

Degree programme quality assurance processes at Arts

The purpose of the degree programme quality assurance processes

The purpose of the degree programme quality assurance processes is to support and ensure the continued development of the degree programmes' high quality and societal relevance through dialogue and continuous identification of actions to develop the individual degree programmes.

Background

In order to support and create a common understanding of the ongoing work to assure and develop the quality of the individual degree programmes, two degree programme quality assurance processes have been developed at Aarhus University: *annual status review* and *degree programme evaluation*.

The *annual status review* is conducted by the degree programme board with the aim of reviewing the status and development of the individual degree programmes and establishing actions for development in the coming quality assurance year. *Degree programme evaluations* are carried out every five years in accordance with a fixed rotation plan. The aim is to conduct an in-depth review of the individual degree programmes with a focus on identifying actions based on a holistic perspective on the degree programme concerned. Together, the annual status review and the degree programme evaluation serve as an overall quality assurance system for the degree programmes at Arts.

Degree programme quality assurance processes

The degree programme quality assurance processes follow the four sub-policies of [Aarhus University's policy for quality assurance in education](#):

1. Getting students off to a good start
2. High-quality, coherent degree programmes
3. Motivational teaching and learning environments



4. Highly qualified graduates with relevant competences

For each sub-policy, indicators have been set covering key data within the area. The work to review the status of and develop the degree programmes is based on this data together with dialogue and experience with the quality assurance work of the individual degree programmes. The indicators cover the following areas:

- I. First-year drop-out rate
- II. Completion time
- III. Scheduled lessons
- IV. Teaching evaluation
- V. Study environment – academic and social well-being
- VI. Proportion of teaching done by researchers
- VII. Time on task
- VIII. Employment

A set of limit values is linked to each indicator. These values determine whether the level of each indicator is satisfactory (green) or whether there is a need for particular focus on the area in question (yellow and red). The indicators are supplemented by relevant key figures in PowerBi and other relevant materials, including Course evaluations, the Danish Student Survey, graduate surveys and staffing plans that show the connection between teaching and the researchers' subject areas on the individual study programme are important elements.

In the middle of the spring semester, the head of department, the chair of the degree programme board and the director of studies receive the annual data material on which the dialogue in the degree programme quality assurance processes is based.

If a degree programme has three or more indicators with limit values in the red area, special attention is paid to the degree programme in question. The vice-dean for education will convene a meeting with the purpose of deciding which actions should be taken on the degree programme concerned. Participants at this meeting are the dean, the vice-dean for education, the head of school, the director of studies and the head of department. If the head of department does not participate, it is the responsibility of the director of studies to inform the head of department about any decisions taken at this meeting which are to be incorporated into the [action plan](#) for the degree programme.

For the annual status review, the following points apply:

The degree programme board is the primary forum for the subject-specific dialogue. The head of department presents the data material to the degree programme board, focusing on including all four sub-policy areas of the quality assurance policy. The annual status review is organised so that each degree programme for which the degree programme board is responsible is reviewed in the spring semester. All four sub-policy

areas must be discussed, and the indicators together with the rest of the data material can show where there are challenges that need to be addressed. The indicators and the data material are not enough on their own, and it is therefore important that specific knowledge and experience regarding the degree programmes add nuance to the dialogue about degree programme quality.

The purpose of the annual status review is to review the status of the performance and development of the individual degree programmes compared to the previous year, and to follow up on development initiatives from the previous year's status review or degree programme evaluation with a view to clarifying which actions should be taken in future. These actions are defined in an action plan for each degree programme. The annual status review thus looks at the ongoing, systematised quality assurance work for the degree programme.

See the graphic overview of the annual status review at the end of this document.
[The annual status review process is also explained in more detail here.](#)

For the degree programme evaluation, the following points apply:

The degree programme evaluation differs from the annual status review in being more thorough, having a greater scope and involving a wider circle of stakeholders. In the degree programme evaluation, the head of department completes an evaluation report, and the head of school completes a head of school report. The evaluation report is drawn up based on the annual data material as well as knowledge of the degree programmes of the head of department and other department staff. The starting point for the evaluation meeting is the evaluation report and the preliminary action plan. Both the evaluation report and the preliminary action plan must relate to the four sub-policy areas.

The purpose of the degree programme evaluation is to provide a holistic, systematic and external perspective on the work to develop and continuously support the degree programme's high quality and academic excellence. To ensure an external perspective in the evaluation, [two external experts](#) are involved, whose task is to critically examine the degree programme and challenge the managers and staff. The school management team must approve the recommended external experts. The vice-dean has the final decision-making and approval authority.

One of the external experts is an expert within the subject area of the degree programme. The person in question takes a subject-specific approach to the evaluation. The other external expert is an employer representative who adopts a societal perspective. In addition to the involvement of external experts at the evaluation meeting in the autumn semester, the department's evaluation report is sent to the relevant chair of the body of external co-examiners, the relevant chair of the board of studies, and especially appointed employers from the school's employer panel or forums, who are invited to comment on the report. All comments received form part of the dialogue

material at the evaluation meeting.

The inclusion of external experts, the chair of the body of external co-examiners and employers as well as a wide circle of internal participants ensures that an external perspective is adopted on the degree programme. As a result of the degree programme evaluation process, a final action plan for the programme is set out. At the end of the evaluation process, the department and the director of studies submit this action plan to the vice-dean for education for approval.

See the graphic overview of the degree programme evaluation at the end of this document.

[The degree programme evaluation process is explained in more detail here.](#)

Output of the degree programme quality assurance processes

The degree programme quality assurance processes result in an action plan for each individual degree programme, and these form the basis of the development of and follow-up on the individual degree programmes the following year. The overall responsibility for drawing up the action plans lies with the head of department, who, together with the degree programme board, is responsible for ensuring the ongoing follow-up on the challenges identified. The person responsible for an element in the action plan is also responsible for including relevant stakeholders and bodies in order to reach a joint understanding and implement the agreed actions and development initiatives.

The head of department submits action plans drawn up in connection with the annual status review to the board of studies following recommendation by the degree programme board. The board of studies takes an interdisciplinary approach to the degree programme portfolio's action plans, and the discussions support the exchange of knowledge and mutual inspiration between the boards of studies. Based on the discussions, the board of studies can put particularly interesting topics on the agenda to be discussed later. After discussions by the board of studies, the action plans are submitted to the director of studies for approval.

Based on discussions of all the action plans by the board of studies, the board of studies submits one degree programme for discussion at a meeting with the vice-dean for education. This degree programme should have certain perspectives on degree programme development that are deemed to help generate knowledge about good initiatives in relation to degree programme development.

For degree programme evaluations, a final action plan is set out after the evaluation meeting has been held. The head of department involves the department/the degree programme board and the director of studies to collaborate on the production of a revised action plan, which the director of studies submits to the vice-dean for education for final approval.

For the degree programmes that are undergoing a degree programme evaluation in the quality assurance year, the head of department provides an oral account to the board of studies of the main points from the year's degree programme evaluations. On this basis, the board of studies assesses whether these evaluations give reason to focus on specific development areas in the coming quality assurance year. The vice-dean for education informs the faculty management team about the quality assurance work that has been carried out during the year. This information is based on the faculty's degree programme report.

The action plans for both the annual status review and the degree programme evaluation are designed on the basis of the common template.

Implementation of current guidelines

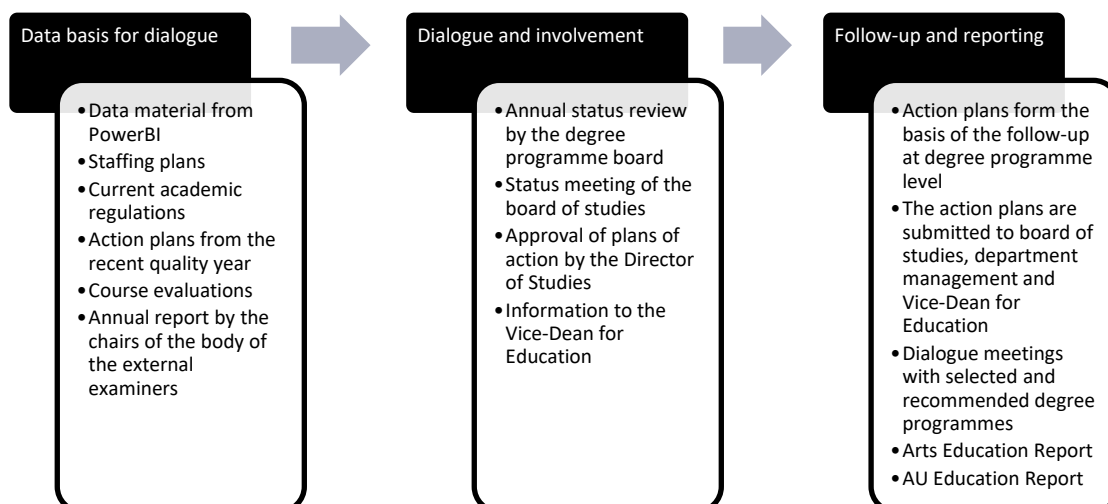
The implementation of degree programme evaluation at the Faculty of Arts complies with Aarhus University's general guidelines for the area as described in *Fælles principper for uddannelseskvalitetsprocesser: Årlig status og uddannelsesevaluering. (in Danish only)*

Link to the templates for the quality assurance work:

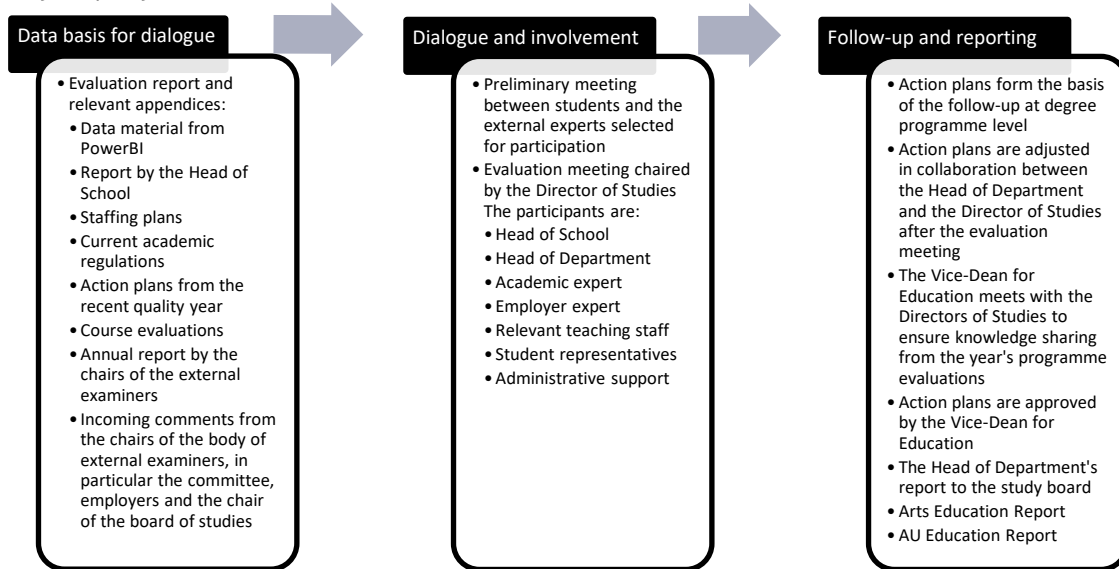
<https://kvalitet.au.dk/arts/kvalitetsprocesserne/skabeloner-og-dokumenter>

Graphic overview of the degree programme quality assurance processes:

Annual status review



Degree programme evaluations



Log for this document		
Description of change	Approved by and date	Effective as of date
Update of memo after revision of AU's quality policy	Vice-dean for Education 1. February 2022	1. February 2022.
The Arts Education Fair was paused with effect from 2023. The reason for the pausing period is declining support for the seminar day.	Vice-dean for Education 27. June 2022	1. January 2023
The Vice-Dean for Education provides the Heads of Studies for the respective degree programmes to chair the evaluations meeting. Management anchoring at faculty level will be ensured through handover meetings, which will be held at the turn of the year. Participants at this meeting is the Vice-Dean for Education and the Heads of Studies of the three schools.	This is a pilot project in 2023 approved by the Directors of Studies and by the Pro-Rector	1. January 2023
Editorial changes	Vice-dean for Education 15. August 2023	15. August 2023
Academic staff are removed as participants at the preliminary meetings	Vice-dean for Education 24. November 2023	1. April 2024
The head of department participates in the meeting along with the rest of the management if an education has three or more indicators with threshold values in the red area.	Vice-dean for Education 1. February 2025	1. February 2025
Update of links (maintenance)		10. marts 2025