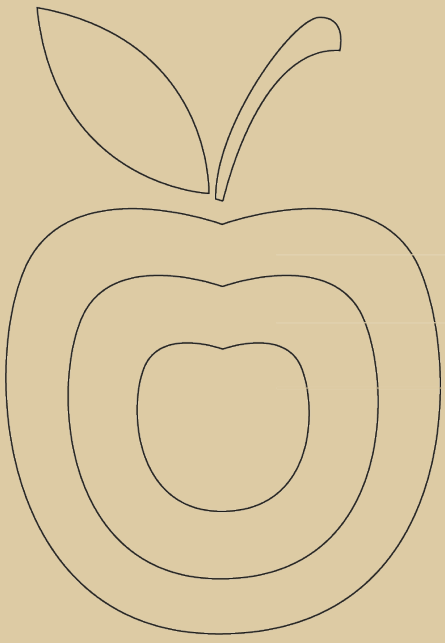
SDU

SDU's Educational Quality

Memorandum on the revision of SDU's quality assurance system for education programmes



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Introduction

This memorandum frames the evaluation and development of SDU's quality assurance system for education programmes. It concerns procedures for ongoing adjustments and procedures for systematic inspections. The development of SDU's quality assurance system for programmes must be transparent, ensuring that the identification of issues requiring adaptation and the implementation of changes are always clear.

The development of the quality assurance system for programmes at SDU must

- be coordinated with the University's other development processes (including strategic initiatives)
- ensure that all elements of the system are kept up-to-date
- ensure that insights from those responsible, located both centrally as well as close to practice, inform the development work
- be characterised by transparent procedures for change
- be clearly communicated to the organisation.

Identifying development needs

Continuous identification of needs for adjustment

There are several ways for managers across SDU to identify the need for ongoing adjustments to the quality assurance system and to initiate systematic evaluation:

- **Based on decisions in the Council for Education and the Executive Board**
  The Council for Education and the Executive Board can initiate changes to the quality policy based on changes in the framework conditions (e.g. external requirements from legislation) or based on their own wishes for development. The follow-up processes across the organisation on educational quality always include an evaluation of the quality assurance system twice a year (as per the Memorandum on SDU's follow-up on educational quality). From this process, information may emerge indicating the need to adjust processes or policies within the quality assurance system. The Council for Education can also recommend to the Executive Board that elements of the quality assurance system be revised based on the annual evaluations that the Council for Education conducts of its work (as per the Terms of Reference of the Council for Education). The Executive Board can initiate the revision of one or more existing elements of the quality assurance system for education, for instance in continuation of the overall follow-up process. This includes phasing out existing elements or developing new ones.

- **Based on feedback from study boards, heads of programmes and others closely involved with the programmes**
  Ongoing practical work on programme quality may reveal the need for development or adaptation of quality assurance system policies or processes. Therefore, comments or suggestions for changes are always welcome. This can, for instance, be done via the link provided in the quality policy in the web universe. Any enquiries received through this channel are handled by SDU Education and may be forwarded to SAK KVAL or the Council for Education for discussion and decision, unless they are just minor, administrative changes.

- **Based on ongoing quality work in supporting units**
  The coordination group for study administration (SAK KVAL) continuously monitors the work with educational quality across SDU. Observations and information obtained during this work are used in the ongoing development of the quality assurance system, together with knowledge and observations from supporting units in the Central Administration. These may include issues identified during development projects, quality seminars, follow-up processes or the ongoing quality work conducted on a daily basis.

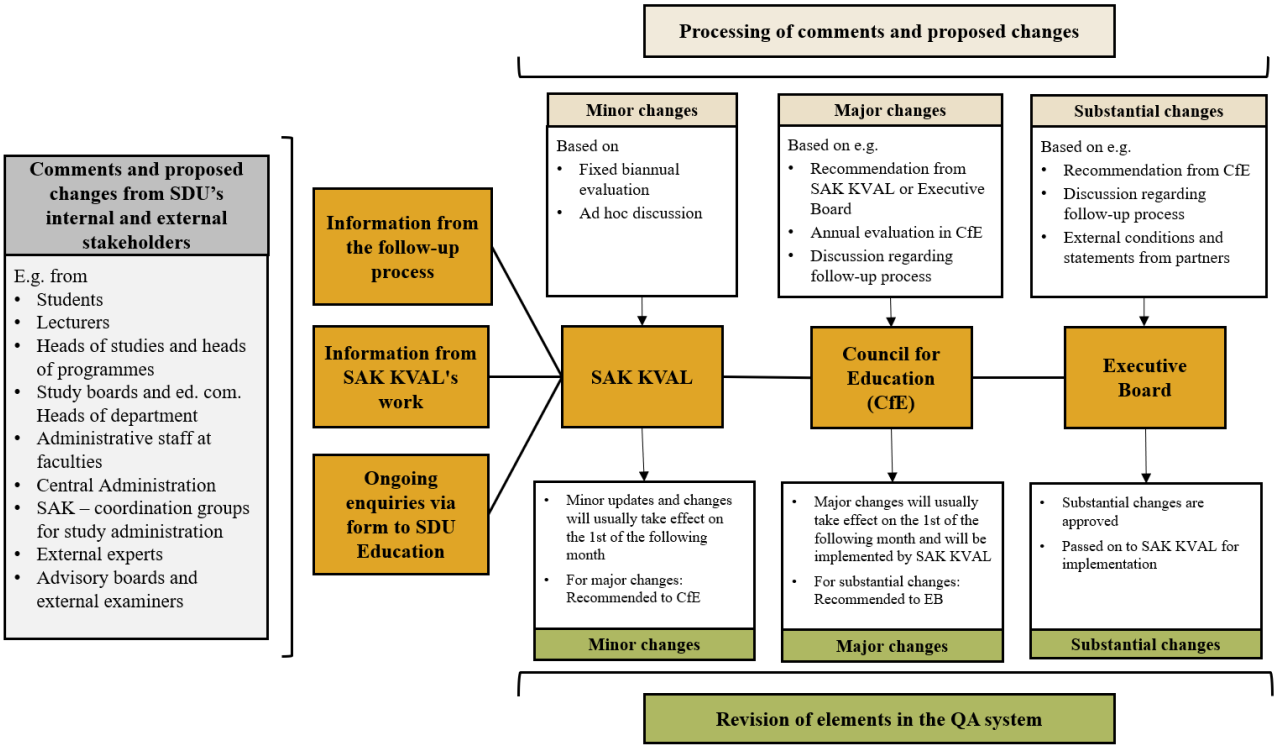
Systematic review and evaluation

The ongoing identification of adaptation needs can also reveal issues that give rise to a general, systematic evaluation and subsequent revisions of the quality assurance system. For example, previous evaluations and revisions have identified challenges and development opportunities through audit trails, interviews and workshops, which led to structures, content and workflows being adapted. Within one year of a decision on a new institutional accreditation, the Council for Education must assess whether there is a need to initiate a revision of the quality assurance system.

Change procedures

Procedure overview

Changes to the system can be made in different ways, depending on the changes in question. For major or substantial changes, approval is required from the Council for Education, the Pro-Rector or possibly the Executive Board, depending on the nature of the changes and which parts of the quality assurance system they concern.



Graphical illustration of the process, from gathering information about the need for adaptations, to decisions and further implementation.

It may require a specific assessment to determine when something is a minor, major or substantial/structural change. However, language corrections and wording changes are typically considered revisions that can be made administratively.

The Council for Education can approve content changes in the cross-cutting descriptions of the policy for education quality, whereas changes to content in the policy itself are considered substantial changes that must be approved by the Executive Board. If there is any doubt as to when changes are considered major or structural, the Pro-Rector will make a decision.

Implementing changes in the quality assurance system

How changes should be implemented depends on which elements are involved and the magnitude of the changes. But in general, the following applies:

- **Entry into force of changes**
  Minor administrative changes can take effect as soon as existing documents have been edited, whereas significant changes to the quality assurance system are discussed at the SAK KVAL meetings twice a year (in January and June). For changes that require actual adoption, it must also be decided when they enter into force (typically the 1st of the month following the final decision), and it must be stated when the change is expected to be implemented (typically at the earliest date of application). For memoranda, the effective date is indicated on the actual document. The approval date is the date of the most recent change.

- **Communicating changes**
  Notification of major or structural changes and requests for implementation are sent to the faculties and the Central Administration via the respective main mailboxes. Communication will be handled decentrally. There must also be a logbook under the auspices of SAK KVAL for major, substantial and structural changes to the quality assurance system.