**MEMO**

**Re:**          **Policy for quality assurance of study programmes and
courses at HEALTH**

**Caseworker:**     Kamma Tulinius

The Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Copenhagen
(HEALTH) provides study programmes in the health sciences. Broadly
speaking, HEALTH educates graduates for the Danish health service. It runs
professional bachelor programmes, bachelor programmes, master's pro-
grammes – three of which lead to official authorisation – professional mas-
ter's programmes and higher adult education programmes. Graduates work
in both the private and public sectors. The main employers are national, re-
gional and local-authority bodies, as well as research and development com-
panies in the pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device industries.

The faculty's study programmes meet society's need for graduates who are
ready for the labour market, are professional and have research competences
based on the latest theoretical and practical knowledge. The faculty is re-
sponsible for ensuring that the programme's competency goals reflect the
courses' academic and research development, as well as the needs of society
and employers. This is achieved through working with a targeted research
strategy and by developing an effective internal quality-assurance system
for the study programmes.

The quality-assurance system ensures that the content of the faculty's study
programmes reflects society's need for health science graduates with exten-
sive knowledge and practical skills in areas such as analysis, systems engi-
neering, planning, treatment, prevention and innovation, and that the gradu-
ates' choices of methods and approaches to problem solving is research- and
evidence-based.

The quality-assurance work is predicated on close co-operation between the faculty's academic and administrative units. Much of the work is done by study boards and in other academic contexts (teaching committees, course committees, semester committees, educational councils, etc.). The administrative units provide assistance with, for example, management information, e.g. information on student intake, the planning of teaching, running exams, and ensuring infrastructure and the study environment.

**Objectives for HEALTH's quality-assurance policy**

HEALTH's quality-assurance policy for teaching and the education area is expressed in a number of objectives:

- That HEALTH's study programmes educates graduates to a high international level

- That the study programmes are research-based and the content is based on internationally recognised research

- That a quality culture is maintained and developed in which everyone – students, staff and management – continuously works to improve the study programmes

- That relevant academic content and appropriate planning of the study programmes is ensured so that they may be completed in the prescribed time

- That HEALTH develops study programmes in close dialogue with employers, including the regulatory agencies

- That the didactics and physical frameworks for the courses, including the study environment, are continuously enhanced to guarantee an effective, modern and motivating learning environment

- That a balance is achieved between, on the one hand, the guidelines for the professional programmes' national standards; and on the other, an increasingly international educational environment in terms of lecturers, students and the labour market

- That the ongoing development work on the structure of the study programmes, course content and competency goals complies both with national legislation and with the University of Copenhagen (UCPH) and the faculty's internal guidelines, and that management, lecturers and students all exert influence on the process.

**The concept of quality**

Evaluating quality in education is often based on which processes and procedures are in place to assure quality and, to a lesser extent, on an evaluation of the actual learning effect of the planned activities, including meeting

the programme's final competence goals. Assuring the quality of learning is the principal objective of quality assurance for an educational institution, and therefore assuring these processes is an important element in the overall quality-assurance policy.

HEALTH's internal quality-assurance policy is based on two interpretations of the concept of quality, i.e. process quality and learning quality.

## Process quality

Processes and procedures assure the quality of the programmes, and ensure that they are run properly and, for example, comply with current laws and regulations. Good process quality enables the programmes to work in a structured and systematic manner on assuring the quality of teaching and programmes, with the fewest possible administrative errors. It also ensures that teachers and administrators comply with the guidelines for achieving the targets set by the University's programme organisers, including the study boards.

## Learning quality

The learning quality of key teaching situations involving lecturers and students is usually based on the individuals concerned. It is determined by the relationship between the lecturer's "personality" and educational professionalism on the one hand, and the students' motivation and intellectual capacity on the other. Good and bad teaching are identified largely through student evaluations. Using the 7-point grading scale, which indicates the degree of fulfilment of the learning objectives, the exam also reflects the learning outcomes to some extent.

In addition to evaluations and examinations, HEALTH's policy is to assure the quality of learning via the following two processes:

1. Improving lecturers' educational and didactic competences through specific training and commitment, in order to ensure a high degree of professionalism

2. Providing a good study environment and an appropriate and modern infrastructure that helps to engage and motivate students.

## Quality culture

HEALTH wants lecturers, students and administrative staff to take personal responsibility for ensuring that the study programmes and teaching meet the quality standards that apply to UCPH programmes. The specific quality-assurance responsibilities assigned to the individual members of staff are described in the function or job descriptions. With regard to the students, the content and organisation of the teaching are designed to inspire critical

thinking, while course evaluations and involvement in education policy serve to encourage them to play an active role in quality assurance. Emphasising this personal responsibility makes clear the expectation that each individual – in his or her own way – has a duty to make a positive contribution, so that the faculty's teaching and study programmes meet the prescribed standards at all times.

## Research-based

Research-based education at HEALTH is realised in the sense that the lecturers are researchers, and the faculty strives to ensure that all teaching is provided by active researchers.

However, teaching in different subject areas and levels of education necessitates different teaching skills and competences. In specific fields, it may be appropriate that lecturers with other qualifications and practical experience, e.g. external specialists and practitioners, do the teaching.

At HEALTH, the proportion of teaching not provided by researchers is determined in relation to the nature of the subject areas. This entails a robust evaluation of which teaching qualifications will achieve the best quality of learning.

Involvement in research and giving students direct access to participation in research-related activities are further essential elements of research-based teaching. Involvement in research takes the form of laboratory exercises, sourcing critical studies and, especially, participating in actual research projects (e.g. bachelor projects and master's theses).

HEALTH has the following objectives for research-based teaching:
- That the content reflects the latest research findings

- That it has links with a recognised international research environment that conducts research in the subject area concerned

- That it is managed (but not necessarily provided) by researchers

- That it is provided by active researchers affiliated with HEALTH within the relevant subject area, unless there are compelling reasons to use specialists or practitioners with other qualifications

- That students receive training in scientific methodology, both in theory and in practical interaction with researchers and participation in research projects

- That students gain understanding of research and competences, including critical and independent use of source material, acquisition of new knowledge, etc.

**Sub-policies – the elements of the quality-assurance system**

HEALTH follows the University of Copenhagen's *Values Underpinning the Quality of Education and the Quality Culture*, which requires that the faculty's study programmes are:

- well-organised

- challenging

- inspiring

- research-based

- relevant

- quality-assured.

The faculty's sub-policies for quality assurance reflect the European standards, as articulated in *[European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions](ESG)* .These seven elements are designed to ensure that the faculty's study programmes meet the six UCPH objectives for the quality of education.

The quality-assurance system is also based on general UCPH policies as well as local HEALTH ones. The policies and related guidelines and procedures all refer to one or more of the seven ESG quality-assurance elements.

HEALTH has drawn up policies for each of the quality-assurance system's seven elements and has formulated procedures and guidelines to implement them. HEALTH's quality-assurance procedures and guidelines are not advisory. They must be complied with as formulated.

The descriptions of functions and procedures clearly outline the quality-assurance roles and responsibilities of the various individuals, committees and boards in the faculty (stated in the organisation chart). Quality assurance is planned according to the annual cycle for the individual procedures.

## 1. Policy and procedures for quality assurance

This document describes the University's and the faculty's key quality-assurance policies. The quality-assurance policy outlines, for example, how the faculty defines the concept of quality and how the concept is interpreted and applied.

## 2. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

This sub-policy concerns the ongoing work on the study programmes and is mainly embedded in the study boards and the faculty's study administration.

The guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that:

- the structure and content, the administrative processing and the ongoing work on the faculty's study programmes comply with laws and regulations as well as University and faculty policies

- the University and faculty internationalisation strategies are implemented in the study programmes

- the individual study boards work on the study programme on an informed and well-documented basis that requires access to detailed and up-to-date management information, etc.

The HEALTH study boards' ongoing work with the study programmes is embedded in the individual procedures' annual cycles.

The annual cycles involve external quality-assurance requirements, pursuant to laws and regulations, general quality-assurance requirements formulated by UCPH and internal quality-assurance requirements adopted at faculty level.

The annual cycle for the revision of curricula converts the results of quality-assurance work into follow-up activities. The key element is the study boards' responsibility for the development of curricula that – based on management information – are continually adjusted to comply with the qualifications framework, competency goals, ECTS credits, etc., but also take into account the programmes' financial and physical parameters.

The annual cycle of programme reports is largely synchronised with all parts of the quality-assurance process and the ongoing work with the individual study programmes. In this way, the annual cycle provides guidelines for the use of intake, drop-out rates, pass rates and course evaluations in quality assurance.

The course evaluation follows the general UCPH guidelines and includes systematic evaluation of the students' experience of all courses offered at HEALTH. For the purposes of systematic and targeted follow-up, course managers, heads of studies, heads of department and hospital management (where applicable) provide feedback on the students' evaluation during each semester. Periodic evaluations of the whole course of study are also conducted.

## 3. Assessment of students

This sub-policy concerns exams and is designed to ensure that students are assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures that are applied consistently.

The guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that:

- students, lecturers and administrators follow the rules and are fully informed of all aspects of work concerning exams

- study boards and other programme organisers are aware of the qualifications framework, curricula and competence goals and testing

- lecturers, students and administrators are aware of assessment criteria, the role of the external examiners, and the complaints and appeals procedures.

The specific work on designing, providing and evaluating exams is organised according to a semester cycle. Guidelines and procedures ensure that framework plans, exam plans, grading instructions and external examining are drawn up/organised within fixed timeframes, so that both ordinary exams and resits meet all of the relevant requirements stipulated in the ministerial orders.

## 4. Quality assurance of lecturers

This sub-policy concerns ensuring the availability of necessary and up-to-date teaching competences and qualifications.

The guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that:

- as far as possible, teaching is provided by active researchers and that all researchers with teaching duties are involved in the development of both the teaching and the programme

- an up-to-date teaching portfolio is used to document the researchers' development as lecturers

- teaching portfolios are central to recruitment, promotion and development reviews

- student evaluations of teaching are used to develop individual lecturers' competences

- all lecturers receive relevant educational skills-enhancement training opportunities

- UCPH's general policies for the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education programme and PhD supervision are complied with.

Lecturers' teaching competences are monitored and enhanced via performance reviews and courses in educational theory and practice.

The students regularly evaluate the individual teaching elements.

## 5. Learning resources and student support

This sub-policy relates to the ongoing assurance of all administrative support functions that are necessary for the planning and implementation of teaching and for the quality assurance of the general teaching infrastructure. It also covers the ongoing assurance of the quality of learning by providing a well-organised and stimulating study environment.

The guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that:

- all student administrative support functions within the faculty comply with the current laws and regulations

- all teaching activities are implemented as planned

- based on the curricula, framework plans are drawn up to support the requirements for teaching facilities, including rooms, equipment, and technical and administrative resources

- the faculty's study environment is regularly evaluated via teaching-environment evaluations (UMVs), and the evaluations are translated into the ongoing development of a well-organised and stimulating learning environment.

As previously stated, HEALTH operates according to the principle of learning quality. Aspects such as classrooms and the ICT-supported teaching infrastructure are quality-assured by ongoing investment based on the programmes' continuous development and on regular teaching-environment evaluations that map the faculty's psychological and physical study environment.

## 6. Information systems

This sub-policy concerns all types of management information that informs the study boards' and faculty management's discussions and subsequent decisions related to the ongoing quality assurance of teaching and the study programme. The overall information system describes: what data to collate, who is responsible for generating it and when it should be available.

The guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that:

- management information is provided to the study boards and faculty management so that discussions and decisions related to the ongoing quality assurance of teaching and the study programme are carried out on an informed and qualified basis

- the information system includes: what data to collate, who is responsible for generating it and when it should be available.

Danish Universities, the Danish University and Property Agency (UBST), Statistics Denmark (DS), University of Copenhagen (UCPH) and HEALTH

regularly generate data and statistics that are used as management infor-
mation in the ongoing work with the faculty's study programmes. Both
UCPH and HEALTH contribute to the data included in the programme eval-
uations (conducted every six years) and the annual programme reports.

Updated management information must be made available as per the fac-
ulty's annual cycle of work with the study programmes.

## 7. Public information
This sub-policy relates to the statutory information about the study pro-
grammes.

It is HEALTH policy that the faculty's official website provides comprehen-
sive information on teaching, programmes, research, communication, organ-
isation and finance. The information will also be available in English when-
ever this is deemed appropriate. Information specifically for staff and en-
rolled students is published on the Faculty intranet in both Danish and
Englis.