Framework for the systematic quality assurance of education programmes at HVL

Approved by the University Board on 29.11.18

Revised following a review by the HVL Education Committee:

- Item 06/19 (minor adjustments and specifications related to freedom of choice for course reports and/or dialogue meetings, periodic evaluations, external representation in the Programme Council, class representatives)
- Item 30/19 (amended requirements for saving reference group meeting minutes)
- Item 6/20 (amended text regarding periodic evaluations of study programmes)
- Item 14/20 (amended description of student democracy under key functions and the election of student representatives under the section on annual activities and processes for the improvement and development of study programmes)
- Item 19/20 (amendments to the description of data and documentation under the quality of study programmes)
- Item 20/20 (amendments to the description of student surveys under quality of study programmes)
- Item 23/21 (amendments to the description of two roles and responsibilities in accordance with the new Universities and University Colleges Act, new PhD regulations for HVL, and new structure of HVL and the Student Government.
- Item 5/24 (updated text according to the 2023-2030 HVL strategy, and amendments related to PhD programmes)

Contents

1 Introduction

Western Norway University of Applied Science (HVL) shall be a university with a clear professional and workplace-oriented profile. Through research, the education of highly competent candidates, and our collaboration with society and the labour market, we contribute to the sharing and application of knowledge. We play an active role and take responsibility for influencing societal developments within our education and research areas.

Our values are what we stand for, and they characterise our identity and culture. HVL shall:

Include: We treat everyone with respect and consideration. Through our inclusion, we value diversity and promote academic and professional development, security and well-being.

Challenge: We challenge established perspectives and working methods. By doing so, we promote education, critical thinking and action.

Collaboration: We develop and share knowledge and experiences through collaboration internally and with our surroundings. Through such collaboration, we are able to promote creativity, learning, innovation and academic relevance.

1.1 Requirements for the University's systematic quality assurance

Systematic quality assurance work applies to all HVL's education programmes at all levels.

The Universities and University Colleges Act requires institutions to have systems in place for quality assurance to ensure and develop the quality of the education. This Act also stipulates that student evaluations must be an integral part of the system. It also includes several provisions for systematic quality assurance work in accordance with European, national and local standards, laws, regulations and frameworks:

- European Standards and Guidelines
- Quality of education regulations (determined by the Ministry of Education and Research)
- Regulations on the supervision and control of the quality of Norwegian higher education (determined by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT))
- Regulations relating to studies and examinations at HVL (adopted by the HVL Board)
- Regulations relating to admissions to HVL (adopted by the HVL Board)
- Regulations relating to PhD degrees at HVL (adopted by the HVL Board)

The framework specifies and expands on the provisions of acts and regulations for systematic quality assurance of education programmes at HVL, and explains which functions are responsible for carrying out processes and activities. In addition to the framework, HVL has dedicated websites for education quality with process descriptions, mandates, annual plans, templates and other tools for each of the areas in the framework.

Documentation of quality assurance work may be produced in the form of case assessments, reports, meeting minutes, analyses and data presentations.

1.2   Objectives for HVL's quality assurance work

HVL presented a new strategy in 2023, which will remain in effect until 2030[1]. The overarching goal of our quality assurance of study programmes at HVL is based on the strategy to ensure that our vocational and workplace-oriented study programmes meet future competence requirements.

HVL's strategy is the foundation for ensuring study programmes of high quality and with continuous education pathways. Our study programmes shall be adapted to all types of students, and we will ensure a stimulating and accessible learning environment.

Our students participate in research, which enhances the quality of our study programmes. Several of our study programmes offer students opportunities for practical training and project-based collaborations in workplaces. Our research is implemented into our study programmes and has an impact on society and the labour market, also at the international level.

In addition to our strategy, the HVL Board has adopted five overarching principles for the strategic development of the programme portfolio that will apply during the same period.[2]

We will have a predictable framework for quality assurance work, where roles, responsibilities and processes are clearly defined and embedded at all levels of the organisation. We will ensure inclusion and participation through a good annual plan, process descriptions and information flow.

NOKUT states that "education institutions, NOKUT and society all have a need to define the concept of quality in higher education." NOKUT has defined several quality assurance areas that are considered key to the quality of education, where study programmes are at the centre of this model. Efforts to ensure and develop high-quality courses, study programmes and programme portfolios at HVL will therefore be based on NOKUT's defined quality assurance areas, as in this model[3].

The University shall facilitate the development and improvement of the *quality of each course and study programme* through good structure and management. We will have study programmes that are both attractive and relevant, with learning outcomes developed in cooperation with the labour market. Instruction and assessments shall be conducted by good teachers who use forward-looking, evidence-based and varied methods. HVL obtains and uses information in its annual and periodic evaluation of the quality of courses, study programmes and programme portfolios, as well as the quality of the learning environment and the academic and professional environment across the study programmes.

We have a system whereby students and employees can report, either in name or anonymously, conditions that may impact the learning environment, educational instruction and the quality of education. Process descriptions and the annual plan related to councils, committees and key functions in quality assurance work shall ensure that poor quality is rectified within a reasonable time. Results of systematic quality assurance work in all areas shall be included in the knowledge base for annual and periodic evaluations, and in the development of the overall programme portfolio.

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[1] https://www.hvl.no/om/strategi-2023-2030/
[2] Board item 24/23-B
[3] Transitions within and to higher education, an academic and professional environment, programme design and education management, learning environment, relevance to society and working life, learning outcome.

This will ensure that HVL safeguards its social mission by offering relevant education programmes of high international quality in accordance with HVL's strategy and distinctive character. These contexts are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Different dimensions of the systematic quality assurance work for education programmes at HVL
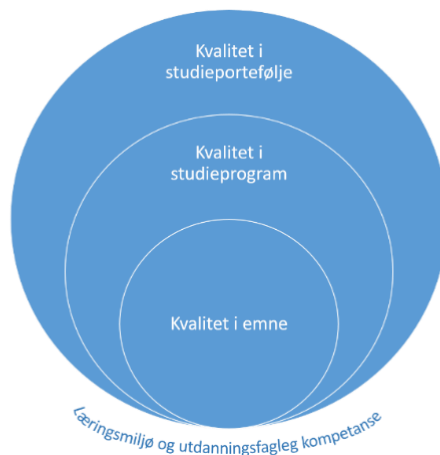
Figure 1: Programme portfolio quality

Study programme quality

Course quality

Learning environment and academic competence

2 Roles and responsibilities

Clear official channels and definitions of roles are essential in order for HVL to succeed in its systematic quality assurance work. The introduction of the framework will therefore highlight the roles and responsibilities for various boards, councils, committees, forums and functions in the work on quality assurance.

2.1 Board, councils and committees[4]

University Board	• Overall responsibility for quality assurance work at HVL and for the strategic development of the overall programme portfolio at all levels. • Has the overall responsibility for ensuring a sound learning environment at the institution, based on a general assessment of considerations for student health, safety and welfare. • Adopts changes to and revisions of the quality assurance system for education programmes. • Adopts local regulations, instructions and mandates for the Board, councils, committees and functions, including responsibilities and tasks related to the quality assurance system for education programmes. • Approves annual reports for HVL, including follow-up of results and planning related to the quality of the education programmes.
Learning Environment Committee	• Shall contribute to compliance with the provisions relating to the learning environment in the Universities and University Colleges Act and will ensure student participation in processes impacting the learning environment.
Education Committee	• Discuss, highlight and advise the Rector on strategic and political education issues. • Contribute to ensuring that education programmes and study programmes are of high quality and have relevance to society and the labour market, develop HVL's academic profile, and support strategic development related to internationalisation, research-based education and lifelong learning. • Advise on measures for student recruitment • Assess, follow up and advise on measures that safeguard and further develop systems and frameworks for the quality of education programmes. • Accredit new study programmes with a scope of more than 60 credits in a discipline, where HVL may confer a PhD, and approve new study plans with a scope of more than 60 credits (with Board-delegated authority). • Make decisions upon any delegation by the Board or Rector in education matters.

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[4]This website shows the structure of all councils and committees at HVL: https://www.hvl.no/om/utval/

Central PhD Committee	• Shall be a strategic, coordinating and advisory body for the Board and the management of the institution with regard to PhD programmes at HVL. • Prepare and administrate common guidelines and procedures in accordance with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.
Faculty councils / Education committees[5]	Advise the Dean on the systematic quality assurance of courses, study programmes and programme portfolios, as well as the faculty's academic and professional competence and learning environment.
Study Programme Council	Advises faculty management and the programme coordinator on issues related to quality improvement of the study programme and its learning environment.
PhD Programme Committee	• Advises the Dean in matters of relevance to PhD programmes • Initiates measures aimed at quality assurance and the development of PhD programmes at the course and study programme levels. • Approves changes to the study plan within the accreditation framework.

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[5] Faculty of Technology, Environmental and Social Sciences, the faculty council and education committee for the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, and the faculty council for the Faculty of Education, Arts and Sports.

2.2   Key functions

Rector	• Has the overall responsibility for quality assurance work for education programmes and students' learning environment. • Reports to the Board on systematic quality assurance work.
Pro-Rector for Education	• Has a strategic responsibility for the development of HVL's education programmes. • Shall safeguard and further develop systems and guidelines for education quality that support faculties' quality improvement work for study programmes. • Responsible for HVL's strategic development of education programmes with a lifelong learning perspective. • Shall be a spearhead for the development and renewal of of study programmes, their quality and their learning environments in collaboration with faculties, and in accordance with the institution's strategies and decisions. • Shall coordinate the enterprise within the area of education and ensure the efficient administration and operations of HVL's collective study programmes. • Chairs HVL's Education Committee, and is a member or chair of the Learning Environment Committee[6]
Pro-Rector for Research	• Responsible for the strategic development of R&D activities at HVL. • Responsible for strengthening the link between education and research. • Shall be a spearhead for the internationalisation of education and research. • Chairs the Research and Development Committee and the central PhD Committee. • In charge of quality assurance work for study programmes at the PhD level.
Pro-Rector for Regional Development	• Responsible for developing external cooperation, strengthening the University's position in the region, establishing HVL as a significant knowledge and competence actor, and taking steps to ensure that the University is an attractive partner for private businesses and public agencies. • Responsible for HVL's overall efforts to further develop five sustainable campuses.
Dean	• Oversees the work on developing faculties' education programmes at all levels. • Responsible for ensuring that education programmes maintain a high quality and that all students have a fully satisfactory learning environment.

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[6] The Learning Environment Committee is chaired by the Pro-Rector for Education and a student representative every other year.

	- Shall ensure that the faculties' study programmes are adapted to society and each individual's need for lifelong learning. - Has the overall responsibility for faculties' quality assurance work and for the strategic development of each faculty's programme portfolio. - Has the overall responsibility for the implementation of PhD programmes at the faculties. - Reports annually to the Rector on the quality assurance system at each faculty.
Department management	- Responsible for the department's work on quality and ensures that this is carried out in accordance with the quality assurance system for education programmes at HVL. - Responsible for the academic and professional quality of the education and research within the department's disciplines. - Heads the work to adapt the department's disciplines to the needs of society, and to develop education programmes at the bachelor's and master's levels and contribute to the work on PhD programmes offered. - Works to promote a good working and learning environment at the department.
Academic administrator for the PhD programme	- Administrative and academic head of the PhD programme, and reports to the Dean - Heads the work on the quality of PhD programmes and ensures that this is conducted in accordance with the quality assurance system for education programmes at HVL, including special requirements for PhD programmes.
Programme coordinator[7] at the bachelor's and master's levels	- Has the overall responsibility for the further development of the education programme, assurance of high academic quality, and good progression and completion. - Responsible for ensuring that the education programme satisfies the requirements set out in regulations and framework plans, and for the follow-up of requirements in HVL's quality assurance system for education programmes. - Overall responsibility for practical training in study programmes. - Overall responsibility to ensure that student's learning environments are fully satisfactory. - Shall facilitate internationalisation, digitalisation and innovation of education programmes. - Responsible for coordinating study programmes at several campuses, and for collaboration across campuses. - Reports in accordance with faculty structure and delegation authority.

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[7] Study programme coordinator at the Faculty of Education, Arts and Sports (FLKI)

Course coordinator	- Heads the work course quality, and ensures that this is conducted in accordance with the quality assurance system for education programmes at HVL. - Responsible for coordinating courses with several course lecturers, and for collaboration across campuses. - Reports in accordance with faculty structure.
Students and PhD candidates	Students and PhD candidates participate in the quality development of study programmes and the learning environment as individuals, as student representatives, or as members of councils, committees or student associations.
Student Democracy (does not apply to PhD candidates)	- The Vestlandet Student Government Association is the highest student government body at HVL. It makes decisions on general policies on behalf of all HVL students. Student democracy is organised with representatives from classes, departments and faculties, and from the campuses. - Students are represented in all councils and committees working to ensure the quality of educational programmes and the learning environment, in accordance with the University and University Colleges Act. - The Student Government Association and student councils are responsible for providing training for all student representatives.
Staff members	Staff members contribute to quality development at HVL by virtue of their functions, or as members of a council, committee or professional organisation.
Administrative services	- Administrative managers for units in the joint administration are responsible for quality development and quality assurance of services in their units. - Administrative managers at each faculty are responsible for the development quality assurance of services in their units. - Students are ensured administrative support for each study programme council.
Societal and business communities	Members of the community and local businesses contribute to the quality improvement of education programmes by participating in councils and forums at the faculty and study programme levels.

2.3   Culture of quality

Each year, the HVL arranges a conference where relevant topics related to the quality of education and learning environment are on the agenda.

The Pro-Rector of Education and Faculties facilitates dialogue on relevant issues related to quality. This may be arranged in the form of seminars, discussion forums or other meeting points. Meeting points should primarily be web-based and open to all interested parties. Student representatives are always invited.

2.3.1   The HVL Award for Quality of Education

This award acknowledges employees and academic communities that have shown particular excellence in educational instruction, and who promote the quality of teaching and evaluation methods. This is intended as inspiration for continued professional and academic efforts, engagement and use of innovative teaching methods and learning arenas.

2.3.2   Speak Up (Sei-i-frå)

HVL has a system whereby students and employees can report, either in name or anonymously, conditions that may impact the learning environment, educational instruction and the quality of education. These reports are sent to the relevant manager, and everyone who states their name will receive a response. The Speak Up system is a supplement to other established channels in the systematic work to improve the quality of education.

2.4   Other relevant functions

2.4.1   Board of Appeals for Student Affairs

HVL has a Board of Appeals that processes appeals on individual decisions, as well as other complaints by candidates following Board decisions, cf. Section 5-1 (1) of the University and University Colleges Act.

2.4.2   Suitability Assessment Board

The Suitability Assessment Board is a legally required body, cf. Section 4-10 (1) of the University and University Colleges Act. The Board's work is regulated by the "Regulations regarding suitability assessments in higher education".

2.4.3   Student Ombudsman

The Student Ombudsman at HVL is an independent resource whose task is to provide students with assistance and advice in matters relating to studies that students have reported or have considered reporting. The Student Ombudsman shall ensure that these issues are appropriately and responsibly processed, and that student rights are safeguarded.

3 Course quality

The quality assurance system shall stimulate and ensure regular assessments and the improvement of course quality at all levels. These requirements also apply to practical training courses. The system shall promote the sharing of experiences and good practices. It will include requirements for revising course plans, as well as the preparation and implementation of instruction and assessments. The aim is to improve and develop the quality of courses and to ensure a good learning environment based on experiences, dialogue and results, as well as documentation of the work and feedback on implemented measures.

Activity/process	Responsibility
Develop and revise course plans	
Develop and revise course plans in accordance with the process description	Programme coordinators/PhD academic administrator
Approve new or revised courses	Dean / PhD Programme Committee
Prepare and implement educational instruction and assessments	
Implement instruction and assessment in accordance with course plans	Course coordinator
Control and operate rooms on the learning platforms	Course coordinator
Ensure the preparation of guidance for examiners	Course coordinator
For practical training courses: Implement assessments and practical training follow-up	Course coordinator
Establish and follow-up long-term plans for external examiners	Programme coordinators/PhD academic administrator
Write examiner reports	External examiners
Improve and develop based on experiences, dialogue and results **See section 3.3.1. for what applies to the PhD programme**	
Implement reference group meetings or meetings with the entire class	Course coordinator
Establish and follow-up long-term plans for anonymous surveys	Study programme coordinator
Implement anonymous surveys in accordance with the long-term schedule	Course coordinator
Select a form of final evaluation (dialogue meeting and/or course report)	Study programme coordinator
Implement final dialogue meeting when necessary	Study programme coordinator
Write a course report when necessary	Course coordinator
Feedback on results and measures	
Convey results and make documentation available to students, PhD candidates and staff members.	Course coordinator

3.1 Develop and revise course plans

All course plans and programme descriptions must be in accordance with templates adopted by the Western Norway University of Applied Science (HVL) and approved by the Dean. The Programme Committee approves changes to the PhD programme within the framework of accreditation.

When revising courses and study programmes, students, employees and representatives from the field of practice/labour market must be involved. The study programme coordinator is responsible for participation, which is generally through the Study Programme Council or the Study Programme Committee.

3.2 Prepare and implement educational instruction and assessments

- The course coordinator is responsible for:
  - o Ensuring that instruction and assessments are carried out in accordance with the course plan.
  - o Control and operation of rooms on the learning platforms. The name of the course coordinator should be stated here.
  - o Preparing examiner guidance and making this available[8].
  - o For supervised practical training courses: Implement assessments and practical training follow-up
- Programme coordinators for bachelor's and master's programmes must establish a long-term plan to ensure that courses in the study programme will engage external examiners at least every third year[9].
- When external examiners are engaged in accordance with a long-term plan, the external examiner shall write an examiner report based on an established template.[10]

3.3 Improve and develop based on experiences, dialogue and results

- No later than midway through a course, the course coordinator must either conduct a reference group meeting with a minimum of two elected students who represent the class, or they must organise a meeting with the entire class (with or without the course coordinator). Minutes must be taken from the meeting. Templates have been prepared for such meetings suited for the topic to be discussed. These can be found in the quality assurance manual.
- The study programme coordinator shall establish a long-term plan for anonymous surveys at the course level to ensure that these are conducted at least every third year after the course is completed. The course coordinator shall ensure that planned course evaluations are conducted within a week after the final class session. Common templates have been prepared for the anonymous course evaluations.
- Study programme coordinators and course coordinators may choose to add other forms of dialogue and feedback with students, course lecturers and/or the labour market/practical training sites.

For each individual course, the course coordinator and study programme coordinator will have access to data on activities and results. This will provide the basis for a final evaluation of the course, in addition to dialogue with students, the field of practical training, course lecturers and possible external examiners during the implementation of the course.

Depending on the type of programme and course, the study programme coordinator will determine whether to conduct a final dialogue meeting at the study programme level, or whether the course coordinator should write a final report on the course. It is possible to choose both, if so desired [11]:

- If a study programme coordinator decides to conduct a dialogue meeting, they will call for a dialogue meeting at the study programme level (possibly at other levels if appropriate),

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[8] cf. Section 3-9 (2) of the University and University Colleges Act.
[9] cf. HVL's Regulations relating to studies and examinations, section 13-3 (2). Should a course be included in several study programmes, the programme coordinators shall jointly determine when to engage external examiners.
[10] cf. Section 3.9 (1) of the University and University Colleges Act.
[11] The type of final course evaluation in a study programme should be apparent when selecting the type of follow-up in the study programme.

where the course coordinator (and potentially other course lecturers) can discuss the implementation and results of the course, and determine whether changes should be made to the course plan or study programme plan, or if other measures should be initiated. Minutes must be taken from the meeting.

-   If a final report for the course is chosen, the course coordinator should use a template for this. The report will be then sent to the study programme coordinator.

3.3.1   PhD programmes:

The PhD academic administrator and the programme committee shall ensure the development and revision of courses at the PhD level and ensure involvement with feedback and suggestions for improvements from both PhD candidates and course coordinators. The PhD academic administrator is responsible for ensuring that this is implemented regularly based on the structure of the programme and how often the course is offered.

This can be done through dialogue-based course evaluations where the course coordinator has meetings with all the candidates or selected representatives for each course. Feedback must be documented by writing a summary from these meetings. For courses where appropriate, anonymous course evaluations can also be conducted through HVL's system for this. The course coordinator will convey the summary and results of the evaluations to the academic administrator, who will pass this on to the programme committee.

3.4   Feedback on results and measures

The course coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all documentation, reports and meeting minutes related to the course for that academic year is made available to students, PhD candidates and other staff members on learning platforms or other communication channels[12].

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[12] Currently Canvas and Sharepoint

4   Quality assurance for study programmes

The quality assurance system will facilitate and ensure regular assessments and the periodic assessment and development of study programme quality. This is intended to promote the sharing of experiences and good practice, and to ensure the documentation of and feedback on results and measures.

Activity/process	Responsibility
Evaluate, accredit, establish and discontinue study programmes	
Implement processes for the evaluation, accreditation, establishment or discontinuation of study programmes in accordance with the Regulations relating to studies and examinations at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences and the process descriptions in the quality assurance manual.	Dean
Conduct periodic evaluations	
Establish long-term plans for periodic evaluations	Education Committee
Conduct periodic evaluations in accordance with process descriptions	Dean
Follow up results of measures for study programmes, departments, faculties and the institution	Dependent on the level of measures
Conduct yearly activities and processes for the improvement and development of the study programme **See section 4.3.1. for what applies to the PhD programme**	
Revise the study plan in accordance with the process description	Study programme coordinator
Approve study plans for existing study programmes	Dean
Appoint a study programme council/study programme committee	Dean
Elect a class representative (up to and including master's level students)	Study programme coordinator
Submit a case related to the type of follow-up for a study programme and course to the programme council	Study programme coordinator
Conduct student and candidate surveys at the study programme level	Dependent on the type of survey
Follow up data and documentation	Study programme coordinator
Feedback on results and measures	
Convey results and make documentation available to students and PhD candidates.	Programme coordinators/PhD academic administrator

4.1   Evaluate, establish and discontinue study programmes

In conjunction with the establishment and coordination of a study programme, the Dean shall ensure the appropriate participation and that the process and content meet the Regulations relating to studies and examinations at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Should HVL consider closing or discontinuing a study programme at one of the campuses in connection with a review of a programme portfolio or suspicion of poor quality, the Dean shall ensure participation by the academic environment, as well as from the professional and academic community, local community and the business community. The University Board shall make decisions on whether to discontinue a study programme in accordance with the Regulations relating to studies and examinations at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

4.2   Conduct periodic evaluations

Section 2-1 of the Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education stipulates requirements for periodic evaluations of study offerings, with contributions from relevant representatives from the local community and business community, and where the results are made public.

An evaluation will generally be performed five years following the accreditation of the study programme, and no later than seven years after accreditation of bachelor's and integrated master's programmes. Evaluations may also be conducted across study programmes related to selected topics. Periodic programme evaluations of bachelor's programmes will also include accompanying one-year programmes.

The Education Committee at HVL will discuss a long-term plan for periodic evaluations, following feedback from the faculties. If necessary, the University Board, Education Committee, central PhD Committee or Dean may request periodic evaluations beyond that which is established in the long-term plans.

Evaluations will be conducted in accordance with current process descriptions and templates established by the Education Committee. The Education Committee at the institution level will be given yearly assignments with a summary of findings and experiences from the periodic evaluations. The central PhD committee shall also receive the equivalent cases for PhD programmes that have been evaluated.

4.3   Conduct yearly activities and processes for the improvement and development of the study programme

All study programmes at the bachelor's and master's level must be linked to a programme council.

Representatives at the study programme council shall include students, lecturers, administrative personnel and external actors. External actors may include representative(s) from public agencies and the business community, and/or other universities and university colleges[13].

The study programme council will normally be chaired by a study programme coordinator. Several study programmes may belong to the same programme council if the faculty finds this appropriate. The Dean will appoint the chair of the study programme council. Minutes from the study programme council shall be sent to faculty management.

All course plans and programme descriptions must be in accordance with adopted templates approved by the Dean.

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[13] *If the study programme is part of a forum with external actors, where there is a dialogue on the study plan, course plan and development of the study programme, this may replace the external members of the study programme council. External involvement in this work must be documented.*

Students, employees and representatives from the field of practice/labour market must be heard and involved when revising programme descriptions. The study programme coordinator is responsible for participation. This should take place via the study programme council.

The study programme coordinator shall ensure that the students elect a class representative and deputy representatives for all classes/academic year groups. If a study programme is offered at several campuses, one class representative should be elected per class or academic year group at each campus.

When necessary, study programme coordinators may summon student representatives, course coordinators and possibly other lecturers to a dialogue meeting. Such meetings can supplement discussions in the study programme council or raise relevant issues related to quality assurance work for the study programme.

For study programmes offered across campuses, the Dean shall ensure a focal point for students and staff at all campuses.

A gathering for students may be held at the beginning of a study programme to clarify expectations and for training in the quality assurance system. This should include activities to help students become acquainted with one another and with the lecturers and programme administration.

Each academic year, the study programme coordinator shall present a case to the study programme council for a discussion on how to follow up the study programme and courses. This case shall include the following assessments:

- Choice of follow-up method at the programme and course level
- Long-term plans for anonymous surveys
- Long-term plans for external examiners
- For studies with practical training: Requirements for preparation, agreements, assessment and supervised practical training follow-up
- An assessment of the potential need for special follow-up in certain areas, based on results and feedback from students, staff and labour market/field of practice.

4.3.1   PhD programmes:

Each PhD programme shall have a programme committee that holds discussions and offers recommendations upon request by the Dean. The PhD programme committee will initiate measures for quality assurance and the development of PhD programmes at the course and study programme levels and approves changes to the study plan within the framework of accreditation. PhD candidates must be represented in the programme committee.

In addition to evaluations of single courses, the systematic follow-up of each individual PhD candidate is a key element of quality assurance work. This is ensured through progress reports and midway evaluations. Cases are prepared for the programme committee and central PhD committee that show the status and that highlights challenges at an overarching level. Details on this point have been mentioned in HVL's quality assurance system for PhD programmes.

4.3.2 Student and candidate surveys at the bachelor's and master's levels

Feedback from student surveys is essential for obtaining information on the students' learning environment and their experienced learning outcome. A high response rate is necessary in order to benefit from the obtained knowledge. At HVL, we regularly receive data from student surveys from bachelor's and master's programmes.

The Study Barometer (for students in their 2nd and 5th academic years) and SHOT survey (every fourth year) are national surveys. HVL also conducts surveys aimed at new students, as well as surveys or focus interviews with students in their final semester of all bachelor's studies. There is also a candidate survey every other year in cooperation with the Student Welfare Organisation at University of Bergen and the Norwegian School of Economics.

Anonymous course evaluations are also conducted in accordance with the long-term plans. It may also be relevant to conduct supplementary surveys in conjunction with practical training, exchange stays or periodic evaluations.
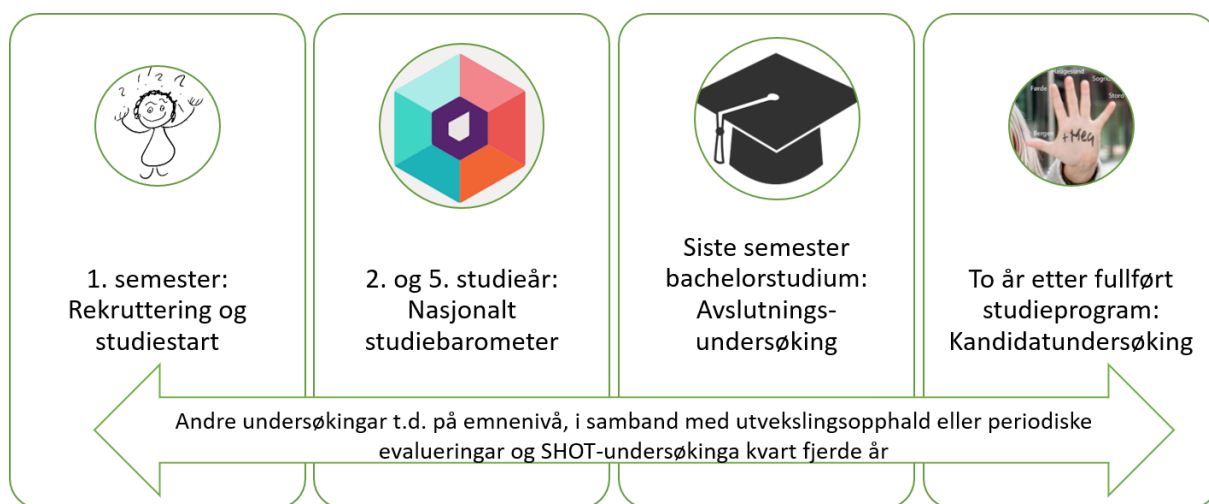

Image 2:

1st semester: Recruitment and starting studies

2nd and 5th academic year: National Study Barometer

Final semester of bachelor's programmes: Concluding survey

Two years after completion of study programme: Candidate survey

Other surveys, e.g. at the course level, in connection with student exchange stays or periodic evaluations and SHOT study every fourth year

4.4 Data and documentation follow-up

Throughout the year, study programme coordinators, department management and faculty management have access to various forms of documentation and data related to different parts of the learning pathway for students in study programmes at the bachelor's and master's levels:
- Documentation of the quality assurance system work at the course and programme level, including results from student and candidate surveys, course reports, minutes from dialogue meetings with course coordinators, and periodic evaluations
- Data base, assessments and management related to
  - Recruitment, admission and the start of the semester

- o Experienced quality
- o Results and progression/completion
- o Internationalisation
- o Academic environment
- o Practical training
- o Learning environment
- o Relevance

The study programme coordinator is responsible for following up documentation from quality assurance system work and data at the programme level, by

- presenting cases to the study programme council and other relevant forums for discussions on the need for measures and the effect of these,
- implementing relevant measures at the programme level,
- conducting self-evaluations and participating in evaluation meetings associated with periodic evaluations,
- participating in meetings with institute and faculty management for assessing the quality of the study programme,
- presenting proposals for changes to course plans and study programme plans and assessing whether these should be viewed as significant changes with respect to the basis for accreditation.

4.4.1 PhD programmes

The PhD academic administrator and faculty management have access to different data from the PhD programme at both the individual and course level. These have been followed up through reports to relevant committees. This is specified in HVL's quality assurance system for PhD programmes.

4.5 Feedback on results and measures

The programme coordinator and academic administrator for the PhD programme are responsible for ensuring that relevant documentation from quality assurance work is stored and communicated appropriately. The coordinator can also choose whether to conduct meetings/gatherings to communicate and discuss feedback, measures and results with the students or PhD candidates.

5   Quality of programme portfolios

The overarching goal of quality assurance work on programme portfolios is to ensure that the University is safeguarding its social mandate by offering a comprehensive portfolio with relevant and high-quality educational programmes in line with HVL's strategic goals.

Results of systematic quality assurance work at the institution shall be included in the knowledge base for annual and periodic evaluation, and in the strategic development of the overall programme portfolio.

Quality assurance work at the programme portfolio level shall highlight the quality of the overall programme portfolio, individual study programmes, and any systematic challenges across study programmes. This work shall form the basis for the development and improvement of quality and reveal any instances of poor quality.

Activity/process	Responsibility
Periodic assessment of the programme portfolio	
Determine a model for periodic assessments of the programme portfolio	University Board
Conduct periodic assessments of the programme portfolio in accordance with process descriptions and accompanying tools	Pro-Rector for Education
Annual assessment of the quality of the programme portfolio	
Assess the quality of the programme portfolio and the systematic work on quality of educational programmes at the faculty	Dean
Provide input for programme portfolio for the coming year	Dean
Review HVL's annual reports and actions plans related to the learning environment and the systematic quality assurance of education programmes	University Board
Establish the programme portfolio and planned admissions for the coming year	University Board
Follow up the assignment letter for the faculty and establish an annual plan	Dean

5.1   Periodic assessment of the programme portfolio

For each board period, the University shall conduct a strategic review of the entire programme portfolio, based on needs of the region, national guidelines and international trends. This review shall assess the extent to which the study programme contributes to solving social challenges, meets HVL's strategic goals, and provides an overview of the quality of the study programme and its economic sustainability.

The University Board shall adopt a model as a basis for these assessments. The Pro-Rector for Education is responsible for conducting a periodic evaluation of the programme portfolio in accordance with adopted guidelines. This includes ensuring participation from the academic environment, and from the community and labour market.

5.2   Annual assessment of the quality of the programme portfolio

Throughout the academic year, faculty management has access to various forms of documentation and data:

- Documentation from the quality assurance system at the programme level includes
  o   results from student and candidate surveys
  o   periodic evaluations

- o minutes from the programme council
- Data from the Common Student System (FS) and the Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service (Samordna opptak (SO)) (via Star/tableau)
- Indicators related to annual reports and plans at the institution and faculty level

Based on documentation from the quality assurance system, including minutes from the programme council, faculty management shall conduct a yearly assessment of the quality of programme portfolios and the quality assurance system work at the faculty, including:

- The need for measures for individual programmes of study at the institute or faculty level (incorporated into the plans at the relevant level at HVL).
- Proposals for changes to the programme portfolio for the following year (incorporated into the annual case for the programme portfolio).

The Rector and Pro-Rector for Education will facilitate a meeting with the Dean based on the faculty's assessments.

HVL's strategy and development agreement with the Ministry of Education and Research include strategic ambitions and aims along with assessments by the faculties. National guidelines in the letter of allocation provide a basis for the evaluation of yearly assessments of the quality of the programme portfolio and the systematic work on quality assurance for study programmes at HVL.

The Education Committee reviews reports and plans of relevance for the educations. HVL reviews programme portfolios and planned admissions at the end of November, and the annual report and plan for HVL in mid-March each year. The Pro-Rector for Education is responsible for following up measures in the plan related to the systematic work on the quality of education programmes.

In mid-March, the Dean determines the annual plan for the faculty based on the Rector's assignment letter, as well as any needs for measures identified in the annual assessment of quality for the programme portfolio, and the systematic work on quality assurance for study programmes. The plan states who is responsible for following up measures related to the systematic work on quality assurance for study programmes.

6 Academic environment

HVL shall develop the competence and capacity to become a university with a professional and labour market profile.

This will be ensured through strategic competence development and targeted recruitment, where we will further develop a strong professional and academic environment for education, research and administration.

In conjunction with the establishment of study programmes, periodic evaluations and the yearly follow-up of study programmes, the University will assess the academic and professional community at HVL related to each individual study programme.

The faculty's overall assessment of the academic environment with comments related to the study programme at the competency level of associate professor, professor or docent will be part of the

- faculty's assessment of the programme portfolio
- work on the next academic year's plans and
- measures related to recruitment and competence enhancement

Educational competence is also a part of the faculty management's assessment of quality, and a factor in the assessment of the programme portfolio at the institution.

Strategic competence enhancement includes systems for the competence enhancement of staff members, education management and administrative personnel. This includes pedagogical, didactic, digital and practical training competence.

7 Learning environment

HVL's strategy declares that we must have a stimulating and accessible learning environment which is diverse, international, and inclusive[14].

The learning environment is defined as follows in section 4-3 (2) of the Universities and University Colleges Act:

"The learning environment are those conditions that affect students' opportunities to acquire knowledge, and which are of importance for students' physical and psychosocial health. A holistic learning environment includes the physical, digital, organisational, pedagogical and psychosocial conditions as part of the holistic learning environment. The Ministry may in regulations lay down further provisions concerning requirements regarding the learning environment."

The learning environment at HVL includes all factors that may impact students' opportunities for acquiring new knowledge. In addition to ensuring good student welfare, a good learning environment shall also ensure that students receive good instruction, guidance, involvement, and ownership of their own learning, in addition to the continuous improvement of physical, psychosocial, digital and organisational needs.

The learning environment at HVL as an education institution is crucial for ensuring that students achieve the desired and expected learning outcomes, and for promoting good health and well-being. One goal is for the learning environment to encompass the diversity of the student body, regardless of gender, ethnic background, religion or functional abilities. All students have equal rights but different capacities and needs for participating in the learning process. Focus on including as many as possible in ordinary solutions through universal design, thereby reducing the need for special solutions, is an important task for the learning environment at HVL.

Administrative management at the faculties and joint administration units are responsible for preparing process descriptions, as well as follow-up and improvement of processes to ensure that HVL maintains high quality administrative support functions that impact the learning environment by ensuring the necessary competencies, efficient processes and good information systems.

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[14] https://www.hvl.no/om/strategi-2023-2030/

8 Study programmes with special requirements

8.1 PhD programmes

HVL has its own quality assurance system for PhD programmes in order to meet the special requirements for follow-up of PhD programmes and individual candidates.

8.2 Continuing education and professional development

All continuing education programmes that award credits at HVL shall meet the requirements of the framework for quality assurance of courses and study programmes. Because it is necessary to be able to respond quickly to the needs of society when establishing continuing education and professional development programmes, these programmes are often of a shorter duration, and the quality assurance manual contains process descriptions, templates and tools adapted to these programmes.

8.3 Bachelor of Nautical Science

The Bachelor of Nautical Science shall meet the requirements of the framework for quality assurance of courses and study programme. HVL also has a separate authorisation from the Norwegian Maritime Authority, which is renewed every five years. This authorisation entails that the study programme is obligated to comply with *STCW 78 and its revisions* and *FOR 2011-12-22, no. 1523 Regulations regarding qualifications and the issue of certificates for maritime personnel* in its instruction and authorisation of personnel. In addition, certain courses have their own approval.

The quality assurance manual therefore includes process descriptions and templates to ensure that the Bachelor's of Nautical Science meets the necessary requirements.

8.4 Vocational training for professional divers

Vocational training for professional divers is provided at a vocational level but must still meet HVL requirements for courses and the study programme. Since the candidates receive diving certificates and authorisations, the quality assurance manual includes process descriptions and templates to ensure that vocational training for divers meets the necessary requirements.