

Regler

2021-12-21

Reg. No.: 2021/1904

# Mid Sweden University Quality Assurance for Research

**Published:** 21 December 2021

**Manager:** Anders Fällström

**Responsible function:** University Management

**Administrative officer:** Håkan Wiklund, Pro-Vice-Chancellor

**Decision date:** 21 December 2021

**Valid:** Until further notice

**Latest review:** 21 December 2021

**Summary:** The aim of the Mid Sweden University Quality Assurance System for Research is to create a structure for quality assurance and systematic quality improvements in the university's research.

**Previous versions:** MIUN 2021/1904, 2021-09-07

# Table of Contents

<b>1 Basic approach .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Culture of quality .....	4
<b>2 Structure and design of quality assurance and enhancement.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Faculty procedures for quality assurance and improvement of research quality .....	7
<b>3 Starting points for quality assurance and enhancement (Part 1) .....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Quality assurance policy for research.....	8
3.2 Roles and responsibilities .....	9
3.2.1 Responsibility in the quality assurance system based on function .....	9
3.3 Participation and involvement .....	12
3.4 Good research practice.....	12
3.5 The free pursuit of research.....	14
3.6 Access to expertise and professional training .....	14
3.7 The link between research and education .....	15
3.8 Gender equality and equal opportunities .....	15
3.9 Collaboration and utilisation.....	16
3.10 Support operations and infrastructure.....	16
<b>4 Day-to-day quality assurance (Part 2).....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5 Quality follow-ups (Part 3) .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>6 Quality evaluations (Part 4).....</b>	<b>18</b>
6.1 Self-initiated evaluations .....	18
6.2 Evaluations initiated externally.....	20
<b>7 Procedures for consultation and communication (Part 5).....</b>	<b>20</b>
7.1 Consultations for promoting quality.....	21
7.2 Information for the public .....	21
<b>8 Procedures for improvement and renewal (Part 6).....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>9 Description of follow-up and evaluation activities .....</b>	<b>22</b>
9.1 Follow-ups at the central level .....	22
9.2 Self-initiated evaluations .....	25
9.3 Evaluations initiated externally.....	26

# Mid Sweden University's Quality Assurance System for Research

## 1 Basic approach

The aim of the Mid Sweden University Quality Assurance System for Research<sup>1</sup> is to create a quality assurance structure and systematic quality improvement of the university's research. A central starting point of Mid Sweden University's Quality Assurance System for Research is the common framework for the quality assurance of higher education institutions and quality improvement of research prepared by the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF) and adopted in 2019<sup>2</sup>.

The Mid Sweden University's processes and work methods to assure and improve the quality of research are to be proactive, systematic and integrated into all activities, including the planning of activities and operations, budgeting and follow-up. As a result, quality assurance and enhancement are characterised by the following characteristics:

- objectives of activities are formulated and communicated;
- processes and work methods are organised and allocated resources in relation to established objectives;
- responsibilities are clearly stated;
- processes and work methods are implemented and followed up;
- follow-ups and evaluations are communicated and used as a basis for development and improvement work;
- quality assurance and enhancement are integrated into the University's follow-up and planning.

<sup>1</sup> See *Handläggningsordning för Mittuniversitetets styrdokument* [Administrative Procedures for Mid Sweden University's Governance Documents], MIUN 2021/290.

<sup>2</sup> SUHF (2019) *Gemensamt ramverk för lärosätenas kvalitetssäkring och kvalitetsutveckling av forskning* [Joint framework for HEIs' research quality assurance and enhancement systems].

## 1.1 Culture of quality

According to the European University Association, a successful culture of quality is based on common core values and a common commitment of all colleagues and on a clear structure and well-defined processes<sup>3</sup>. Mid Sweden University is to promote this type of culture of quality.

Quality assurance and enhancement at Mid Sweden University is based on the established academic values and approaches that have long been natural elements of the quality culture characterising the organisation. This quality culture is characterised by day-to-day improvement and renewal driven by employees and students. The “Mid Sweden University Strategy 2019–2023”<sup>4</sup> describes the values that guide quality assurance.

The quality culture that permeates research is expressed in established and embedded forms of quality assurance and quality improvement, where the peer review process and seminar discussions are central components. The quality and relevance of the research is tested continuously in internal and external processes, nationally and internationally.

## 2 Structure and design of quality assurance and enhancement

Mid Sweden University’s quality assurance system for research is based on the systematics illustrated in the improvement cycle, also referred to as the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle (Figure 1). This means that quality assurance and enhancement are initiated and planned, that measures are implemented, that results are studied, and that quality assurance and enhancement result in learning, improvement and development.

<sup>3</sup> Ex Surssock, A. (2011) Examining Quality Culture Part II: Processes, Tools – Participation, Ownership and Bureaucracy, Brussels: EUA.

<sup>4</sup> MIUN 2018/1006

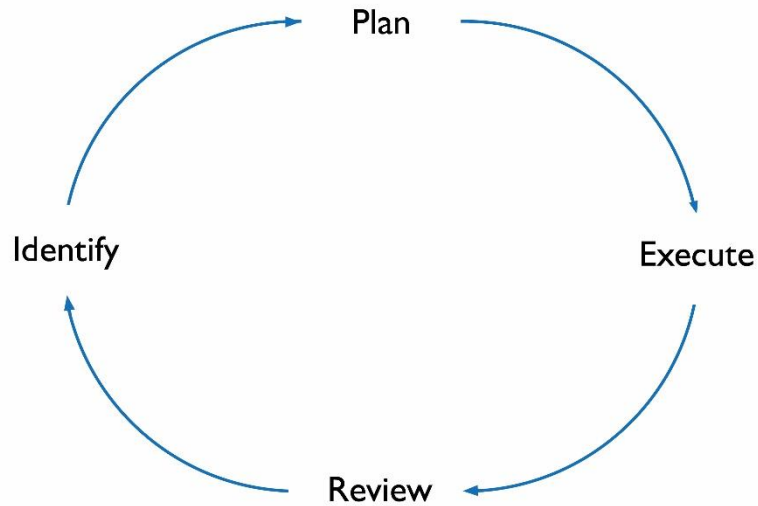


Figure 1. The improvement cycle (inspired by W. Edwards Deming, 1986)<sup>5</sup>.

Part 1: The starting points for quality assurance and enhancement related to the prerequisites for conducting research.

Part 2: Day-to-day quality assurance and enhancement mainly related to how research is conducted.

Part 3: Quality follow-up measuring and evaluating different outcomes.

Part 4: Quality evaluation that reviews results of the research.

Part 5: Procedures for communication and consultation.

Part 6: Procedures for improvement and renewal.

<sup>5</sup> Deming, W.E (1986) *Out of the Crisis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

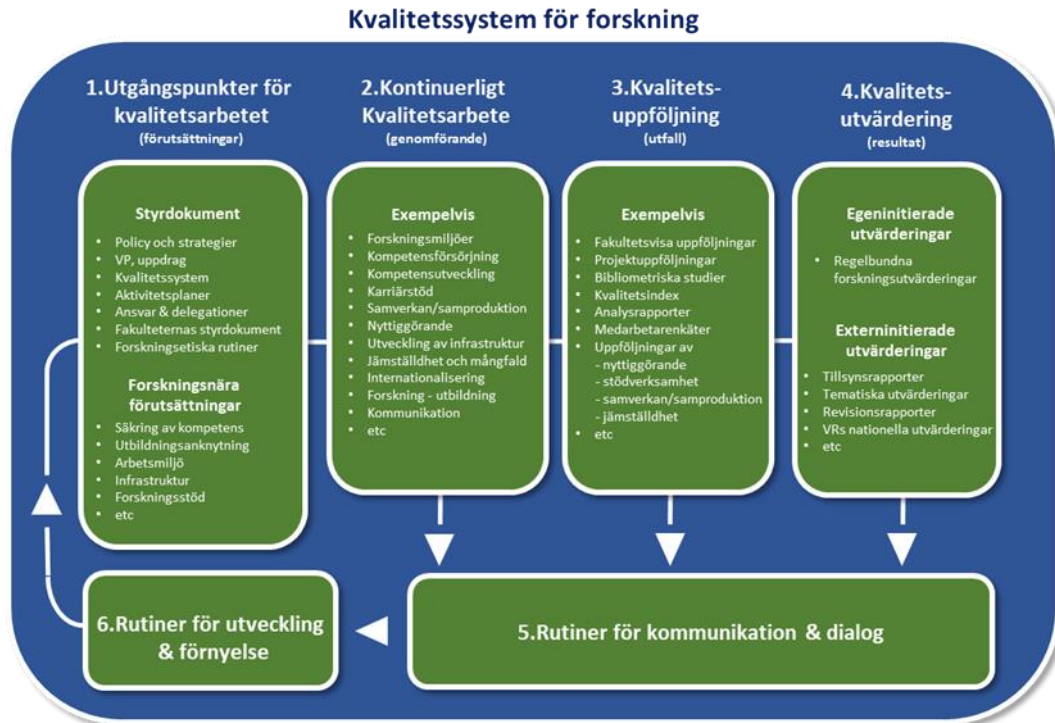


Figure 2. Mid Sweden University's Quality Assurance System for Research.

This document covers the University-wide parts of Mid Sweden University's Quality Assurance System for Research, while the work of the faculty is described in the faculties' Procedures for Quality Assurance and Improvement of Research (see Figure 3).

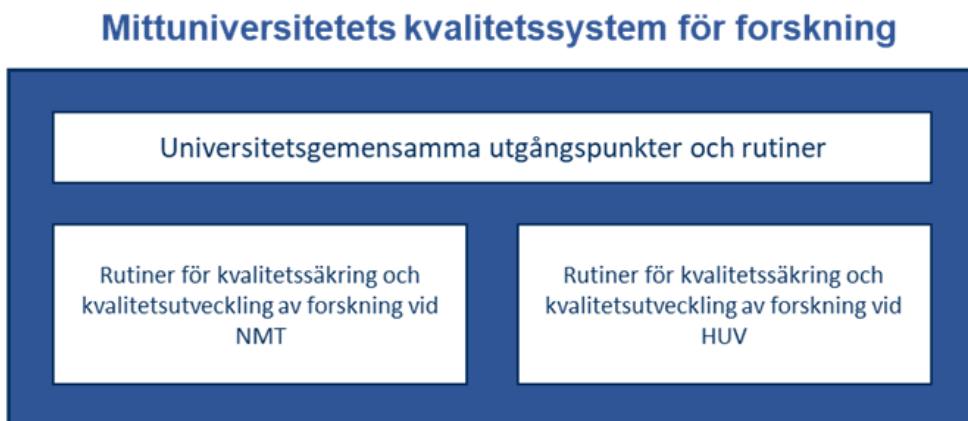


Figure 3. The structure of the quality assurance system.

## 2.1 Faculty procedures for quality assurance and improvement of research quality

The bulk of the work on quality assurance and improvement of research is conducted within the faculties. Each faculty has decided on faculty procedures<sup>6</sup> (Procedures for Quality Assurance and Improvement of Research at the Faculty of Human Sciences and the Faculty of Science, Technology and Media, respectively) covering Parts 1–6 of Figure 2 – that is, principles and work methods for quality assurance and improvement of research<sup>7</sup>. The procedures make clear how the faculties ensure that they continuously collect, analyse and use information affecting the quality and relevance of research as a basis for quality improvement, strategic decisions and priorities.

The procedures include the following areas:

- Good research practice
- Freedom of research
- Access to expertise, professional development and career support
- The connection between research and education
- Gender equality in the prerequisites and implementation of research
- Collaboration and utilisation
- Assessment of Research and Co-production (ARC)
- Publishing and communication procedures
- Following up research activities and infrastructure
- Procedures for the improvement and renewal of research environments.

<sup>6</sup> MIUN 2021/198 and MIUN 2020/1688

<sup>7</sup> See the Vice-Chancellor's assignment MIUN 2020/1688

## **3 Starting points for quality assurance and enhancement (Part 1)**

The quality assurance system for research underpins strategic work at all levels within the University and contributes to achieving the vision, objectives and strategy of the University (see "Mid Sweden University Strategy 2019–2023")<sup>8</sup>. The quality assurance system includes all research and consists of structures, procedures and processes to ensure high-quality research.

Starting points for quality assurance refers to principles, activities and documents governing research activities and their requirements.

### **3.1 Quality assurance policy for research**

Mid Sweden University conducts research contributing to scientific development and sustainable development of society. Mid Sweden University strives to have its research recognised within the scientific community and within the community at large.

Research is conducted through active participation in national and international knowledge development and through the use and development of scholarly theories and methods in accordance with good research practice. This includes outreach to the surrounding community.

Research is to meet the requirements of the Swedish Higher Education Act and the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance and maintain the freedom and credibility of the research. Research by Mid Sweden University ensures access to a scientific basis for education by integrating research findings into all teaching.

To safeguard and improve the quality of research, Mid Sweden University conducts proactive, systematic and inclusive quality assurance and enhancement that is integrated into its activities and in organisational governance. Quality assurance and enhancement contribute to the realisation of the University's vision and strategic objectives and fulfils

<sup>8</sup> MIUN 2018/1006



external quality requirements. These include both quality assurance and the day-to-day development of research conditions, implementation, improvement and renewal.

## 3.2 Roles and responsibilities

The “Mid Sweden University Rules of Procedure”<sup>9</sup> describes roles and responsibilities at different levels. The “Rules of Procedure of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Media”<sup>10</sup> and the “Rules of Procedure of the Faculty of Human Sciences”<sup>11</sup> define which bodies and officials within the faculties may make decisions on behalf of the respective faculty boards. The chief administrative officer is responsible for quality assurance and enhancement within the administration.

### 3.2.1 Responsibility in the quality assurance system based on function

Responsibility for research and research-related activities is described below.

#### University Board

The University Board determines internal allocation of resources and their follow-up for the University’s long-term objectives, vision and strategies; planning frameworks; and the operational plan and budget of the University<sup>12</sup>.

#### Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for leading the University’s strategy development and operational planning and for conducting University-wide follow-up of operations and finances.

#### Mid Sweden University’s Research Council

The council works with initiating, developing and coordinating University-wide issues related to research and third-cycle studies.

<sup>9</sup> MIUN 2012/1290

<sup>10</sup> MIUN 2014/1705

<sup>11</sup> MIUN 2011/1307

<sup>12</sup> Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 2, section 2

Regler

2021-12-21

Registration number: 2021/1904

### **Research Ethics Committee**

The committee is an advisory body that can review projects and provide advice and opinions. It can also provide advice and recommendations on an application before sending it to the Swedish Ethical Review Authority.

### **Council for Good Research Practice**

The council is responsible for the University's investigations into suspected deviations from good research practice other than those specifically addressed under the Act on Responsibility for Good Research Practice (LAO).

### **Faculty Boards**

The faculty boards have overall responsibility for quality assurance and quality improvement of the content of faculty activities. They establish long-term overall strategies and action plans (operational plans) based on directives determined by the University Board or the Vice-Chancellor.

### **Deans**

The deans are responsible for following up and evaluating finances and activities within the faculty's area of responsibility and for taking appropriate actions as a result.

### **Councils for Third-cycle Studies (FUR/RUF)**

The councils are tasked with following up and promoting third-cycle education. They have responsibility for maintaining the quality of third-cycle education within each faculty.

### **Employment Councils**

The councils prepare employment cases for the Faculty Board. The councils follow up the results of the processes for which they are responsible.

### **Subject staff, research staff and planning areas**

Subject staff are to be actively included in discussions on important improvement issues in first-, second- and third-cycle education. Subject staff are responsible for quality and improvement of courses in their area of responsibility. In the Faculty of Human Sciences, research staff are responsible for quality, implementation and improvement of third-cycle

education in their areas of responsibility. Planning areas refers to the Faculty of Science, Technology and Media's nomenclature for research that is grouped and constituting a centre of expertise and research or by thematically clustered subjects from one or more departments.

### **Subject representatives**

Subject representatives exercise overall quality assurance responsibility for the subject.

### **Heads of departments**

The heads of departments are responsible for personnel, planning, quality assurance and enhancement, coordination and improvement of the department's activities.

### **Centre leaders and forum leaders**

Centre leaders and forum leaders have overall responsibility for the activities of their centre or forum. Responsibilities for centre leaders and forum leaders are defined in the document *Regler för centrum och forum vid Mittuniversitetet* [Rules for Centres and Forums at Mid Sweden University].<sup>13</sup>

### **Division for Research and Educational Support (FUS)**

The division assists researchers in the areas of internationalisation, research funding, good research practice, innovation and utilisation.

### **The Vice-Chancellor's Office (ULS)**

The Vice-Chancellor's Office is responsible for updating the Mid Sweden University Quality Assurance System as needed.

The collegial approach and staff organisations play a key role in quality assurance and enhancement at Mid Sweden University, both through participation in quality audits through peer reviews and through Mid Sweden University's collegial governing body. In addition to faculty boards and associated councils, these include subject and research staff.

<sup>13</sup> MIUN 2019/2272

### 3.3 Participation and involvement

The Higher Education Ordinance emphasises that quality assurance is a mutual concern for the higher education institution's staff and students<sup>14</sup>. Mid Sweden University is to have systematic processes that encourage participation, involvement and responsibility of staff and first-, second- and third-cycle students (see the follow-up activities in the chapter **Description of follow-up and evaluation activities**).

All managers of Mid Sweden University are responsible for enabling participation in quality assurance. To facilitate this, there is a collaboration agreement with trade union organisations that includes regulation of employee co-determination. This applies to both department issues and policy issues.

### 3.4 Good research practice

Good research practice means that it is possible to rely on the quality of that research, that the research is conducted and reported in a truthful manner, that it is conducted with respect for important societal and ethical values, and that the researchers take responsibility for their research and its consequences.

All research at Mid Sweden University is to adhere to good research practice – that is, the ethical practices that emerge when the various research stakeholders critically reflect on research activities in interaction with the society<sup>15</sup>. In addition, Mid Sweden University is to follow the national recommendations on good research practice decided by the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions<sup>16</sup> and the European Code of Integrity of Research published by All European Academics (ALLEA). All employees of Mid Sweden University are responsible for adhering to good research practice. Research must also adhere to ethical

<sup>14</sup> Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 1, section 4

<sup>15</sup> SOU 1999:4

<sup>16</sup> SUHF, *Rekommendationer för hanteringen av misstankar om avvikelser från god forskningssed* [Recommendations for Handling Suspicions of Deviations from Good Research Practice], 20 May 2020.

guidelines and laws that regulate and impose ethical requirements on the research process.

Mid Sweden University's organisation for research ethics and good research practice is illustrated in Figure 4. Mid Sweden University proactively promotes good research practice and follows good research ethics. Suspicions of deviations from good research practice are handled by the "Council for Good Research Practice"<sup>17</sup> under special administrative procedures<sup>18</sup>. Suspicions of misconduct in research are investigated by the National Board for Assessment of Research Misconduct, NPOF.

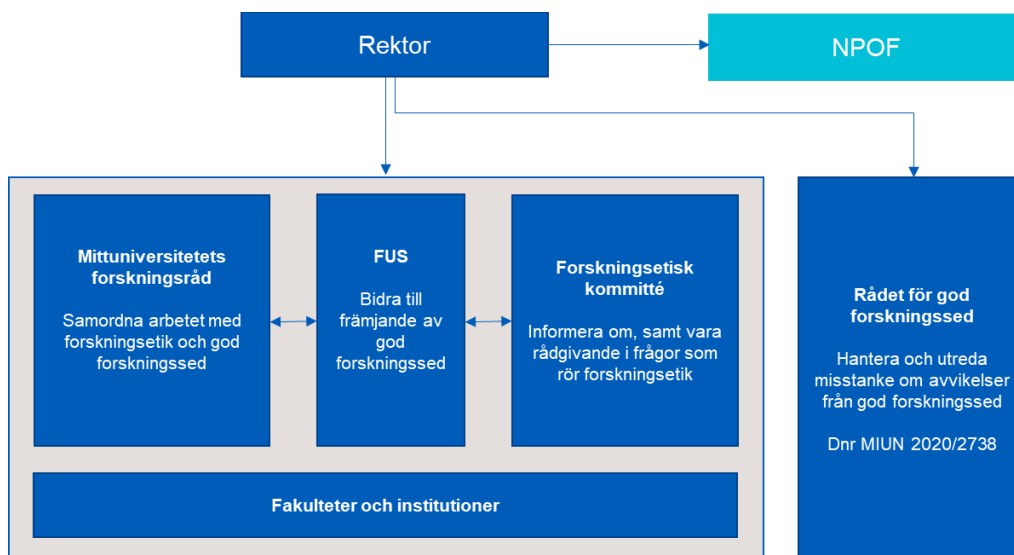


Figure 4. Mid Sweden University's Organisation for Research Ethics and Good Research Practice.

Research misconduct is defined as serious deviations from good research practice in the form of fabrication, falsification or plagiarism committed with intent or by gross negligence in planning, conducting or reporting research<sup>19</sup>. Legal violations regarding research ethics are defined under the "Act (2003:460) Concerning the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans", section 38, i.e., research covered by the law that is conducted prior to obtaining ethical approval. Deviations may include misleading

<sup>17</sup> MIUN 2020/2739

<sup>18</sup> MIUN 2020/2738

<sup>19</sup> SFS 2019:504

information provided to research subjects, violating individual privacy, and carelessness or shortcomings in management and use of research data.

### 3.5 The free pursuit of research

The free pursuit of knowledge is one of the cornerstones of a democratic society. Results from curiosity-driven, high-quality research, in which researchers define their own research domains and formulate their own questions, are the foundation for advances in knowledge.

Autonomy and academic freedom are key starting points for all research at Mid Sweden University. Research is to be free from external pressures, and the freedom, integrity and quality of research to be defended. In this regard, University Management and faculties have a special responsibility to promote and follow up the freedom of research.

### 3.6 Access to expertise and professional training

Mid Sweden University ensures that all members of the teaching staff have both the scholarly and education expertise to meet the needs of the organisation. Fair and transparent processes for recruiting and training staff are applied.

Systematic efforts to ensure access to expertise aim to establish, apply and follow up processes intended to attract, recruit, develop, retain and offboard staff<sup>20</sup>. The "Mid Sweden University Appointments Procedure"<sup>21</sup> establishes targets for recruiting teachers (see also the faculties' rules of procedure for ensuring educational qualifications). Rules and quality criteria for various positions and administrative procedures have been adopted<sup>22</sup>.

Mid Sweden University's appeal as an employer is crucial in successfully ensuring long-term access to expertise. Mid Sweden University works to have strategic access to expertise using associated recruitment plans and employee interviews. The relevant manager is responsible for this. The

<sup>20</sup> Mid Sweden University's staff website

<sup>21</sup> MIUN 2013/1282

<sup>22</sup> Mid Sweden University's staff website

process of accessing expertise is integrated into the planning of activities and operations and budgetary work to clarify the link between mission, strategy, objectives and staffing needs. The Human Resources department supports this work and provides appropriate templates for departments and divisions. The annual employee interview leads to an individual development plan based on the objectives and specialisation of the department and the continuing advanced training of the employee.

### **3.7 The link between research and education**

The link between research and education is regulated in the Swedish Higher Education Act<sup>23</sup> and is initially ensured when a programme is established. The link is a central basis in the day-to-day development and renewal of the programme<sup>24</sup>. Strengthening and highlighting this link and giving special care to professional training is one of the stated objectives of the "Mid Sweden University Strategy 2019–2023".

From the perspective of research, this entails ensuring that conducted research at Mid Sweden University also benefits education<sup>25</sup>.

### **3.8 Gender equality and equal opportunities**

Everyone should feel both motivated and welcomed when working and studying at Mid Sweden University. An obvious and fundamental principal for the organisations and activities at Mid Sweden University is the equality of all people. Individuals are to be treated with respect and dignity, and consideration is given to differences to foster an individual's opportunities for work and study.

Mid Sweden University encourages fostering gender equality in the prerequisites and implementation of research. Mid Sweden University works systematically towards a balanced gender distribution in groups that prepare and decide on the prerequisites and implementation of research.

<sup>23</sup> Higher Education Act SFS 1992:1424

<sup>24</sup> MIUN 2015/817

<sup>25</sup> MIUN 2018/1820

Gender equality is an integral part of quality assurance and encompasses equal opportunities in career paths, skills development opportunities and research. Gender equality is to be continuously monitored, and relevant improvements are to be implemented.

### 3.9 Collaboration and utilisation

Collaboration in research is to contribute to the development of society in a broad sense, contribute to the quality and vitality of research, and add value in activities with collaborators. Researchers who, through collaborations, encounter issues and challenges in the private sector and society come away with insights that can be translated into new approaches and quality improvements for research and education. Collaboration in research is to be based always on a respect for the integrity of research. Reciprocity, mutual benefit, sharing of knowledge and joint development of new areas of knowledge are both the goal of and characterise good collaboration<sup>26</sup>.

Through the Fyrklövern innovation office, <sup>27</sup>Mid Sweden University fosters a research culture that promotes entrepreneurship and the utilisation and commercialisation of research findings. In this work, researchers are offered qualified support in utilising research-based knowledge. The main task of the Miun Holding AB is to commercialise research and knowledge developed within Mid Sweden University, making them available to society and strengthening collaboration between the University and the private sector.

### 3.10 Support operations and infrastructure

This area includes research and innovation advice, advice on research and research ethics and support for publishing, data storage and research

<sup>26</sup> See also SUHF (2018) *Lärosätenas samverkan med det omgivande samhället – utgångspunkter och principer* [Higher education institutions' collaboration with the surrounding community – starting points and principles].

<sup>27</sup> Fyrklövern is a joint innovation office for Karlstad University, Linnaeus University, Örebro University and Mid Sweden University (the coordinator).



applications. It also includes access to laboratories, equipment and other equipment.

Mid Sweden University follows up research support operations and infrastructure and, when necessary, implements appropriate quality-enhancing measures<sup>28</sup>. Support operations and infrastructure are evaluated in connection with the Assessments of Research and Coproduction (ARC).

## 4 Day-to-day quality assurance (Part 2)

Day-to-day quality assurance is systematic, following the improvement cycle (Figure 1), and is characterised by ongoing improvements in day-to-day operations. Quality assurance and enhancement are based on more than cyclical follow-ups and evaluations described in the chapter **Description of follow-up and evaluation activities**. Based on implemented activities, appropriate measures are taken regularly to improve and develop research and activities that add value for first-, second- and third-cycle students and for staff and society.

One part of promoting day-to-day quality assurance is the annual call for proposals for specific development projects (*Allmänna lärosättesprojekt, ALP*<sup>29</sup>). The projects, which aim to promote improvements at Mid Sweden University, can serve as pilots or preliminary studies for wider use at the University.

## 5 Quality follow-ups (Part 3)

Quality follow-up refers here to a measurement or investigation that collects and compiles information about a particular activity or the outcome of conducted activities. Quality follow-ups are less extensive than quality evaluations, and the method rarely includes self-evaluation or external assessment.

As a basis for quality improvement, setting priorities and strategic decisions, Mid Sweden University continuously collects, analyses and uses

<sup>28</sup> MIUN 2021/198 and MIUN 2020/1688

<sup>29</sup> MIUN 2018/715

relevant information related to the quality and relevance of research. These follow-ups can be both quantitative and qualitative.

Descriptions of faculty-based quality follow-up of research are found in "Procedures for Quality Assurance and Improvement of Research at the Faculty of Human Sciences and the Faculty of Science, Technology and Media, respectively"<sup>30</sup>.

Other follow-ups of importance for quality assurance and quality improvement of research are conducted centrally. These include indicators, reports, various types of surveys and follow-ups related to organisation consultations (see the activity descriptions in the chapter **Description of follow-up and evaluation activities**).

## 6 Quality evaluations (Part 4)

Quality evaluation refers here to a relatively comprehensive examination of an activity, and the method usually includes self-evaluation and external assessment. These include approaches for evaluating the results of quality assurance and for evaluating the quality of research. The evaluations are either self-initiated or initiated externally (see Part 4 of Figure 2).

### 6.1 Self-initiated evaluations

Independent and recurring peer review of all research (Assessment of Research and Co-production, ARC) have been conducted since 2013. Beginning with ARC21, all third-cycle studies that are not part of the Swedish Higher Education Authority's national evaluations are also included in the research evaluation<sup>31</sup>. The evaluations are conducted with assessment criteria derived from the Higher Education Act, the Higher Education Ordinance, the Higher Education Authority's basis of assessment<sup>32</sup> and the quality criteria for research adopted by SUHF in

<sup>30</sup> MIUN 2021/198 and MIUN 2020/1688

<sup>31</sup> See Mid Sweden University's Quality Assurance System for First-, Second- and Third-cycle Education, MIUN 2018/1820.

<sup>32</sup> See the Swedish Higher Education Authority's website, [www.uka.se](http://www.uka.se).

2019<sup>33</sup>. The evaluations normally are conducted at intervals of six to seven years.

The University-wide research evaluations aim to develop the University's research in accordance with the University's vision and strategic objectives and to strengthen the research environments' ability to improve quality. The process has a stated goal of promoting quality and being based on the participation of researchers. The implementation contributes to reflection and in-depth analysis of the current state of research and to support the development of short- and long-term objectives. The evaluation gives particular focus to improvement of research based on previous evaluations.

It covers all research for an evaluation period defined prior to each evaluation. Both subject research and research at Mid Sweden University are evaluated. The faculties determine how the research is divided into evaluation units called Units of Assessments (UoA). Faculties can decide whether to exclude from the evaluation a subject with no or very limited amounts of research.

The evaluations are conducted in English from a national and international perspective and using international expert panels. The composition of the panels is regulated in the action plan.

Each research evaluation adopts an action plan covering conditions, organisation, implementation, schedule and budget. The Vice-Chancellor approves the action plan. The assessment basis for all the evaluations includes relevant data and indicators, self-evaluations and site visits. To facilitate this work in advance of each evaluation, the University regularly and systematically collects and documents indicators on which to base upcoming evaluations.

The expert panels draft a report on each UoA. These reports include proposals for strategic decisions on research centres and subject research as well as proposals for improving the quality of research.

<sup>33</sup> SUHF (2019) *Gemensamt ramverk för lärosätenas kvalitetssäkring och kvalitetsutveckling av forskning* [Joint framework for HEIs' research quality assurance and enhancement systems].

The Research Council of Mid Sweden University, a steering group for the evaluations, determines the planning and implementation of the evaluation and submits proposals to the Vice-Chancellor for the action plan. Each action plan determines other organisational aspects of the evaluation.

Planning and implementation of the evaluations occurs in close collaboration with the faculties. Each faculty addresses the outcome from the evaluations according to established procedures<sup>34</sup>. The University Management Council and the University Board deal with the evaluation results and their analysis.

Information on evaluations, their results and taken quality enhancing measures are published and communicated appropriately within and outside the University. For each evaluation, the Communications Department draws up a communication plan adopted by the Research Council.

In addition to these, Mid Sweden University can initiate other evaluations as needed.

## 6.2 Evaluations initiated externally

Research-related evaluations initiated externally include the Swedish Research Council's national evaluations of selected research fields; the Swedish Higher Education Authority's review of the University's quality assurance system for research and its thematic evaluations; and the legal higher education institution oversight preceding the that review. For these evaluations, the same internal management processes apply as for self-initiated evaluations.

## 7 Procedures for consultation and communication (Part 5)

Measures that are planned or implemented as a result of a follow-up or evaluation are to be communicated to all concerned parties (see also the chapter **Description of follow-up and evaluation activities**).

<sup>34</sup> MIUN 2021/198 and MIUN 2020/1688

Communication is to comply with the guidelines defined in Mid Sweden University's communications policy<sup>35</sup>. The policy specifies what applies to internal and external communications and the communication responsibilities of both employees and various roles and functions.

## 7.1 Consultations for promoting quality

University management and the deans are responsible for conducting semester and structured organisation consultations, including Vice-Chancellor consultations with the faculties and administration and dean consultations with the faculties' departments. Heads of departments are responsible for consulting with representatives of the staff organisation. The organisation consultations address, where appropriate, the activities covered by the quality assurance system, including forecasts, outcomes and results as well as identified challenges and needs for improvement.

## 7.2 Information for the public

Mid Sweden University is to apply a high degree of transparency and provides regular information about quality assurance efforts at the University. In addition, the information on activities that Mid Sweden University publishes is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and easily accessible.

# 8 Procedures for improvement and renewal (Part 6)

The final stage of the improvement cycle, the learning step of Figure 1, aims to ensure that results from follow-ups, evaluations and other quality assurance efforts lead to improving and renewing research and that applied work methods are developed. This means that more extensive improvement measures are allocated resources, that relevant assignments added to the Mid Sweden University operational plan and faculty activity plans, and that measures are linked back to the improvement cycle, resulting in follow-up and development of **Starting points for quality assurance** (part 1 of Figure 2). See also the specific procedures for each

<sup>35</sup> MIUN 2014/460

activity in the chapter **Description of follow-up and evaluation activities**. Minor improvement measures, i.e., measures that do not require specific operational assignments or specific budgetary space, are implemented within the framework of regular activities. All improvement measures are linked to starting points and prerequisites (Part 1), allowing them to be followed up and updated as necessary.

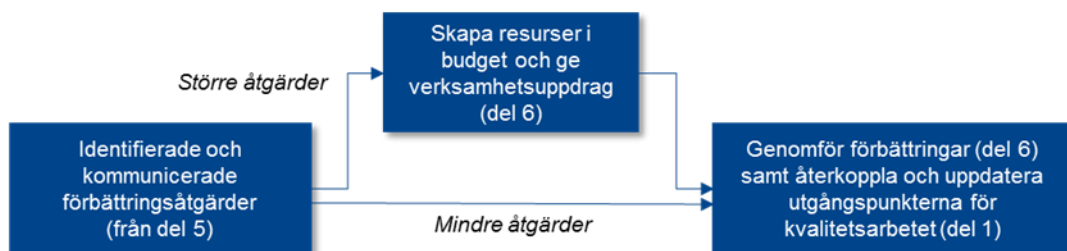


Figure 5. Procedures for improvement and renewal of research in relation to the quality assurance system's different parts in Figure 2.

## 9 Description of follow-up and evaluation activities

Below are some core quality follow-ups and quality evaluations that relate to the University as a whole. The faculty-specific activities for the follow-up and evaluation of research are described in the documents "Procedures for Quality Assurance and Improvement of Research at the Faculty of Human Sciences and the Faculty of Science, Technology and Media, respectively".

### 9.1 Follow-ups at the central level

#### University-wide indicators (1-year cycle)

##### Purpose

The indicators provide a basis for analysis and discussions and are to indicate specific needs for improvements.

##### Responsible function(s)

Vice-Chancellor's Office.

##### Implementation

The follow-up consists of ongoing measurement and analysis of key factors crucial for the University's strategy. The indicators stem from the strategy's

Regler

2021-12-21

Registration number: 2021/1904

intended effects of the University's activities and are based on follow-up needs from the organisation consultations (appeal, relevance, quality and sustainable development).

### Stakeholders

The University Board, first-, second- and third-cycle students, University Management, Education Council and Research Council, faculties and administration.

### Consultations and communication

The indicators serve as the basis for analysis and discussion in the context of, for example, the organisation consultations. Their primary contribution to improving operations is the analysis of why the indicator values are as they are and what they say about our research.

### Improvement and renewal

Based on the organisation consultations, agreements are reached on how to centrally support improvements locally. Discussions are then held in management teams based on a holistic perspective for the University.

### Additional information

Read more in the Mid Sweden University governance model<sup>36</sup> or at the Mid Sweden University staff portal under Follow-up.

## **Analytical reports (2–3 times a year)**

### Purpose

The analytical reports compile important information for managers and employees by monitoring national and international developments and internal data analysis.

### Responsible function(s)

Vice-Chancellor's Office.

### Implementation

Each analytical report has a special theme. The upcoming analytical report theme is discussed in the University Management Council (ULG). The

<sup>36</sup> MIUN 2019/1118

Regler

2021-12-21

Registration number: 2021/1904

analyses mainly use monitoring national and international developments and the LISA management information system.

### Stakeholders

University Management Council and university managers. Depends on the theme.

### Consultations and communication

The reports are presented and discussed with all managers. All reports are posted on the staff portal. The analysis report can also be used in the organisation consultations, depending on the theme.

### Improvement and renewal

The reports provide data for day-to-day quality assurance at university, faculty and department levels.

### Additional information

Read more on the Mid Sweden University staff webpages.

## **Internal follow-up of the quality assurance system (3-year cycle)**

### Purpose

The purpose is to follow up on the functioning of and compliance to the quality assurance system.

### Responsible function(s)

The coordinator for quality issues.

### Implementation

Mapping of activities and interviews conducted with managers, teachers, researchers, administrators, doctoral students and others.

### Stakeholders

University Management, research councils, faculties, centres and departments.



Regler

2021-12-21

Registration number: 2021/1904

### Consultations and communication

The results of the follow-up are presented and discussed with University Management and faculties. A summary of the follow-up is published in the staff portal.

### Improvement and renewal

Improvement measures are identified with respect to methodologies, work methods and compliance with them. These can result in adjustment of the quality assurance system as needed.

### Additional information

Read more on the Mid Sweden University staff webpages.

## 9.2 Self-initiated evaluations

### **Recurring evaluation of all research, ARC (approximately six-year cycle)<sup>37</sup>**

#### Purpose

To develop the University's research in accordance with its vision and strategic objectives and to strengthen the ability of research environments to improve quality.

#### Responsible function(s)

Mid Sweden University Research Council.

#### Implementation

Peer reviews conducted with internationally composed panels according to the adopted action plan. The assessment is based on self-evaluation, compilation of essential information and site visits. The results are compiled in public reports. The evaluation is coordinated with the evaluation of third-cycle studies.

<sup>37</sup> Refers to all research at the University 2013–2014 and 2021–2022 and thereafter at approximately six-year intervals.

Regler

2021-12-21

Registration number: 2021/1904

### Stakeholders

University Management, faculties, including councils for third-cycle studies (FUR/RUF); the Mid Sweden University Research Council; relevant departments and administration.

### Consultations and communication

See the action plan (communication plan) for the respective research evaluation.

### Improvement and renewal

Improvement and development activities are allocated resources and implemented according to the process description in Figure 5.

### Additional information

Read more on the Mid Sweden University staff webpages.

## 9.3 Evaluations initiated externally

Mid Sweden University research and related activities may be subject to various forms of externally initiated evaluations. The results from all evaluations are included in the procedures covered by the University's quality assurance efforts. Three of these evaluations are described below.

### **The Swedish Research Council's national research evaluations<sup>38</sup>**

#### Purpose

To provide a national picture with an international perspective of research results in Sweden in a particular subject or theme.

#### Responsible function(s)

The relevant faculty.

#### Implementation

International panels that review a selection of research subjects according to a specific procedure.

<sup>38</sup> Swedish Research Council, Ref. No. 3.2.2018-00113

Regler

2021-12-21

Registration number: 2021/1904

## Stakeholders

University Management; faculties, including councils for third-cycle studies (FUR/RUF); the Mid Sweden University Research Council; relevant departments and management.

## Consultations and communication

Reports are published through the Swedish Research Council. Internal information is disseminated on the Mid Sweden University staff webpages.

## Improvement and renewal

Improvement and development activities are allocated resources and implemented according to the process description in Figure 5.

## Additional information

Read more on the Swedish Research Council's website, [www.vr.se](http://www.vr.se).

## **Thematic evaluations, UKÄ (six-year cycle)**

### Purpose

To contribute knowledge and national comparisons of the higher education institutions' work with the fields in question.

### Responsible function(s)

Coordination through the University Management Office (ULS).

### Implementation

Refers to a selection of thematic areas under UKÄ's six-year plan and with the process determined by UKÄ. An internal process description for all evaluations conducted by UKÄ can be found in the *Handläggningsordning för UKÄ-granskningar vid Mittuniversitetet* [Administrative Procedures for UKÄ Reviews at Mid Sweden University]<sup>39</sup>.

### Stakeholders

University management, faculties, departments, administration, subject staff, first-, second- and third-cycle students, and the public.

<sup>39</sup> MIUN 2018/1789

Regler

2021-12-21

Registration number: 2021/1904

### Consultations and communication

The internal communication process adheres to the *Handläggningsordning för UKÄ-granskningar vid Mittuniversitetet* [Administrative Procedures for UKÄ Reviews at Mid Sweden University].

### Improvement and renewal

Improvement and development activities are allocated resources and implemented according to the process description in Figure 5.

### Additional information

Read more on UKÄ's website ([www.uka.se](http://www.uka.se)) and on the Mid Sweden University staff portal for quality assurance.

## **Evaluation of the quality assurance system, UKÄ (six-year cycle)**

### Purpose

The evaluation is aimed at reviewing both the quality assurance of research conducted by higher education institutions and helping improve the quality of higher education institutions.

### Responsible function(s)

Coordinated through the University Management Office (ULS).

### Implementation

According to UKÄ's model and schedule. An internal process description for all evaluations conducted by UKÄ can be found in the *Handläggningsordning för UKÄ-granskningar vid Mittuniversitetet* (Administrative Procedures for UKÄ Reviews at Mid Sweden University)<sup>40</sup>.

### Stakeholders

University management, faculties, departments, subject staff, students and the public.

### Consultations and communication

Reports are published through UKÄ. The internal communication process adheres to the *Handläggningsordning för UKÄ-granskningar vid*

<sup>40</sup> MIUN 2018/1789

Regler

2021-12-21

Registration number: 2021/1904

*Mittuniversitetet* [Administrative Procedures for UKÄ Reviews at Mid Sweden University].

### **Improvement and renewal**

Improvement and development activities are allocated resources and implemented according to the process description in Figure 5.

### **Additional information**

Read more on UKÄ's website, [www.uka.se](http://www.uka.se), and Mid Sweden University's staff portal for quality assurance.