

Follow-up of Third-Cycle (doctoral) Education¹

These guidelines were finalised by the Faculty Board on the 7st of February 2024 and take effect from the same day.

Registration number HS 2024/526

¹ This is a translation of the Swedish version (Uppföljning av utbildning på forskarnivå, registration number 2024/116). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail

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1 Introduction

All subjects at the third-cycle studies at the University of Skövde (the University) is to be followed up within the framework of six-year cycle (six-year follow-up). Newly established subjects are also followed up one year after the first doctoral students are admitted (one-year follow-up)². The six-year follow-up is carried out through review by an external assessment group (see Appendix 1). The one-year follow-up is conducted internally by the Faculty Board at the University. The Faculty Board is responsible for ensuring that both follow-ups are carried out.

Subjects at third-cycle studies that are scheduled for evaluation by the Swedish Higher Education Authority during the current six-year cycle are not fully followed up at the University. An internal follow-up of assessment areas and assessment criteria that are not evaluated by the Swedish Higher Education Authority may be conducted as a complement. This decision is made by the Faculty Board.

2 Six-year follow up of subject at third-cycle studies

The six-year follow-up of a subject at third-cycle studies is designed and planned by the Faculty Board and the Faculty Board's presidium. A timetable is established by the Dean well in advance of the follow-up, to allow the Head of School to allocate resources for the follow-up.

A self-evaluation from the subject forms the basis of the follow-up. The self-evaluation is structured based on the areas and criteria to be followed up (see Appendix 2). An external assessment group conducts the review.

The main steps in the six-year follow-up are as follows:

- Determination of assessment areas and assessment criteria
- Start-up
- Self-evaluation from the subject
- Work of the assessment group
- Further development of the education
- Feedback on planned and implemented measures

² With "doctoral student" in this document, it refers to all individuals admitted to third-cycle course and study programme at the University of Skövde within the subject being followed up.

The assessment areas and assessment criteria used in the follow-up are found in Appendix 2. The Faculty Board may decide to add additional assessment areas and assessment criteria for a specific follow-up. The Subject Coordinator for the subject being followed up and the Head of School may submit requests for additional areas or criteria³. In addition to proposals from the Subject Coordinator and the Head of School, the Faculty Board considers the following factors when deciding on assessment areas and assessment criteria:

- Results from previous internal follow-ups, such as six-year follow-ups and one-year follow-ups of newly established subjects.
- Results from conducted external evaluations and follow-ups (for example, educational evaluations and HEI audit conducted by the Swedish Higher Education Authority).
- The University's development plan, operational plans, and similar guiding documents and strategic decisions.

Based on the Faculty Board's decision on assessment areas and assessment criteria, a self-evaluation template is developed for the current follow-up.

2.1 Start-up

The follow-up formally begins with the presidium of the Faculty Board calling for an initiation meeting. The Subject Coordinator, Director of PhD Studies, Head of School and Head of Division, doctoral student representatives, and the Coordinator of PhD Studies are invited to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to inform about the follow-up process and available documents. During the meeting, the self-evaluation template and supporting materials are made available on a shared storage space.

2.2 Self-evaluation from the subject

The Subject Coordinator is responsible for compiling the subject's self-evaluation along with attachments. If necessary, the self-evaluation can be written in English. Collaboration should occur with other functions involved in third-cycle studies, primarily the Director of PhD Studies, Supervisors, Course Coordinator, and the Coordinator of PhD Studies. The Student Union, through the Doctoral

³ At the University, a subject at third-cycle studies may be located in more than one school, which means that multiple Heads of Schools may be involved in the follow-up. All Head of Schools have the opportunity to submit requests in these cases. In this document, "Head of School" is consistently written in the singular, but it refers to all relevant Head of Schools. This applies also when "Head of Division" is mentioned in the document.

Student Council, should be invited to participate in the work on the self-evaluation.

The self-evaluation should include both analysis and reflection as well as description, related to the assessment areas and assessment criteria (see Appendix 2). The self-evaluation should also include a summary reflection of the subject. Concrete examples should be provided to demonstrate how the assessment criteria are met.

To support the writing of the self-evaluation, factual basis is prepared by the Support Services. The specific data depends partly on the assessment areas and assessment criteria included in the follow-up (see 2.1).

The self-evaluation should not exceed 30 pages (excluding appendices). The Head of School must approve the self-evaluation before it is submitted to the Faculty Board.

2.3 Work of the assessment group

The self-evaluation and other documents are reviewed by an external assessment group. The assessment group is appointed by the Dean, upon recommendation from the Head of School. The composition and assignments of the group are described in Appendix 1.

2.3.1 Site visit

To supplement the information in the self-evaluation and other documents, the assessment group conducts a site visit at the University. During the site visit, the assessment group interviews the Subject Coordinator, the Director of PhD Studies, the Coordinator of PhD Studies, supervisor representatives, doctoral student representatives, Head of Division, and the Head of School. The assessment group may request to meet additional individuals. Interviews may be conducted entirely or partially in English if necessary.

2.3.2 Statement

The assessment group summarizes its review in a statement where they highlight strengths and provide recommendations for measures to further develop the education. The group provides an assessment for each assessment area and assessment criteria included in the follow-up (see Appendix 2). The assessment group also provides a collective assessment for the subject.

For the collective assessment of the subject, the following ratings are used:

Satisfactory: No development areas that risk affecting the quality of the education have been identified. However, areas for improvement that could further strengthen the education may have been identified.

Satisfactory with reservation: Areas for development that need to be addressed to maintain the quality of education have been identified.

Not satisfactory: Deficiencies that could seriously affect the quality of the education have been identified.

For each **assessment area**, the ratings "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory" are used.

For each **assessment criteria**, it is indicated whether it is "fulfilled" or "not fulfilled".

The statement is written in a specific template provided by the University. A preliminary statement is shared with the subject for comments on any factual errors and misunderstandings before the assessment group provides its final statement to the University.

2.4 Further development of the education

The recommendations provided in the assessment group's statement should serve as a basis for further development of the subject. The Student Union, through the Doctoral Student Council, should be offered the opportunity to participate in this development and in planning actions. Goals and measures related to the follow-up should be documented in operational plans and other documents linked to quality work of education.

The Faculty Board should handle the statement at a decision-making meeting. The purpose is to highlight and forward recommendations to relevant recipients that should be addressed at a university-wide level. This could include matters that the individual subject or schools cannot influence. The Coordinator of PhD Studies is invited to participate in the meeting.

2.5 Feedback on planned and implemented measures

In cases where the follow-up has resulted in the collective assessment of "satisfactory with reservation " or "not satisfactory", the Subject Coordinator and the Head of School should provide feedback to the Faculty Board on planned and implemented improvement measures. If the follow-up has resulted in the collective assessment of "satisfactory with reservation ", the feedback should be provided approximately one year after the completion of the follow-up. If the assessment is "Not satisfactory", the feedback should be provided after approximately six months.

The feedback should include a report on planned and implemented measures for the assessment areas that received the assessment of "not satisfactory". If the Faculty Board determines that the implemented and planned measures are not sufficient to ensure the quality of the education, the matter is referred to the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the Faculty Board, then decides whether additional time should be given for measures or if the education should be discontinued.

3 One-year follow-up of newly established subject

Newly established subjects are followed up approximately one year after the first doctoral students have been admitted to the programme. The purpose of the follow-up is to assess how the subject has initiated the education and to identify if measures need to be taken to ensure that education at the third-cycle studies maintains high quality.

The one-year follow-up is conducted by the Faculty Board. The follow-up begins with a start-up meeting where the process is presented to relevant managers and staff. The follow-up is conducted through interviews with the Subject Coordinator, Director of PhD Studies, supervisor representatives, doctoral student representatives, as well as the Head of School and Head of Division. The Faculty Board may choose to interview additional functions from school and Support Services. To support the interviews, the Support Services prepare certain factual basis. At the latest, these are made available to those who participate in the follow-up in connection with the start-up meeting. Information about the types of questions that may be asked during the interviews is also provided at the start-up meeting.

During the one-year follow-up a selection of the assessment criteria, found in Appendix 2, is applied. The assessments used in the six-year follow-up are also used in the one-year follow-up (2.3.2). The Faculty Board provides its assessment in a report. Before the report is finalised, it is sent to the school for comments on any factual errors and misunderstandings.

The recommendations provided in the report should serve as a basis for further development of the subject and should be documented in operational plans and other documents linked to quality work of the education. Follow-up of the measures is carried out in the same way as in the six-year follow-up.

4 Additional responsibilities when following up of subjects at third-cycle studies

In order for the follow-up of subject at third-cycle studies to work well, it is required contributions from several different functions within the University.

Below is a list of responsibility allocation for tasks not already mentioned in the document.

Head of School and Head of Division

- Ensure that the results of the follow-up are addressed and that measures are established and implemented.
- Ensure that planned measures are communicated to supervisors, teachers, and doctoral students.
- Ensure that the results of the follow-up and planned measures are communicated to relevant external stakeholders (e.g., external parties involved in research school).

Head of University Administration

- Ensures that resources are allocated within the support services to support the follow-up, such as project managers, preparation of factual basis, and communication of results.
- Ensures that the parts of the follow-up results involving support services are addressed and incorporated into operational plans and/or other relevant documents.

Faculty Board

- Utilizes experiences from the follow-up to continuously improve the follow-up process.

Dean and Pro-Dean

- Addresses the results of the follow-up in the annual quality dialogue ⁴ with relevant schools and support services.

Vice-Chancellor

- Includes the results of the follow-up in the university-wide development of the University's education, operations, and quality system.
- Addresses the results of the follow-up in the annual quality dialogue with relevant schools and support services.

⁴ The Dean and Pro-Dean conduct an annual quality dialogue with each school and Support Services, where quality work is reviewed. The quality dialogue is conducted as part of the Vice-Chancellor's dialogue meeting. In addition to the Vice-Chancellor, Dean, and Pro-Dean, the Pro Vice-Chancellor and the Head of University Administration also participate.

5 Taking effect

This document was finalised by the Faculty Board on the 7th of February, 2024, and replaces Guidelines for Six-Year Follow-Up of Third-Cycle Subjects (registration number HS 2020/227).

Appendix 1: The assessment group

The assessment group consists of three subject experts, one doctoral student representative, and one representative from the professional work life. One of the subject experts is appointed as the chairman. All members of the assessment group must be external. The role of the subject experts is to assess the education from a subject perspective. Therefore, the expertise of the experts collectively needs to cover as much of the subject area under review as possible. They should be professors within the relevant field of education. The experts should have good knowledge and experience in designing and conducting education at third-cycle studies.

The role of the doctoral student representative is primarily to assess the doctoral student perspective within the education. The doctoral student should actively pursue third-cycle studies within the relevant field of education or have recently obtained their Degree of Doctor.

The role of the representative from the professional work life is primarily to assess the usefulness of the third-cycle studies in the professional work life and how the doctoral students are prepared for it. The representative should have a doctor degree in the relevant field of education. Additionally, the representative should have experience in collaborating with higher education institutions regarding education at the third-cycle studies or collaborating with graduates who have been employed at the workplace of the representative.

Suggestions for assessors are provided by the Head of School. The assessment group is appointed by the Dean, who also appoints the group's chairman. Conflict of interest and gender equality aspects should be considered in the appointment of the assessment group and its chairman. Rules for compensation for the assessors are outlined in a separate decision.

The assessors' assignment includes:

- preparing and conducting a site visit at the University.
- based on the documentation and site visit, making assessments and proposing measures to ensure the quality and development of the subject. These are provided in a collective statement.
- after sharing the statement with the subject, correcting any factual errors before the final statement is submitted to the Faculty Board.

Appendix 2: Assessment area and assessment criteria

The following assessment areas and assessment criteria are applied during the six-year follow-up of subjects at the third-cycle studies at the University. The Faculty Board may decide to include additional assessment areas and assessment criteria for each separate six-year follow-up (See 2.1 of the guidelines).

A selection of the assessment criteria below is also used during the one-year follow-up of new subjects. These assessment criteria are marked with an asterisk (*).

Guidance texts related to the assessment areas and assessment criteria can be found in the self-assessment template.

Assessment area: Conditions

Assessment criterion 1*:

The number of supervisors and their combined scientific and pedagogical competence are adequate based on the volume, content, and implementation of the education.

Assessment criterion 2*:

There are conditions for the supervisors to be able to perform supervision and to develop competence in supervision.

Assessment criterion 3*:

There is stable and appropriate administrative support and infrastructure for the education.

Assessment area: Design, implementation, and results

Assessment criterion 1:

The design, implementation, and examination of the education ensure that the doctoral student achieves the national learning outcomes within the specified study period.

Assessment criterion 2*:

There are well-functioning processes for establishing the doctoral student's individual study plan (ISP) and monitoring it.

Assessment criterion 3*:

The course offerings are sufficient in terms of scope, depth, and breadth, contributing to the doctoral student's access to education that is content-wise adequate.

Assessment criterion 4:

There is systematic quality work within the subject.

Assessment area: Doctoral student perspective

Assessment criterion 1*:

All doctoral students are provided with good opportunities to actively influence the content and implementation of the education.

Assessment criterion 2*:

The education ensures a good physical and psychosocial study environment for all doctoral students.

Assessment area: Professional work life and collaboration

Assessment criterion 1:

The education is useful and has a strong connection to future professional work life within and outside academia.

Assessment criterion 2:

Collaboration for mutual exchange with the surrounding society occurs within the education.