



VICE-CHANCELLOR

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Procedures for periodic research review at Karlstad University

Aim

In accordance with “Quality Assurance System at Karlstad University” (Vice-Chancellor’s decision reg. no C2019/1027), periodic research review is an important part of the University’s quality management.

The purpose of these procedures is to guide everyone involved in the periodic research reviews. The procedures should provide a clear overview of various roles and responsibilities, and define the work process before, during, and after a periodic quality review.

Decision	RB 19/24	Reg. no	C2024/165	Replaces	RB 89/22, C2022/582
Applies from	5 February 2024	until	further notice	Officer	Sofia Andersson

Procedures for periodic research review at Karlstad University

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Introduction

Quality management at Karlstad University focuses on ensuring and developing quality in relation to education, research, and administration. Quality management shall promote a quality culture that includes participation and commitment in the University's operations. With systematic quality management, we will be able to identify good research practice and identify areas for improvement. Our quality assurance efforts are guided by eight fundamental principles which are laid out in the document titled "Quality Assurance System at Karlstad University"¹.

The quality council monitors the development in the area and supports the faculty boards and the teacher education board in strategic decisions regarding quality management. The faculties are responsible for quality management in relation to education, research and collaboration with the surrounding society. The teacher education programmes are part of a matrix organisation with a teacher education board that is responsible for quality management within teacher education and for the research and collaboration that is linked to the teacher education programmes.

The purpose of these procedures is to guide everyone involved in the periodic research reviews. The procedures define roles and responsibilities, and clarifies the process before, during, and after a periodic research review.

Periodic research review is an important part of quality management, analysing the evaluation unit's current level of performance and potential for quality improvement. The goal is to strengthen the quality of research and promote the development.

Periodic reviews follow an overall six-year plan that includes all research at the University. The overall plan is followed up through annual plans that include a timetable for when the periodic review will take place for the evaluation units concerned. The vice-chancellor approves the annual plan. The process for periodic research review at Karlstad University is summarised in Appendix 1.

An evaluation unit consists of a department, a research centre, or a strategic initiative. The deans decide on appropriate evaluation units at their respective faculties. If required, a department can be divided into smaller evaluation units.

Roles and responsibilities

The University's division of roles and responsibilities that concern quality management is described in the document "Quality Assurance System at Karlstad University". This section describes roles with a specific responsibility in relation to periodic research review.

Review coordinator

Periodic reviews at Karlstad University are coordinated by the Grants and Innovation Office. The head of department appoints the review coordinator. The coordinator is in charge of coordinating the work in the support group and providing relevant support and information to

¹ RB reg.no. C2019/1027

the quality council, faculty management, evaluation unit, and assessment panel throughout the review process. Duties include:

- Organising an internal introduction meeting with the evaluation unit
- Specifying a programme for site visits
- Engaging the assessment panel and clarifying the task
- Ensuring the availability of background data
- Distributing the review material to all the parties concerned one month before the site visit
- Providing administrative support during site visits
- Consulting with the Communications Department regarding communication activities
- Ensuring that the assessment report is received by the evaluation unit, faculty management, and vice-chancellor
- Ensuring that an action plan is established

The faculty

Faculty management participates in drafting the six-year plan and the annual plan for periodic reviews. Faculty management participates in the start-up meetings and is engaged at the digital site visit. Faculty management is responsible for work efforts that arise in connection with periodic review.

Support group

The task of the support group is to ensure that the background data used are internationally comparable within the field/s of research, validated, comprehensible, and reflect the activities of the evaluation unit in a satisfactory way. It should be possible to compile background data for longer periods. The support group should consist of representatives from the Planning and Finance Department, Human Resources Office, University Library, and the Grants and Innovation Office. The support group members are appointed by the University Director.

Work process

1. Preparatory work before a periodic review

1.1 Assessment panel

Each review will be conducted by an assessment panel, which includes a varied number of experts depending on the purpose and objectives of the review. However, the assessment panel must be large enough and have a balanced composition of participants in order to ensure sound and objective conclusions about the quality of the evaluation unit.

The evaluation unit consults the specified requirements for the composition of the assessment panel and proposes experts using the designated template. An evaluation unit can recommend up to four suitable experts to serve on an assessment panel. It is imperative that no conflict of interest exists between the evaluation unit and the proposed experts (see The Swedish Research Council's guidelines for managing conflicts of interest, reg.no. 1.2.4-2019-00139).

The review coordinator is responsible for inviting the proposed experts and informing the dean and vice-chancellor ahead of a decision. The vice-chancellor makes the final decision on which, and how many, experts to invite onto the assessment panel. The vice-chancellor appoints the chairperson of the panel. The evaluation unit and review coordinator are briefed

on the decision, at which point the review coordinator becomes responsible for further communication with the assessors in connection to the review.

Remuneration to the assessment panels are covered by the vice-chancellor's central research resource. Remuneration to evaluators is based on the number of working days set aside for the review work and follows the daily remuneration that the Swedish Higher Education Authority applies. Evaluators are normally estimated to spend 3.5 working days on the review. For the chairperson of the assessment panel, an additional 0.5 working days may be added.

1.2 Internal introduction meeting

The review coordinator invites the evaluation unit to an internal introduction meeting. Participants receive information such as the function of periodic review in the University's quality assurance of research and its purpose of contributing to quality work at the evaluation unit. The meeting also addresses the procedure, assessment criteria, review material, and the time schedule. There will also be time set aside for questions and discussion. The head of department/director is the contact person for the evaluation unit. The contact person will serve as liaison between the evaluation unit and the review coordinator.

1.3 Basis of assessment

The evaluation unit is reviewed based on the following assessment criteria:

Organization and leadership

The evaluation unit's organization and strategic work to ensure that research is of high quality and is continuously developed. This relates to the formal leadership and collegial structures for research, and working practices utilized to address challenges and opportunities in research. In addition, it encompasses routines and priority settings in relation to formal policy documents.

Scientific results and academic impact

The positioning of the evaluation unit, nationally and internationally. Scientific results and academic impact refer to scientific production as well as contributions to the research community. It includes expert assignments as well as scientifically recognized results such as artistic work, computer code, patents, processes, and film.

Academic culture

Collegial working practices aimed at enhancing the quality and renewal of research. This relates to various forms of collegial work and how it support good research practice. Additionally, it encompasses outreach activities to engage researchers in various academic collaborations and networks.

Collaboration with surrounding society

The evaluation unit's work to ensure quality and renewal of research through collaboration with the surrounding society. This should reflect current work to establish and maintain collaborations with partners outside of academia. It also relates to the dissemination of knowledge and innovation, and the impact created in society.

Linkage between education and research

The evaluation unit's structured work to ensure the link between education and research. This relates to how research enriches education and how education enriches research.

1.4 Review material

Self-evaluation report

The evaluation unit shall write a self-evaluation report in accordance with the instructions given in Annex 1. Within 12 weeks of the introduction meeting, the evaluation unit shall submit the self-evaluation report electronically to the review coordinator. The self-evaluation report shall take into account the assessment criteria presented in section 1.3. The self-evaluation should be supplemented by background data provided by the support group.

Background data

Background data include information about staff, third-cycle education, financial resources and publications. The aim of background data is to give the evaluation panel a better understanding of the evaluation unit regarding the current situation and the preconditions for further development. A description of the background data to be included in the review material is presented in Annex 2.

2. Work during a periodic review

2.1 Tasks of the assessment panel

The appointed chairperson leads and distributes work within the assessment panel. Ahead of site visits, the assessment panel is offered a digital meeting with the review coordinator to plan and discuss the process. The assessment panel decides whether that meeting is necessary or not. Based on the assessment criteria and the documentation, the assessment panel shall assess the evaluation unit's current level of performance and potential for quality improvement on the basis of the specified assessment criteria in section 1.3. The assessment panel shall submit an assessment report in accordance with the instructions given in Annex 3.

2.2 Site visit

A digital site visit shall be included in the review. The purpose is partly to give the review panel an opportunity to ask supplementary questions based on the evaluation unit's self-evaluation and partly to meet active researchers at all levels. During the site visit, the assessment panel will meet:

- head of department/head of subject/director or equivalent
- head of research/professors active within the evaluation unit
- researchers/early career researchers active within the evaluation unit

The review coordinator will be present throughout the site visit. The review coordinator acts as administrator and does not participate in the review but can provide information and support during the visit. The site visit normally takes place on one working day. Prior to the site visit, the evaluation unit shall prepare a 15-minute presentation. The presentation provides an opportunity for the evaluation unit to supplement the self-evaluation and present selected areas for improvement for further discussion with the assessment panel. Examples of areas to include in the presentation could be strategic work, challenges and/or opportunities.

The site visit also includes two meetings between the assessment panel and University and faculty management - one to start the site visit and one to conclude it with some preliminary feedback. Time will also be set aside for the assessment panel to draft a report. Activities during site visits are listed in Appendix 2.

3. Work following a periodic review

3.1 Evaluation report

The self-evaluation, background data and information acquired at the digital meeting form the basis of the periodic review. Based on that material, the assessment panel should deliver a report in accordance with the instructions in Annex 3. The report will reflect on the evaluation unit's current level of performance and present consistent conclusions on the future development of the evaluation unit. The report and subsequent analysis will be used for quality enhancing efforts, as a basis for decisions and in the development of the university's overall vision and strategy.

The assessment panel should send the evaluation report to the review coordinator by the agreed-upon deadline. The review coordinator will immediately distribute the report to the contact person of the evaluation unit. Within one week of receiving the report, the evaluation unit will notify the review coordinator of any factual errors via the contact person. The review coordinator is responsible for passing the information on to the assessment panel. The assessment panel makes any necessary revisions and submits a final version to the review coordinator within one week. The assessment panel's final report should be made available to all employees at Karlstad University and other interested parties. The Communications Department will assist in doing so.

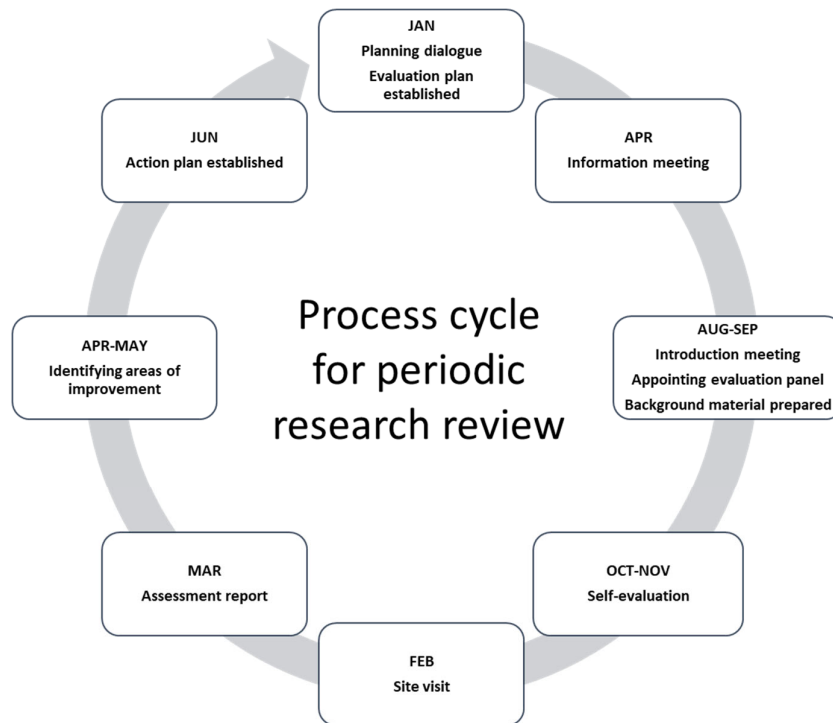
3.2 Action plan

The evaluation unit is responsible for writing an action plan on the outcome of the evaluation. There is a designated template to guide structure and content. The action plan needs to be approved by the faculty board. The action plan should include measures that strengthen the research quality and promote outstanding research.

3.3 Follow-up

The faculties are responsible for follow-ups, which are normally done within two years of the approval of the action plan. The result of periodic reviews, including action plans and follow-ups, are reported continuously through dialogues with the University management.

Appendix 1. Process for periodic research review at Karlstad University



Appendix 2. Digital site visit activities

The programme for the digital site visits can include various activities during one working day. The following activities should always be included in a digital site visit, which normally should not cover more than one working day. A detailed programme will be provided.

Activity
Introduction for assessment panel
The evaluation unit presents development areas
Discussions led by the chairperson of the panel
Time for the assessment panel to draft their report
Preliminary feedback to faculty management

