



Faculty Board

Guidelines and procedures for programme evaluations by external experts at the Faculty of Social Sciences

This decision applies to evaluations initiated from 2025 onwards.

Introduction

The guidelines build upon the Quality Policy for Lund University (reg. no. STYR 2024/2168) and the Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement of Education at Lund University (reg. no. STYR 2024/1140).

This document outlines guidelines and procedures for programme evaluations involving external experts at the Faculty of Social Sciences. All degree-related first, second and third cycle programmes are to be evaluated at least once every six years, based on eleven criteria.

Programme evaluations at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University are to drive development and quality, focusing on strengths and challenges. The external expert group's collective recommendations are to act as support in the long-term quality enhancement of the programmes covered by the evaluation and constitute a part of the faculty's quality assurance management.

The Faculty Board initiates and decides on the implementation of programme evaluations, which are followed up during the annual quality dialogues.

External expert group

The external expert group's collective recommendations are to support the long-term quality enhancement and quality assurance of the programmes.

Assignment

The assignment of the external expert group is to:

- review and analyse the department's¹ self-assessment including supporting documentation, and student/doctoral student input
- prior to a site visit, start working on a statement and prepare questions
- participate in site visit
- after a site visit, finalise a statement in accordance with the agreed schedule
- participate in online feedback meeting (chair)
- The chair of the external expert group is responsible for leading and allocating work within the group and coordinating the writing process in connection with the external expert statement. The chair communicates with the department and faculty office regarding the schedule for the process and organisation of the site visit, and leads the meetings included in the site visit.

The external expert group's statement is to cover the strengths, challenges and development potential of the learning environment and programmes. This could be an aspect that the department highlights in its self-assessment, but also an aspect that the external expert group considers important for the department's continued quality management.

¹ Department also refers to centres and other organisational units that conduct education at the Faculty of Social Sciences. Responsibility for writing a self-assessment and hosting a site visit normally rests with one of the departments, and the clustering of the programmes included in the evaluation is usually based on one department. In the case of interdisciplinary programmes, responsibility for the evaluation may be shared between different institutions or equivalents.

If the expert group requests more or supplementary material, there is an opportunity for dialogue with both the department and the faculty office, which can produce additional material if necessary, during the entire process.

The following headings are to be included in the external expert group statement:

- assignment and composition of the external expert group
- the main strengths and challenges of the learning environment and programme/programmes, and the external expert group's reflections and recommendations for improvements, based on Lund University's eleven criteria
- the external expert group's summarised views and recommendations
- appendix: programme for site visit

Composition

The size and composition of the external expert group is determined in accordance with the number and type of programmes included in the cluster to be evaluated.

The external expert group is to include at least two members with research and teaching expertise from other higher education institutions. In normal cases the external expert group consists of three members. The chair of the external expert group is to have good knowledge of the Swedish education system.

The external expert group may be increased with a working life representative and/or members with research and teaching expertise from other higher education institutions or faculties at Lund University. A doctoral student or student from another higher education institution or faculty may be included in the external expert group.

The number external expert group members should not exceed five and more than one gender is to be represented in the group. Members with research and teaching expertise are to make up the majority of the external expert group and at least two of these are to come from a higher education institution other than Lund University.

Decisions

Decisions on external expert groups are made by the dean, after consultations with the student union/doctoral student council, based on proposals from the department. The department provides proposals on the size and composition of the external expert group. The proposal is to provide a short justification. Preliminary requests to participate in the external expert group is made by the department.

The dean appoints one of the external experts with research expertise as chair of the external expert group. The request to act as chair should be made in conjunction with the request to participate.

Reimbursement and expenses

Costs relating to fees, travel and any overnight stays in connection with the external expert group's visit are covered by the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Allocation of work and responsibilities in connection with the evaluation and site visits

Faculty board and dean

The dean makes decisions regarding

- appointment of external experts, as well as the chair of the external expert group
- the chair of the external expert group.

The faculty board

- makes decisions regarding the department's development plan based on the external expert group's statement

Faculty office

The faculty office is responsible for

- the start-up meeting with the department (head of department and director of studies)
- the start-up meeting with the students union/doctoral student council
- the schedule prior to the evaluation, in dialogue with the department and external expert group
- access to LU Box

- informing the students/doctoral students on the possibility to compile written input for the self-assessment
- the feedback meeting.

The faculty office assists the department in the evaluation process with

- a checklist prior to site visit
- access to joint LU Box, and a proposal for structuring the material in LU Box
- relevant statistical information (e.g., key performance indicators for admission and completion rate)
- support regarding selection of supporting documentation
- support regarding the text in the self-assessment.

The faculty office assists the external expert group with

- information on the evaluation assignment to the external experts and chair of the external expert group
- the schedule
- access to the joint LU Box
- organisation of the feedback meeting.

Department and department board

Prior to the evaluation, the department appoints a working group, which is responsible for the internal evaluation process and for discussions with the faculty office on the supporting documentation and schedule.

The department has a responsibility prior to the evaluation to

- draw up a proposal for the external expert group prior to a decision by the dean
- establish the evaluation process in the department (all affected staff categories)
- for department-wide programmes: include other partners in the work of writing the self-assessment and drawing up supporting documentation.
- write self-assessment
- draw up relevant supporting documentation for the external expert group and upload this to LU Box (in addition to what can be managed by the faculty office)

- support the external expert group with login details for relevant course pages

The department is the host for the site visit and has a responsibility to

- contact the relevant people, including doctoral students and students that the external expert group are to meet for discussions during the site visit
- book premises, order catering and plan the schedule
- manage any travel requests and overnight stays
- manage any expenses in connection with the site visit.

The department board has a responsibility after the external experts' statement to

- draw up a proposal for the development plan.

Students union and doctoral student council

The students union and doctoral student council have a responsibility prior to the evaluation to

- assist students/doctoral students from the programme in question to compile written input for the self-assessment
- participate in the planning of the site visit.

The department's self-assessment and supporting documentation

The department's self-assessment and supporting documentation is to focus on Lund University's common criteria for quality management.

The department self-assessment

The department self-assessment is to be brief (approximately 10–20 pages) and include an analysis of strength and challenges². The self-assessment can be written in Swedish or English depending on the composition of the expert group and the environment in which the education is conducted.

² The length of the self-assessment may vary depending on the number of programmes included in the same evaluation cluster. Texts are to be brief, but there is to be sufficient space for the analysis of each programme.

The work on the self-assessment can advantageously be based on and build on previous evaluations or other similar documentation. In the self-assessment, the department can also highlight particular challenges within the programmes or choose to place extra emphasis on one or more of the criteria that are regarded as particularly relevant for evaluation.

The self-assessment may contain clarifications of specific prevailing conditions for the programme/programmes that are not clearly presented in the documentation, information on significant contexts for how certain documentation is to be understood or information on planned or ongoing development work.

All of Lund University's criteria are to be included as headings in the self-assessment. The self-assessment is to include clear references to supporting documentation in LU Box.

Supporting documentation

The faculty office draws up the supporting documentation that applies to the entire faculty and that which can be retrieved from university-wide systems, such as

- key performance indicators for admission, application statistics, completion rate,
- international mobility for teaching staff, students and doctoral students, percentage of international students and doctoral students
- supporting documentation from discussions on quality: summary and agendas
- faculty-wide guidelines and documents

The department produces other relevant documentation.

The documentation is collected in LU Box. Administrators at the faculty office provide the department and external expert group and the relevant students/doctoral students with access to LU Box.

Criteria for quality management and examples of supporting documentation

1. That the course or programme is based on scientific and/or artistic grounds and proven experience.

- programme syllabi and course syllabi

- publication lists for teaching staff
- staff category for teaching staff
- supporting documentation from research evaluation

2. That the attained study results correspond with learning outcomes and qualitative targets.

- programme syllabi and course syllabi
- general syllabus
- report on forms of assessment, plus analysis
- report on progression, plus analysis
- Third cycle: supporting documentation from examining committees
- Third cycle: list of thesis titles and formats (previous 10 years)
- examples of degree projects/theses
- assessment report or equivalent
- assessment criteria for examinations, plus analysis

3. That continuous follow-up and development of courses and programmes is carried out.

- supporting documentation from quality discussions, summary and agenda
- procedures for, and examples of, course evaluations and course evaluation reports
- minutes from management groups or equivalent
- development plan and follow-up from previous evaluation

4. That teaching staff and supervisors have appropriate expertise concerning the subject, teaching and learning in higher education, disciplinary teaching and other relevant areas, and that the teaching and supervisory capacity is sufficient.

- teaching resources (form of employment, academic expertise, training in teaching and learning in higher education)
- members in the Teaching Academy
- number of teaching/planning hours or clock hours per course
- education development projects
- forms of teaching

5. *That the teaching places its central focus on the students' and doctoral students' learning.*

- third cycle: examples of individual study plans
- procedures for course evaluation reports plus analysis
- course guides or equivalents

6. *That the course or programme must be relevant for the students and doctoral students and meet the needs of society.*

- alumni surveys
- programme evaluation reports

7. *That students and doctoral students can influence the planning, implementation, follow-up and development of the course or programme.*

- description of doctoral student and student influence as well as representation in advisory and decision-making bodies
- procedures for, and examples of, course evaluations and course evaluation reports

8. *That for all students and doctoral students there is an appropriate and accessible study and learning environment with effective support services.*

- the programmes' use of SI mentors or other support in teaching
- management of special learning support for students/doctoral students with disabilities: mentors, special study stations, access to alternative forms of assessment
- support for students/doctoral students
- support from the library
- access to study stations
- access to learning platforms
- special introductory activities for students/doctoral students (programme or freestanding course)
- access to study guidance

9. *That gender equality and equal opportunities are integrated into the course or programme.*

- documentation of work related to gender equality and equal opportunities (department level), e.g., minutes from gender equality and equal opportunities groups

- course syllabi and reading lists
- gender distribution of course directors

10. That internationalisation and an international perspective are promoted in the course or programme.

- statistics regarding mobility (teaching staff and students), percentage of international students/doctoral students in the programme
- description of access to international exchanges
- course syllabi and reading lists
- third cycle: supporting documentation from individual study plans
- examples of internationalisation at home, for example Certificate of international merits

11. That subject-relevant perspectives on sustainable development are promoted in the course or programme.

- course syllabi and reading lists

Site visit

A site visit is carried out once the external expert group has reviewed the supporting documentation and prepared a statement and questions. The site visit is usually carried out during a working day at the premises where the programme/programmes are based. Meetings are conducted with programme and department management, teaching staff/supervisors, students/doctoral students and relevant administrative staff such as study advisers and education administrators.

The detailed planning of the site visit is carried out by the department based on the external expert group's wishes.

External expert group statement

The external expert group sums up the collective experiences in a statement that analyses the strengths and challenges of the programme/programmes based on the eleven criteria and make proposals for areas of improvement. A guideline for the statement is that it should be approximately 10–15 pages.

In its statement, the external expert group can draw attention to best practice in the programme. Furthermore, the external expert group can state possible higher education institutions/programmes for benchmarking with an aim to promote the development work. The department and students/doctoral students who have participated in the evaluation are to be given an opportunity to comment on any factual errors before the statement is published.

The external expert group statement is to be published on the faculty website.

Feedback meeting with the chair of the external expert group

Once an external expert statement is finalised, a feedback meeting is conducted with the chair of the external expert group, student/doctoral student representative, faculty office, department and the faculty management. The aim is for the chair to describe how the external expert group has experienced the evaluation process and also provide the recipients of the statement with an opportunity to pose questions and discuss the content. The meeting is usually online.

Development plan

After the feedback meeting the department board is responsible for drawing up a proposal for a development plan. The development plan is to be established in the department and presented to the Education Board/Research Studies Board before it is submitted to the faculty board for a decision. The development plan must be written in Swedish.

In the development plan the department is to describe, justify and prioritise the measures that are considered to be necessary. In cases where the external expert statement takes up recommended areas for improvement and the department deems that it is not possible or desirable to work on this, there is also to be a rationale for this position.

The development plan is to be published on the faculty's website along with the external expert group's statement.

Schedule for evaluations starting in the spring semester

October, first half

- start-up meeting for department and faculty office, preliminary schedule
- department works on a proposal for external experts
- start-up meeting for students union/doctoral student council and faculty office

November/December

- department draws up a proposal for the external expert group, with justification
- the dean approves the composition of the external expert group and appoints a chair after consultations with students and doctoral students

January

- discussion (meeting) for faculty office and department on self-assessment and supporting documentation

February–March

- the department finalises the self-assessment

March

- the department uploads the self-assessment and supporting documentation in LU Box
- the faculty office reviews the self-assessment
- administrators at the faculty office make the self-assessment and documentation available in LU Box for the external expert group and students/doctoral students
- students/doctoral students upload student input in LU Box
- the external expert group allocates the work, reviews the supporting documentation and self-assessment

April

- the external expert group works on the statement, possible additions to the supporting documentation and questions prior to the site visit
- the department makes preparations for the site visit

May-June

- site visits are conducted in Lund/Helsingborg
- after the site visit, the external expert group sends the statement to the faculty office
- online feedback meeting with chair, faculty office, faculty management, department and student/doctoral student representative

September–December

- the department works on the development plan
- the development plan is established in the department, and in the Education Board/Research Studies Board

January

- the department board presents a proposal for the development plan to the faculty board
- the development plan is approved

the development plan along with the external expert's statement is published on the website