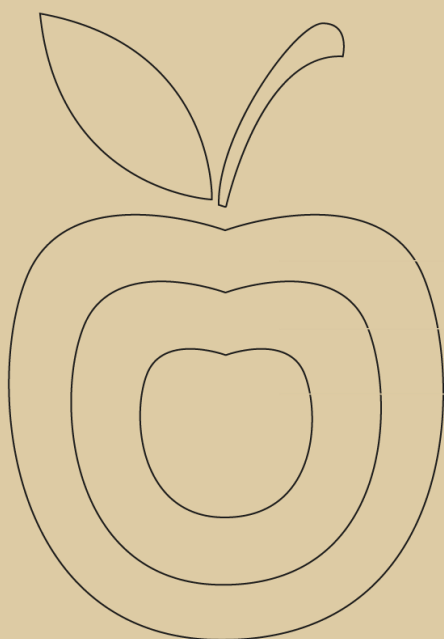


# Memorandum on SDU's follow-up on educational quality



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# Introduction

This note sets out the framework for follow-up processes in SDU's quality system for study programmes. It focuses mainly on the overall, cross-cutting follow-up processes, whose central elements are *status meetings* and *programme reports*.

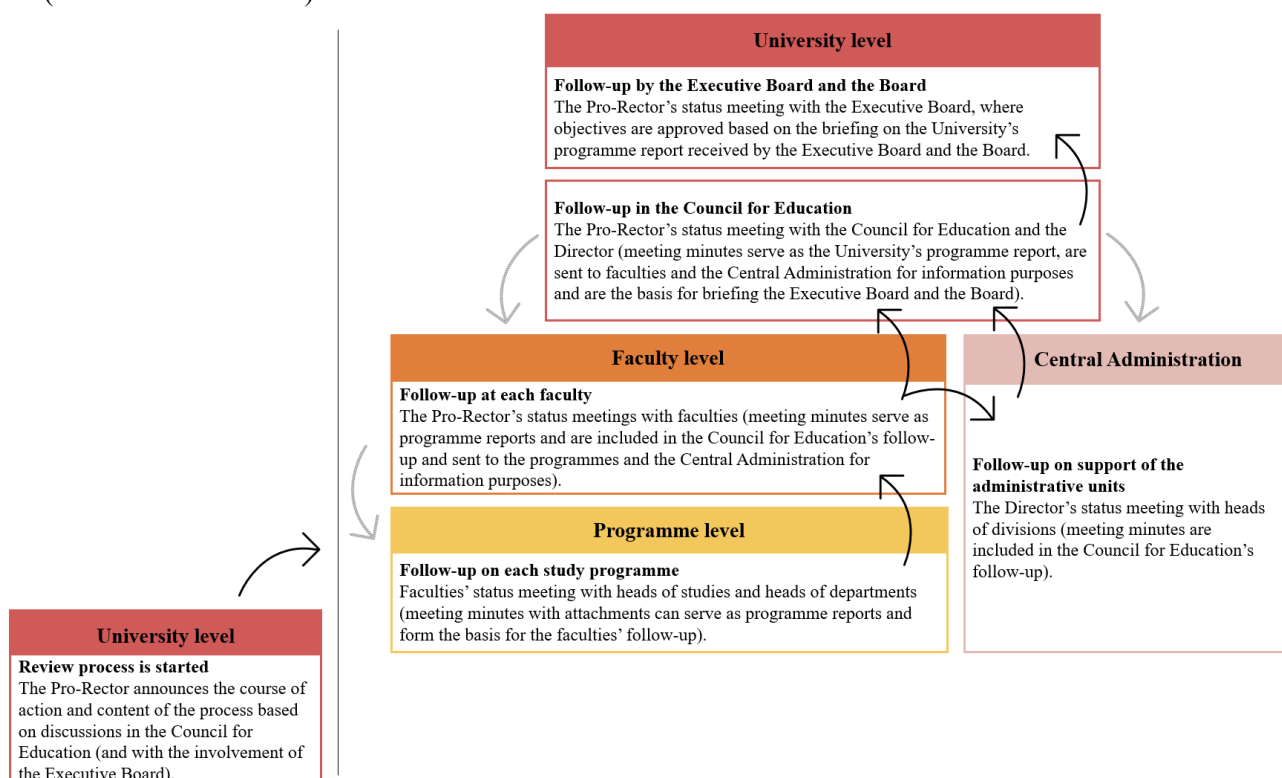
Both the Central Administration and the individual faculties have additional descriptions of how the common framework outlined in this memo is applied in their local workflows.

## General principles for follow-up processes

All types of follow-up processes at the university are organised based on the following principles and considerations.

- **Follow-up at all levels and throughout the organisation**

All levels in the organisation share responsibility for ensuring and developing educational quality at SDU. Every two years, follow-up processes are initiated within and across all levels and units. They are structured so that relevant information flows upwards from the programme level, through the faculty level and to the university level, while also taking into account the support provided by the Central Administration. In addition, information from follow-ups at management-level is fed back to the organisation's stakeholders (see illustration below).



- **Dialogue is key to follow-up processes**

Both practice-oriented follow-ups and overall processes are characterised by dialogue. In the overall process, status meetings are held at the programme level between heads of studies and faculty management. At the faculty level, status meetings are held between the faculty management and the Pro-Rector. At the university level, follow-up on educational quality is discussed at a meeting of the Council for Education, which the Director also attends. Before this meeting, the Director meets with the unit heads in the Central Administration.

- **Clear responsibility for starting and organising overall follow-up processes**

The Pro-Rector is responsible for the overall review processes. These are started up when the Council for Education approves a comprehensive process plan every two years, based on this memo and in consultation with the Executive Board. The plan covers the faculty and university levels, including deadlines for submitting materials ahead of meetings. The Council for Education informs the faculties and the Central Administration about the plan.

At the study programme level, the Dean is responsible for initiating and overseeing the practical organisation of the follow-up processes, helping with meeting preparation and involving the heads of all full- and part-time programmes.

In the Central Administration, the University Director is responsible for initiating the programme report among the heads of divisions and others involved in cross-cutting tasks that ensure educational quality.

- **The overall follow-up reflects systematic work on quality assurance and development**

Status meetings at all levels of the follow-up process show that the units take a systematic approach to educational quality, following the approach outlined in the quality cycle. Before each meeting, participants review previous agreements and check progress against the quality policy, strategic goals and other aims. At the meeting, priorities, task allocation, time horizon and success criteria for the upcoming period are agreed. In years when there are no status meetings, interim review meetings are held at the faculty and university levels to discuss whether previous agreements need any adjustments.

## **Key follow-up activities in the quality system**

The quality system's follow-up processes include three main systematic activities that are key to maintaining and developing teaching quality:

- **Ongoing, practice-oriented work on quality assurance and development of study programmes**

Through practice-based procedures, the organisation's stakeholders regularly and systematically follow up on the parts of the quality policy that fall under their areas of responsibility. The quality system includes a range of these procedures.

They include: faculties ensuring that all programmes live up to the curriculum guidelines; study boards following an annual cycle in line with the quality policy's goals; lecturers conducting teaching evaluations; and heads of department overseeing the professional development of teaching staff. In addition, external experts carry out full programme evaluations. *The guidelines for these ongoing activities are set at faculty level and in guides for the relevant stakeholders, based on SDU's common quality policy.*

- **Overall follow-up process across management levels**

The university ensures the quality and development of study programmes through a central process that takes place through status meetings and programme reports across units and management levels. This overarching process allows for a long-term perspective by ensuring that relevant information moves through management levels. *This follow-up process is the focus of this memo.*

## **Purpose of the quality system's overall follow-up**

The follow-up processes in the quality system aim to:

- **Joint approach**

The procedures should support a shared model for maintaining and developing educational quality at all levels of SDU and across units.

- **Support quality assurance and development**

The follow-up procedures should help safeguard and enhance educational quality at SDU by integrating the quality policy, educational data and strategic goals. By systematically comparing results with set goals and ambitions, management ensures that programmes meet established standards, address identified challenges and continue to develop.

- **Provide documentation and management information**

The follow-up procedures should document the ongoing work and results within the organisation and, for instance, form the basis for discussions about what to prioritise. This is necessary to ensure reliable management information and create a solid foundation for knowledge sharing, management involvement and the continued development of the study programmes.

# Elements of the follow-up process

## About status meetings and reports

Status meetings are a key part of the process, as they ensure dialogue across management levels, management involvement in follow-up activities and decisions, and a systematic, data-driven review of the quality of the programmes and teaching. The status meetings are held every two years.

Preparation for the meetings must include a review of the topics listed below, which also form the basic structure of the agenda and minutes. SDU has a shared digital platform that supports the written preparation for these meetings at the faculties. Minutes from the meetings can serve as programme reports, as long as they contain the necessary documentation of ongoing quality work, follow-ups and dialogue. The agenda and minutes of the status meetings must include at least the four elements outlined in the table below. The following sections provide detailed descriptions of the content requirements for these four parts of all status meetings (except for the Pro-Rector's interim review meeting).

Main theme	Elements
<b>Part 1:</b> <b>Follow-up on previous agreements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow-up on results based on aims agreed at previous status meeting.</li><li>• Follow-up on agreements regarding overall allocation of responsibilities and work processes from previous status meeting.</li></ul>
<b>Part 2:</b> <b>Current status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of the quality policy: Current status (for study programmes, this must include documentation of the ongoing, systematic work via practice-oriented annual cycles).</li><li>• Key figures and other important programme data: Current status</li><li>• Strategic initiatives: Current status</li><li>• Specific focus areas:* Current status</li><li>• Strategic analysis of current opportunities and challenges in maintaining educational quality</li><li>• Overall assessment of where adjustments, preventive actions or further development are needed regarding educational quality</li></ul>
<b>Part 3:</b> <b>Agreements for the next period</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agreements on prioritising objectives (including how and when to follow up)</li><li>• Agreements on overall allocation of responsibilities and work processes.</li></ul>
<b>Part 4:</b> <b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional information relevant to educational quality that is important to share within the organisation.</li><li>• Experiences and focus areas regarding the quality system's follow-up processes.</li></ul>

- \* As part of the preparation for each follow-up round, the Council for Education can select specific focus areas to be addressed in the status meetings. The Executive Board is involved in this selection.

### **Requirements for Part 1: Follow-up on previous agreements**

During the status meeting, follow-up on agreements from previous meetings involves reviewing the results achieved during the period and comparing them with the objectives and priorities previously agreed across management levels.

Previous agreements	Details of the follow-up
<b>Follow-up on previous agreements</b>	<p>This part involves reviewing the results achieved during the period in light of the agreements made at the previous status meeting, as well as how the allocation of responsibilities has worked out.</p> <p>There's no requirement to provide a detailed account of all elements, as long as areas where aims were not met are addressed. There's also an opportunity to highlight particularly good results that other parts of the organisation may benefit from knowing about.</p>

### **Requirements for Part 2: Follow-up on status elements**

The elements under 'Current status' are the aspects that SDU must address to make informed decisions about improving and developing educational quality.

The basis for preparing and holding follow-up meetings is information from the ongoing, practice-oriented quality work, key figures and other relevant analytical data.

Status element	Details of the follow-up
<b>Aims in the quality policy</b>	<p>This part involves accounting for the progress in meeting the quality policy objectives for which each unit is responsible. The programmes should also document their practice-based work as guided by the annual cycle.</p> <p>There's no requirement to provide a detailed account of all elements, as long as areas where objectives were not met are addressed. Particularly good results, which other parts of the organisation may benefit from knowing about, can also be highlighted.</p>
<b>Key figures and other important programme data</b>	<p>In this part, the participants provide a status update on key figures and other important data related to the educational quality of the full- and part-time study programmes. The data includes both quantitative metrics (available via Educational Quality 360) and insights from student surveys. (The Central Administration only considers the latter.)</p> <p>There's no requirement to provide a detailed account of all elements, as long as unsatisfactory key figures are analysed and explained.</p>
<b>Strategic initiatives</b>	<p>The follow-up in this part follows the guidelines set out in the objectives formulated at the relevant organisational levels.</p>
<b>Specific focus areas</b>	<p>The follow-up in this part adheres to the guidelines set out by the Council for Education (in consultation with the Executive Board) at the start of a new follow-up round.</p>
<b>Opportunities and challenges</b>	<p>This part provides an overall conclusion to the follow-up on status elements and also includes a broader analysis of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for the upcoming period. The section forms the basis for agreements made in the final part of the status meetings.</p>

### **Requirements for Part 3: Agreements for the next period**

Based on the follow-up on status elements and the analysis of opportunities and challenges, the specific objectives are agreed on for the coming period, along with who's responsible for implementing them and when to follow up.

Next period	Details of the follow-up
<b>Agreements for the next two-year period</b>	This part involves making agreements on priorities for the coming period, in addition to the set goals in the quality policy. There's no requirement for detailed action plans, but the objectives must be specific enough to determine who's responsible for carrying them out, whether the results are satisfactory and when they'll be evaluated.

### **Requirements for Part 4: Evaluation of the review process and quality system**

The final mandatory part of the status meetings should provide an opportunity to gather experiences and reflections on the review process and quality system with the aim of making any necessary adjustments or improvements.

Previous agreements	Details of the follow-up
<b>Evaluation</b>	In this part, the participants share any comments on how the follow-up process has progressed, along with general observations on the aims, allocation of responsibilities and processes in the quality system.

## **Specifics of faculty status meetings with heads of study programmes**

The status meeting with the study programme heads includes a 'programme development dialogue' – a meeting between faculty management, heads of study and heads of department that focuses on the individual programme, including internal and external challenges.

The purpose of the follow-up is also to shed light on the general quality of the programme, and to establish agreements for the next period that address any unsatisfactory issues. The status meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss specific, current issues at SDU or other matters relevant to ensuring and improving educational quality.

Each faculty is responsible for planning these meetings. At a minimum, the faculty management, head of studies and head of department must attend, and the head of studies must involve the study board in preparing for the meeting. Faculties may also choose to include additional participants as needed.



## Specifics of the Pro-Rector's status meetings and interim review meetings with the faculties

Systematic follow-up on educational quality, along with programme data, forms the basis for status meetings between the Pro-Rector and faculty leadership in odd-numbered years. The aim is to ensure data-driven follow-up on the overall status of the faculty's study programmes, focusing on the quality policy, strategic priorities and key figures. The meetings also strengthen management involvement, address any unsatisfactory conditions and review the faculty's programme portfolio. The status meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss specific, current issues at SDU or other matters relevant to ensuring and improving educational quality.

The meetings are planned by the Rector's Office. At a minimum, the Pro-Rector, Dean and Vice-Dean must take part in the status meeting. Faculties can choose to include administrative support as needed.

In years without status meetings, interim review meetings are held for the Pro-Rector and faculties to assess whether agreements from the previous year's status meetings require adjustments (e.g. due to new circumstances) or if the work can proceed as planned. The meeting also provides an opportunity to discuss the faculty's programme portfolio, and to follow up on aims, provided that results were expected to be available by this point. But interim review meetings don't involve the same general follow-up as status meetings.

The agenda and minutes for the Pro-Rector's interim review meetings must include the following elements:

Main theme	Elements
<b>Part 1:</b> <b>Review of agreements from the status meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review of agreements on aims and results from the previous status meeting to clarify whether there's a need to change something in light of new circumstances.</li></ul>
<b>Part 2:</b> <b>Current status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any results from aims that the parties agreed to follow up on in the interim review meeting.</li></ul>
<b>Part 3:</b> <b>Agreements for the next period</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any adjustments to the agreements from the status meeting regarding the prioritisation of aims (including how and when to follow up)</li><li>Any adjustments to agreements on overall allocation of responsibilities and work processes.</li></ul>
<b>Part 4:</b> <b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Additional information relevant to educational quality that is important to share within the organisation.</li><li>Experiences and focus areas regarding the quality system's follow-up processes.</li></ul>

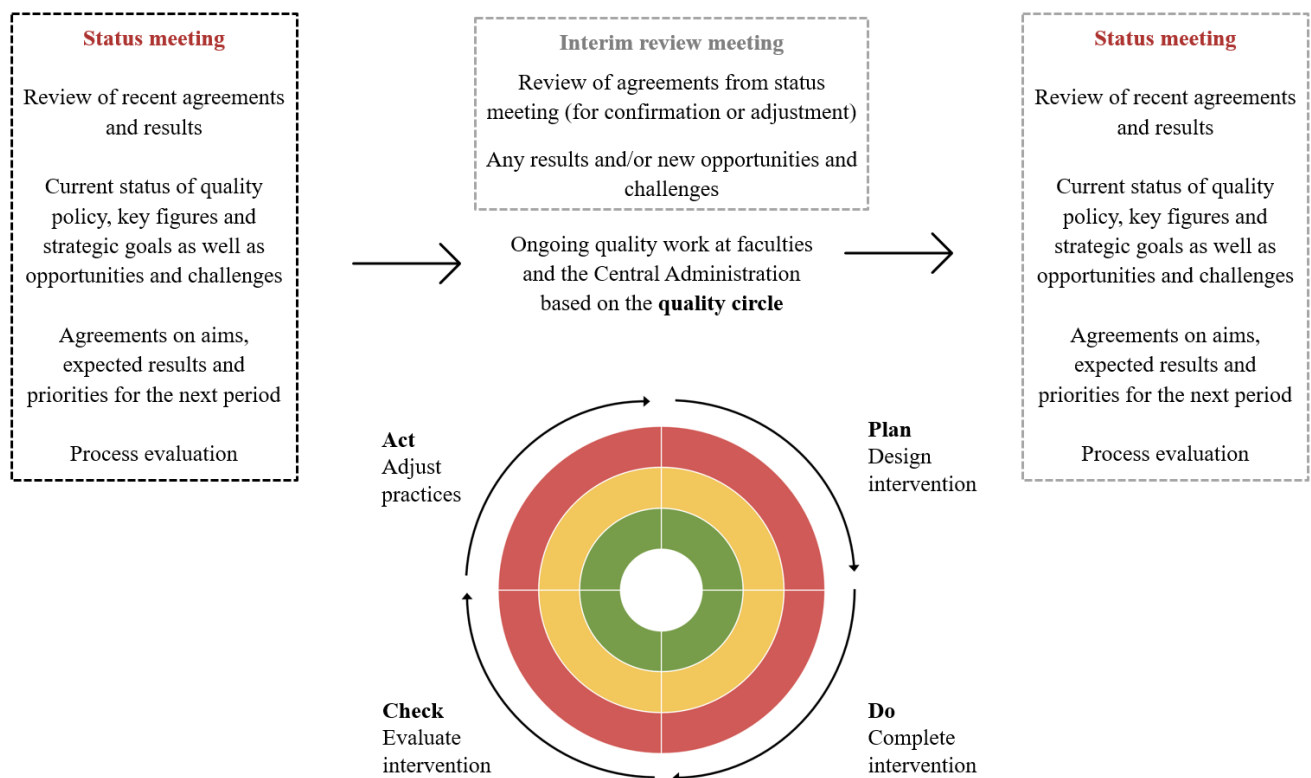
## Specifics of the follow-up meeting in the Council for Education

The Pro-Rector's follow-up meeting in the Council for Education provides an overview of efforts to ensure and develop educational quality across the university. The Director participates in the part of the meeting that focuses on the Central Administration's support, to ensure dialogue and necessary agreements across units. The minutes from the review meeting serve as the university's programme report, documenting: the current status of key figures and quality aims (including any specific focus areas); a strategic analysis of the university's programme portfolio in relation to the work on educational quality; and an account of agreements on how to

work with key figures, aims and priorities in the coming period. The report also forms the basis for briefing the Board on follow-ups on the previous period's results and the ambitions for the coming period.

## Framework for work between status meetings

The follow-up processes are based on a shared understanding that systematic work is being done to ensure and develop educational quality at the university. Status meetings serve both as a basis for ongoing work and a review of progress. They help identify focus areas and result in agreements on priorities, expected outcomes and allocation of responsibilities for the next period. In this way, the meetings provide a framework for planning, implementation and evaluation of efforts in the coming period.



In cases where an interim review meeting is held between two status meetings – such as the Pro-Rector's interim review meetings with the faculties – the meeting focuses on ongoing development processes. It's also an opportunity to reassess agreements made at the status meetings.

# Processes for status meetings

The diagram shows the full follow-up process, which is started every two years. The review years (odd-numbered years) focus on ensuring educational quality, aggregating information, dialogue between management levels and strategic choices. The second year (even-numbered years) provides time for practice-based work on educational quality, allowing time to make improvements based on insights from the previous follow-up process.

