

# Quality Assurance System for the University of Agder

*Approved by the University Board 16 September 2009*

## **3 Procedures for quality assurance of research and organised research training**

Quality assurance of research includes:

- Quality assurance of existing PhD programmes
- Quality assurance of new PhD programmes
- Quality assurance of research documentation
- Quality assurance of project establishment and execution
- Guidelines on research ethics
- Follow-up and monitoring by the academic management

### **3.1 Quality assurance of existing PhD programmes**

Courses included in the research training component are normally not evaluated individually. PhD students are asked to evaluate the PhD programme as a whole in connection with their annual progress report. The main supervisor should carry out a similar evaluation in connection with the supervisors' annual progress report.

A programme evaluation of the PhD programme is carried out at least every five years. The evaluation report is presented to the Academic Affairs Committee and the University Research Committee as an information item.

The Research Secretariat is responsible for preparing and presenting general administrative procedures for the PhD programmes to the University Research Committee.

The Research Training Committee at each faculty should prepare an annual report on the faculty's PhD programmes for each academic year. The report should include the following items:

- Assessment of the number of PhD students relative to target numbers and strategy objectives.
- Assessment of student completion rate and suggestions for increased production
- Overview of completed doctoral courses
- Cooperation with other institutions in the PhD programmes, including organised research training.
- Summary of progress reports of PhD students and supervisors, with comments
- Assessment of the quality of the programme, effects of already implemented improvement measures, and suggestions for new improvement measures
- Comments on admission procedures
- Information on completed programme evaluations
- Information on other external or internal evaluations involving the PhD programme

### **3.2 Quality assurance of new PhD programmes**

Quality assurance of new PhD programmes is normally carried out by expert committees. The University Board, or the Rector on the authority of the Board, appoints the members of the committee based on suggestions from the faculty.

National criteria for the accreditation of PhD programmes form the basis of the assessment.

Criteria for the selection of expert committees for the assessment of new PhD programmes:

- Experts cannot have functions at the institution or program they are appointed to assess or other formal connections with the institution which may render them disqualified.
- Legal obligations on fair gender representation must be observed.
- Expert committees for the assessment of new PhD programmes should normally consist of 3 members.
- In connection with assessment of new PhD programmes all experts must be full professors. One of the experts must be recruited from outside Norway.

### **3.3 Quality assurance of research documentation**

The Research Secretariat, in cooperation with the University Library and the faculties, is responsible for developing procedures for the registration of scientific production and for the follow-up and monitoring of those procedures. The procedures are approved by the University Research Committee.

A special committee headed by the Vice Rector for Research is responsible for quality assurance of the registration of scientific anthologies and monographs at the University of Agder. The University Library acts as secretariat for the committee.

The Research Secretariat, in cooperation with the Finance Office, is responsible for developing procedures for the reporting of financial performance indicators relating to research activity.

### **3.4 Quality assurance of project establishment and execution**

Research activities that are completely or partially externally financed are regulated by UiA's Guidelines for external funding. The Research Secretariat, in cooperation with the Finance Office and the faculties, is responsible for preparing and updating a checklist of administrative procedures for externally funded projects, covering project application, the entering into agreements, project organisation, follow-up and monitoring and reporting.

### **3.5 Guidelines on research ethics**

A set of guidelines on research ethics has been approved by the University Board for handling accusations of academic misconduct at the University of Agder. A separate committee is responsible for information about research ethics and proper research practices. The Research Secretariat acts as secretariat for the committee. Information on research ethics is presented on the University's web pages.

### **3.6 Follow-up and monitoring by the academic management**

The research activity at each faculty and for the institution as a whole is reviewed and evaluated as part of the annual quality reporting and regular revision of institutional and faculty level strategic plans cf. 3.7 and 3.8 below.

Individual researchers and research groups are monitored and evaluated by project progress monitoring, annual performance assessment interviews, and internal and external peer review. The evaluation should also address any ethical issues that arise out of the research activity.

If quality faults are discovered, the head of department or dean is responsible for taking necessary measures to follow up the researchers involved in the project (see also chapter 6).

### **3.7 Strategic plans for research and organised research training. Key performance indicators**

Strategies for research and organised research training shall be included as part of the University's overall strategy. The Rector, in consultation with the deans, gives guidelines for the strategic plans at

the faculty level. Each faculty' strategic plan for research and organised research training must be approved by the Faculty Board, and the plan must be revised at least ever 4 years.

The University and each faculty must set qualitative and quantitative performance targets for each of the key performance indicators decided by the Ministry of Education and Research for the higher education sector, and should set supplementary performance targets where this is relevant for the quality assurance system. Annual targets for each faculty are decided by the Faculty Board. Annual targets for the University are decided by the University Board based on suggestions from the Central Research Council.

### **3.8 Faculty reports on quality assurance of research and organised research training**

Each faculty's annual quality report must include research and organised research training. The report should include an assessment of goal attainment with respect to the goals set down in strategic plans, action plans and performance targets for key performance indicators. The report must be approved by the Faculty Board.

As a basis for the assessment, the faculties will be provided with basic statistics and any existing non-conformance reports within a set deadline each year. The quality report should also contain a short assessment of initiatives in progress, and assess the need for further initiatives in the coming period. The report must be sent to the Research Secretariat by the deadline and will be considered by the University Research Committee and then by the University Board. Annual reports from each faculty and the Teacher Education Unit are made for each calendar year, and form part of the basis for the University's Report on Educational Attainments.

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