

Policy for quality assurance and continuous quality improvement of research

Decision-maker	Vice-chancellor
Overseeing function	Grants and Innovation Office
Decision date	October 3 rd 2024
Period of validity	To be scrutinised for relevance in 2027
Summary	This policy sets out the principles, processes and steering documents that contribute to the quality assurance and continuous quality improvement of research. The policy was originally decided in 2023. This is a translated version of the Swedish original. In case of differences between the Swedish original and the English translation, the Swedish original shall prevail.

Principles of Continuous Quality Improvement

These principles are founded on the tradition developed at the university and within the academic community at large.

- Continuous quality improvement is integrated into the university's regular operations.
- So that it can be adapted to each environment, the carrying out of continuous quality improvement is decentralised. Monitoring is carried out by a higher level.
- Research quality is promoted via a variety of initiatives in respect of the planning, implementation and monitoring of research. Collegial and international peer review are fundamental.
- The university's continuous quality improvement involves all the bodies, meeting forums, processes, documents and activities that provide opportunities for developing the quality of research.
- A living quality culture, spreading of good examples and exchanges of findings via various arenas are central.
- Open reporting of continuous quality improvement provides a strong incentive for taking good care that our operations maintain high quality.

Overall processes

1. Local continuous monitoring and quality improvement

Monitoring of continuous quality improvement within research is carried out at the department level. The aim is that research has high quality and compliance with legislation and ordinances. Processes for continuous quality improvement are anchored, visible and known.

Departments shall, based on statistics and qualitative information, particularly monitor and develop:

- Research development and renewal
- Recruitment, career paths and career support.
- Initiatives in respect of external collaboration.
- Conditions and outcomes regarding gender equality.
- Research ethics and secure handling of research data.

The faculties' overall quality responsibility is formulated in [*Rules of Procedure*](#). These state, amongst other things, that faculty boards decide on: objectives and strategies for research including external collaboration; and, monitoring, quality assurance and development of each faculty's core operations. The responsibility includes follow-up of the departments' work mentioned above. The dean, along with his/her faculty management, plays an important role in monitoring the departments' quality improvement and their follow-up on decisions and policies.

2. Recurrent external review

In research, there is a continuous and established external assessment through peer review. Furthermore, research groups, management of departments/faculties and faculty boards can when needed initiate special external evaluations.

Additionally, the university's quality system includes the RED model (*Research Evaluation Development*) of external review. RED is carried out every eight to ten years. On each occasion, its focus is adapted to best contribute to the quality and development of research. University management, faculty boards, management of faculty and departments are responsible for analysing review results and, as a consequence of the review's conclusions and recommendations: carrying out improvements in operations; and, monitoring the impact of implemented measures.

3. University-wide continuous monitoring and quality improvement

The vice-chancellor is to annually monitor the quality of the research. Central components in this are dialogues about the faculties' three-year *Strategies*; annual *operational plans*; annual monitoring reports; and, plans of measures linked to RED.

As a support for monitoring in respect of the directions set out in the vision, the strategies, there are annual-monitoring indicators. These indicators serve as a complement to the qualitative annual monitoring reports (in which initiatives and results are presented).

Learning across discipline and organisational boundaries is an important element in the university's continuous quality improvement. This is why university-wide seminars are continuously held for inspiration and exchanges of findings in respect of continuous quality improvement in research.

Led by the university management's representative for research issues, the [Research Board](#) is especially charged with monitoring and preparing issues regarding cross-faculty strategic research and research-relevant collaborations. The Research Board initiates and supports measures aimed at assuring the quality and continuous improvement of the university's research and promotes efficient coordination and development of the university's organisation of research infrastructure. The Research Board is to review this policy at least every other year.

The Quality Committee of the Research Board works to enhance and develop the university's research quality.

The Research Board's committee for ethical issues in research is seeks to promote high-level knowledge and awareness of research ethics and the importance of good research practice.

The Council for the review of deviations from good research practice, conducts initial assessments when a suspicion of research misconduct or other deviations from good research practice comes to the university's attention. The council provides a recommendation for further handling to the vice-chancellor. The Council can also investigate suspicions of other serious deviations from good research practice and subsequently submit an investigation report to the vice-chancellor.

The university's central steering documents for research quality

The university's steering documents govern the organisation's operations in a university-wide and normative manner. They are decided on by the board or the vice-chancellor. In addition to the steering documents set out below, there are others of importance for securing and developing research quality.

The University of Gothenburg's Vision 2021 – 2030: A University for the World

This vision establishes the direction for the development of operations at the University of Gothenburg. Measures for achieving the vision are concretised in the university management's and faculties' three-year strategy documents and annual operational plans.

Rules of Procedure and Delegation of Authority Policy

The university's Rules of Procedure and Delegation of Authority Policy set out an organisational allocation of responsibilities that identifies various bodies/agents and their responsibilities. Faculty boards are responsible for monitoring, quality assurance and development of the faculties' core operations and the latter's objectives and strategies.

Appointment procedure for teaching posts

The university's appointments procedure contains the local regulations supplementing the teacher appointment rules in Sweden's Higher Education Ordinance. The appointments procedure regulates which teaching posts there are at the university and the entry requirements for each such post. The appointments procedure additionally contains procedures for recruitment processes, drafting processes and teacher appointment decisions.

Rules for research infrastructure

The rules set out the university's criteria for research infrastructures at university-wide. Additionally, the rules regulate how research infrastructures are to be designated and evaluated.

Rules for centres

The rules set out the university's criteria for university-wide, interdisciplinary centres of expertise and research. Additionally, the rules regulate how centres of expertise and research are to be designated and evaluated.

Administrative procedures on suspicion of deviation from good research practice

These administrative procedures regulate how research misconduct and suspicion of deviation from good research practice are to be handled.

Open Publication Policy

The policy sets out the overall objectives and responsibilities for the transparent publication of research results.

Research Ethics Policy (in preparation)

The policy provides that all research carried out at the university shall be carried out in accordance with good research practice and preceded by research ethics considerations.

Rules and guidelines for research data management (in preparation)

The rules describe how data should be handled to ensure that research meets legal requirements and other relevant rules and principles.

Gender equality plan

The plan assure that the university follows the requirements established by the European Commission and by the Swedish government.