-evaluations" (*självvärderingar*).
[2] **SWOT**, which stands for **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats, is a planning tool. It is a strategic review of the analysis object to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

be described. Based on this analysis, the most important development measures (see section ii below) will be identified.

For the SWOT analysis, the table in the template is used. A guideline is 1–3 points per box (write directly in the boxes). By means of the SWOT analysis, the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, internal and external, are mapped. Strengths and weaknesses are often related to internal factors, while opportunities and threats may more often be related to external factors. What is internal and external may vary.

ii.   A brief <u>description of the work</u> on questionnaires, report and anchoring of the activities, and who has contributed.

iii.   <u>Proposals for development measures</u> for increased quality in education. Here are suggestions for the most important measures, in order of priority, to develop the quality of programmes. The proposals may be short-term measures (approx. one year) or long term (three to six years). Accountability, the desired effect as well as an assessment of timeframes must be provided for each proposal.

Following the implementation of the dialogues, the chair of UN/FUR decides which actions to prioritise.

4.2   Sluss

- Sluss has the possibility to submit **an overall comment** on each report from the faculty boards and the programme boards. Sluss comments are open-ended (no template is available).

For each dialogue, the following documents about the relevant course/programme is available:
1. *Report from the faculty board/programme board*
2. *Sluss's comments on the report*
3. *The filled-in questionnaire*
4. *Statistics summary (key performance indicators)*
5. *Results from the Student Welfare Survey/ PhD Student Satisfaction Survey*

The report and SLU's comment on the report will be the primary supporting documents for the quality dialogues.

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5   About the SLU quality assurance system

SLU's system for quality assurance is designed to meet the requirements of the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) as well as the university's own need for quality assurance. The system aims to promote a culture where all education continually undergoes strategic development and improvement. The point of departure is that the responsibility is shared within the university, in that:

- faculties and departments are responsible for delivering high-quality programmes;
- the university administration is responsible for providing faculties, departments and students with adequate support and service of high quality;
- the university management has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the university's overall performance is of high quality.

The students also play an important role in that they give feedback on programmes and participate on boards and committees that prepare or take decisions that have bearing on programmes.

The different parts of SLU's quality assurance system aim to:
- when applicable, identify and highlight deficiencies, weaknesses and/or needs for development measures within education and related support functions – *present status analysis in the report, based on the assessments in the questionnaire*;
- when needed, identify, implement and follow up measures to increase the quality – *proposed development measures that are identified in the questionnaire and prioritised in the report, follow-up after 1.5 and 6 years respectively, after each quality dialogue;*
- make available a forum for structured discussion, based on joint/shared knowledge (i.e. documents that have been produced specifically for the purpose), between those responsible for education at different levels – *quality dialogues*;
- make available a forum for structured discussion about the support and service provided by the university administration in relation to the needs of faculties and departments – *quality dialogues with divisions within the university administration, which are based on the results of the quality assurance*;
- give the university management an overall picture of the quality of education and the prerequisites for providing high-quality education – *the system for quality assurance in general*.