



Manual for the quality assurance of degree programmes at SLU 2022

(Instructions for doctoral education will be provided in a separate document)

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1 New for 2022

The aim of SLU's quality assurance of degree programmes and courses is to support a culture within the whole university where the programmes and courses continuously undergo strategic development and improvement. Also, the quality assurance work itself need to be developed and improved, which means a gradual adaptation of processes and supporting documents based on the experiences made. During its meeting in December 2021, the Board of Education (UN) expressed that the quality of the present state-analyses need to be improved. Above all, in-depth and more self-critical analysis was requested.

As a first step, before a more comprehensive review is conducted preparatory to next six-year cycle (starting 2024), and to give programme boards (PN) and programme directors of study (PSR) better conditions to fulfil the expectations of UN, the manual and template for the programme-specific present state-analysis that PN/PSR is to produce are modified. It mainly means a clarification of the expected division of responsibilities and some changes regarding the scope and disposition of the report:

- The maximum number of pages have been increased to 12.
- The present state-analysis must begin with a brief background description of the programme and its conditions.
- Revised instruction texts in this document and in the template provide increased guidance to PN and PSR regarding the division of responsibilities,

the expected focus on the present state-analysis and how development measures are to be described.

When a programme is given in English, the present-state analysis must be written in English to allow all students and teachers to participate in the quality assurance work.

2 The process

Spring semester

PN has the overall responsibility for submitting good quality documents to UN. PSR is responsible for presenting a proposal for the present state-analysis (see 5.1), which PN then approves after consultation with PSR. The faculty board (FN) must have the opportunity to comment on the present state-analysis.

Everyone who participates in the planning and implementation of a particular degree programme, including *student representatives appointed by SLUSS*, must have the opportunity to contribute with reflections and participate in discussions about the programme in question. A questionnaire (“dialogue tool”) must be used to support the reflections and discussions (see 5.1). The completed questionnaire is submitted to PN together with the present state-analysis. Based on these conditions, each PN is free to design a working method or a process that leads to systematics and participation in the work with the documents.

Autumn semester

The quality dialogues, which takes place between representatives of UN and involved PN, faculty, department(s) and students, are mainly based on the present state-analysis. The completed questionnaire and other documentation provided by the Division of Planning constitute background material. The quality dialogue gives PSR, PN and other participants a forum to highlight to UN and the university management both strengths and successes as well as shortcomings and difficulties regarding the work with SLU’s programmes and courses.

After the dialogues, the UN chair proposes, in a so-called quality report, which development measures should be prioritised. UN then approves the quality report.

3 Programmes included in the 2022 quality assurance project¹

In 2022, the following first-cycle and second-cycle programmes are included in the quality assurance project:

PN-LT

1. *Landscape Architecture*
2. *Landscape Architecture for Sustainable Urbanisation*

PN-NJ

3. *Rural Development and Natural Resource Management*
4. *Soil, Water and Environment*

PN-S

5. *Forest Ecology and Sustainable Management*

¹ For doctoral education, please see specific instructions.

4 Important dates

10 June	Present state-analyses and questionnaires from the programme boards (PN) to be submitted
13 June	Present state-analyses from PN sent to SLUSS for comments
At the latest one week before the respective dialogue	SLUSS submit their comments
Sept.-	Quality dialogues (will be booked via Outlook)
15 Dec.	UN decision about quality reports

5 Supporting documentation which is to be submitted

5.1 Programme boards (PN)

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

- **A present state-analysis²**. It should be relatively short (max 12 pages) and comprise four parts as outlined below. A special Word template must be used (can be accessed via [this link](#)). As mentioned above, PN has the overall responsibility for the present state-analysis. PSR is responsible for producing a proposal for the present state-analysis, which PN then approves after consultation with PSR. FN must have the opportunity to comment on the analysis.
 - i. **Background description**, must give a brief, summary picture of the programme's purpose and prerequisites.
 - ii. **SWOT analysis³**, based on the assessments in the completed questionnaire and other documents provided by the Division of Planning, must be inserted in the table in the template. 1–3 items should be written per box. By means of the SWOT analysis, the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, internal and external, are mapped. The items raised here must also be addressed in the programme analysis.
 - iii. **Programme analysis** with an overall assessment and proposals of development areas. It must be based on the SWOT-analysis, the assessments in the questionnaire within the six quality areas, the compilation of statistics and other information that is of significant importance.
 - It is PN's responsibility to ensure that the analysis is in-depth and provides a nuanced and accurate picture of the programme's strengths and weaknesses, and that the most important areas of development are identified.

² Called "present status analysis" to avoid confusion as regards the Swedish Higher Education Authority's (UKÄ) more comprehensive self-evaluations.

³ SWOT, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, is a planning tool for making a strategic review of the object in question, to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

- The analysis and areas of development should primarily focus on aspects that relate to the implementation of teaching and are included in the assignments, within the framework of existing resources, of those responsible for the programme⁴. Areas that are the responsibility of, e.g. actors within the university administration, may be addressed if they are important for the programme, but PSR/PN should avoid listing general measures with non-specific responsibility.
- The development measures should be prioritised so that it is clear what is considered to be most important.
- For each identified development area, a plan for significant development measures and associated activities must be proposed. Occasional minor activities do not need to be reported. Each significant development area must be described as concretely as possible with regard to:
 - Measure and purpose (activities/efforts to be done and why (rationale))
 - Responsibility (for it being done)
 - Implementation (how to do it and by whom)
 - Time frames (when to do it)
 - Results (expected effects)

The proposals may be short-term measures (about one year) or long term (about three to six years).

iv. A brief description of the work, on the questionnaire, present state-analysis and anchoring of the activities, and who has contributed.

- **Filled in questionnaire.** The questionnaire should form the basis for the SWOT and present state-analysis. It should be regarded as a dialogue tool for structurally assessing and discussing various aspects of the programme, regarding both content and delivery. 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 (see figure 1). The questionnaire is available as a Word template (can be accessed via [this link](#)). Brief guidelines are available in the first paragraph of the questionnaire.

⁴ Refers to responsible bodies at different levels: PN, PSR, ISR/GU-managers and teaching staff.

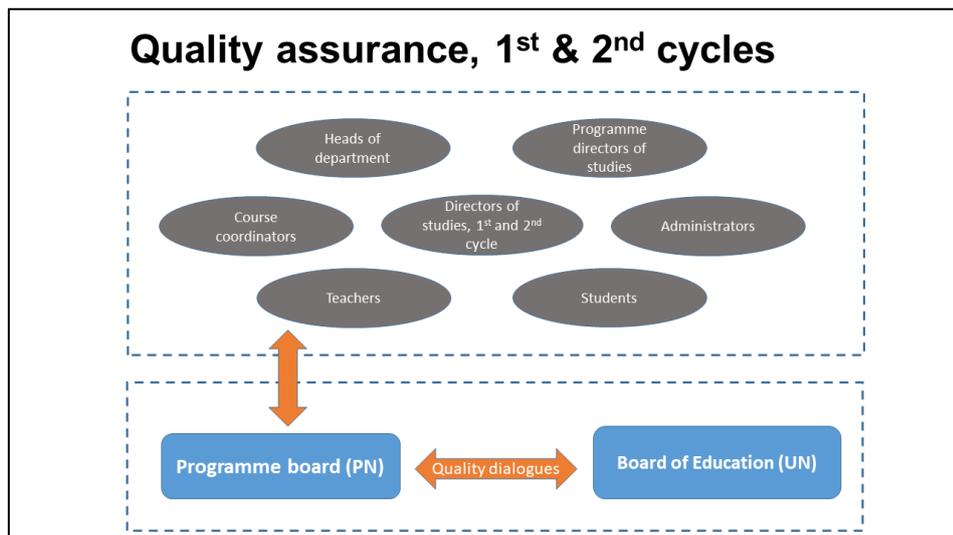


Fig 1. Illustration of who must have the opportunity to contribute to the quality assurance of undergraduate and Master's programmes (1st and 2nd cycles).

5.2 SLUSS

SLUSS and the student unions have the possibility to submit **an overall comment** on each present state-analysis from the programme boards (to be sent to helena.eklund.snall@slu.se).

- SLUSS' comments are open-ended (no template is available) and must be submitted **at the latest one week before the respective quality dialogue**.

For each dialogue, the following documents about the relevant programme is available:

1. *Present state-analysis from the programme board*
2. *SLUSS' comments on the report*
3. *The completed questionnaire*
4. *Statistics summary (key performance indicators)*
5. *Results from the Student Welfare Survey 2021*
6. *Results from SLU's alumni survey 2021*

The present state-analysis and SLUSS' comment on the report will be the primary supporting documents for the quality dialogues.

6 About the SLU quality assurance system

SLU's system for quality assurance is regulated by 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](#) (SLU ID: SLU ua 2018.1.1.2-501). The system is designed to meet the requirements of the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) as well as the university's own need for quality assurance. It aims to promote a culture where all programmes and courses 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 and courses;
- 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 courses and participate on boards and committees that prepare or take decisions that have bearing on programmes and courses.

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 programmes and courses and related support functions – *present state-analysis, 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 of degree programmes and courses;*
- 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.*